

As the GB harvest gets underway, AHDB will provide regular updates on the Markets website. In past harvest reports, harvest week 1 has been the second week of July and so although this is the third report of this year's harvest, it provides information for week 6 (Week Ending 15 August), for ease of comparison with previous reports. Please note that reporting takes place up to the close of play of Tuesday each week.

Overview – Week 6- WE 15 August

Harvest report prepared by ADAS for AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds, using data supplied by regional reporters (mostly independent agronomists). The approach used is consistent with previous years allowing comparison of data and provides a snapshot of harvest progress throughout the harvest season.

Continued unsettled weather over the last fortnight, with heavy rain at times, has caused disruption in harvest progress across most of Great Britain. Regular rainfall continued to affect most regions, especially in WE 8 August, with typical rainfall over the last fortnight averaging 30-50 mm across the AHDB weather stations. The scattered nature of the showers meant some locations received significantly more, whilst others were drier. Conditions improved towards the end of the period with more settled weather arriving from 11 August, although scattered showers have affected some northern regions during this period. The majority of grain harvested in the last fortnight required drying.

Despite the challenges faced over the last fortnight, by 15 August an estimated 98% of the winter barley and 96% of the winter oilseed rape crop had been harvested. Just small areas of these two crops were left to harvest in Wales and Scotland. Good progress has been made to the start of wheat and spring barley harvest in the South. This brings the GB cereal and oilseed harvest to date to 50% complete.

Table 1 GB average yields and quality for cereals and oilseeds

Crop	GB Yield Estimate t/ha	Specific weight kg/hl	Other Quality
Winter wheat	8.0-8.2	74-75	Limited data
Winter barley	6.9-7.1	63	Grain N ~ 1.4% Screenings ~ 4-10% Germination ~ 95-100%
Spring barley	Slightly above average	64-65	Grain N ~ 1.6% Screenings ~ 2-7% Germination ~ 95-97%
Oats	Winter oats above farm average	Winter only – 54-55	
Winter oilseed rape	3.5-3.7	68-70	Oil – 45%

*HFN – Hagberg Falling Number

Weather

Unsettled weather affected much of GB between 2 and 9 August, but improved into the second week of August, giving longer harvest windows. Temperatures were slightly higher than the last week in July. Example rainfall data from AHDB trial sites shows total rainfall of 54mm over the last two weeks for Norfolk (Deopham), 31mm for Herefordshire (Lydbury North) and 53mm for North Yorkshire (Cawood).

Harvest Progress

To date 50% of the GB cereal and oilseed area has been harvested. Harvest of winter barley and winter oilseed rape is nearing completion, with just small areas left to harvest in Wales and Scotland. A good start has been made to wheat and spring barley harvests across southern England with the majority of progress made in the last week (WE 15 August) following a period of more settled weather.

During WE 8 August harvest was typically only possible for a few hours between showers. Despite these catchy conditions an estimated 425,000 ha of cereals and oilseeds were harvested during the week. The improvement in weather conditions from 11 August onwards (especially in the South) meant that longer harvest days were available, with many farmers starting late-morning and continuing to harvest until after dark. With more settled conditions an estimated 700,000 ha of cereals and oilseeds were harvested in WE 11 August. Harvest progress remains ahead of most recent years, with the exception of the early harvest in 2014.

Harvest progress charts are available to view [here](#). Select the region and crop that you are interested in to see progress. There is also a dashboard, which shows national harvest progress against previous years.

Winter Wheat

Winter wheat harvest started in earnest during WE 8 August, with just over 10% of the GB area harvested. More settled conditions in the WE 15 August allowed an increased rate of harvest with an estimated 30% of the wheat area completed in the week. This brings the total harvested area to just over 40% of the GB wheat area. The high rate of harvest over the last week means that despite a delay to the start of wheat harvest, caused by the weather, overall progress is in line with the 5-year average. At a regional level 50-60% of the area had been harvested in the South West, South East and Eastern regions, 35-40% harvested in the Midlands, 25% in Yorkshire and small areas harvested elsewhere. Crops are ripe in all regions other than Wales and Scotland. Lodging is increasing with ripe crops waiting for harvest, with an estimated 5% of the national area affected by lodging to a greater or lesser extent.

Yields

English crops are tending to yield 5-10% above the farm average in most regions, although in Wales and Scotland the early yields have been slightly below average, leading to a forecast GB average yield of 8.0-8.2 t/ha (GB 5-year average for all wheat of 7.9 t/ha). There is a great deal of variability in farm yields with reports ranging from 5.0-13.0 t/ha. The best yields have been reported in the Eastern region, South East and Yorkshire, where yields in excess of 8.5 t/ha are common and a number of crops have yielded over 10 t/ha. Heavier soil types with greater soil moisture availability during grain fill are tending to give the better yields.

Quality

Quality data is currently based on small areas of early harvested wheat. It is expected that the implications of the delay to wheat harvest on quality will become clearer next week as larger volumes of crops are sent for analysis. The quality of early harvested crops has been good, with most group 1 milling crops meeting milling wheat specifications with farmers tending to prioritise harvesting their milling varieties to ensure that milling quality is maintained.

- Specific weight– currently averaging 74-75kg/hl, range of 72-84kg/hl.
- Falling Hagberg Number (s)– currently averaging 255-260 seconds, range of 220-350 for group 1 milling wheat, lower HFNs reported on group 2 & 3 varieties.
- Milling Protein – currently averaging 13%.
- Moisture– average 17%, range 16-22%. Almost all crops harvested in the last fortnight have required drying, coming in at higher than ideal moisture contents.

Winter Barley

By WE 15 August winter barley harvest was 98% complete (91% complete by WE 8 August). Despite the unsettled conditions an estimated 94,000 ha were harvested in WE 8 August, with a further 30,000 ha harvested in WE 15 August. The majority of the area harvested in WE 8 August was in Scotland (36,000 ha), Yorkshire (17,000 ha) and the Eastern region (13,000 ha). In the WE 15 August the largest areas harvested were in Scotland (12,000ha), Yorkshire and the North East (6,000ha each). The steady rate of harvest from mid-July means that the completion of winter barley harvest is ahead of most recent years, and in line with the early harvest of 2014.

An estimated 8% of the GB winter barley crop has been affected by lodging, with reports of up to 25% of crops in Yorkshire showing signs of lodging.

Yields

English yields are tending to be 5-10% above the farm average, although in Scotland yields are slightly below average. The current estimated GB average yield is 6.9-7.1 t/ha (5-year average 6.8 t/ha). Farm yields to date range from 4.0-10.0 t/ha.

Quality

Most malting winter barley has met its specification this year, with much of it harvested before being adversely affected by the unsettled weather.

- Specific weight– average slightly low at 63 kg/hl, wide range of 58-70 kg/hl.
- Screenings– High in some areas, typical range between 4% (East) and 10% (North West).
- Grain Nitrogen (malting varieties) – average 1.4%, range 1.3-1.8%.
- Germination– range 95-100%.
- Moisture– average 16%, range 15-18%. Most crops have required drying.

Spring Barley

Spring barley harvest is 20% complete (7% complete in WE 8 August), this is equivalent to approximately 145,000 ha harvested to date. Spring barley harvest started in the last week of July. However, the rate of harvest progress has been influenced by a combination of availability of ripe crops ready for harvest and availability of suitable harvest opportunities between showers. The largest areas of spring barley harvested to date have been in the South West (45,000 ha) and Eastern Region (51,000 ha). Rain and wind over the last fortnight have caused an increase in the GB area of spring barley affected by lodging, now estimated at 15%.

Yields

Yield data is based on early harvested crops predominantly from southern England. Yields appear highly variable with above average yields reported in the Eastern region and South West, where the majority of the crop area harvested to date is located. However, in the West Midlands and South East below average yields are being reported. Elsewhere yields are close to average. Initial indications are that English yields are likely to be above average (5-year average is 5.6 t/ha), however, with such large areas present in Scotland, the final GB average will depend on whether crops there are yielding above or below average.

Quality

Quality data is based on early harvested crops, predominantly from southern England and therefore, overall quality values are expected to change as the Scottish crop is harvested. Malting specification has been met on the majority of malting crops but brackling and lodging are now starting to affect quality.

- Specific weight– average 64-65kg/hl, range of 64-67kg/hl.
- Grain Nitrogen (malting varieties) – average 1.6%, range 1.3-1.8%.
- Screenings– range 2-7%.
- Germination– range 95-97%.
- Moisture– average 17%, range 16-19%.

Oats

By WE 15 August, 40% of the GB area of oats had been harvested, up from 10% the previous week. This progress is in line with the five year average harvest progress. The majority of the winter oat area has been harvested, with harvest of spring oats now underway in some regions. The largest areas of oats harvested to date are in the South West (~15,000 ha), West Midlands (~13,000 ha) and South East (~10,000 ha). Spring oats are not yet ready for harvest. An estimated 10% of the GB oat area has been affected by lodging, with up to 25% in the South. Where oats are grown, the harvest of winter oats is being prioritised due to their vulnerability to lodging.

Yields

Early yields are from winter oat varieties only, with the majority of crops harvested to date tending to yield above the farm average. Current yields range from 4.8-9.0 t/ha, with some of the best yields reported in Scotland, although as yet only small areas have been harvested here.

Quality

Quality data is only available for winter varieties harvested in the southern half of England and is therefore subject to change.

- Specific weight– average 54-55 kg/hl, range of 50-59kg/hl.
- Moisture– average 18%, range 14-20%.

Winter oilseed rape

An estimated 96% of the GB winter oilseed rape area has been harvested to date, remaining well ahead of the five year average of 73%. The remaining 4% is made up of small areas in Wales and Scotland, which are ripe and will be cut as soon as conditions allow. Lodging is estimated to have affected 3% of the GB winter oilseed rape area. Disease levels were low but weeds have been an issue, with high thistle and cleaver levels affecting a small proportion of crops.

Yields

With the winter oilseed rape harvest coming to a close, the estimate of the national average yield is 3.5-3.7 t/ha (5-year average is 3.4 t/ha). Farm yields have typically ranged from 2.3-5.2 t/ha, with most crops producing slightly higher than average yields. The poorest yields of under 3t/ha tend to be from crops grown on lighter land and areas where the crop struggled due to pigeon damage, earlier drought or poor establishment leading to patchy fields. The highest yields of up to 5.2t/ha have been reported on heavy land in the East, South and Midlands. These yield ranges have been very similar across all regions.

Quality

- Oil content– average is good at 45%, range of 42-47% reported.
- Specific Weight– 68-70 kg/hl.
- Moisture – weekly average 9%, range 8-14%, majority required drying in last fortnight.