

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 second report of this year's harvest, it provides information for week 4 (Week Ending 1 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 4 (WE 1 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.

This week's report is based on data collected from England only, being still early in the season. After a promising early start to harvest, the last fortnight of unsettled weather, with rain heavy at times, has caused delays in harvest progress across most of Great Britain. Regular rainfall has affected most regions. Typical rainfall over the last fortnight at the AHDB trial sites was between 40 and 55mm, although the scattered nature of the showers meant some locations received significantly more.

With cool, still and overcast conditions, natural drying has been very slow, with harvest continuing in damp conditions and the majority of harvested grains requiring drying in the last two weeks. Due to regular showers and subsequent heavy dews harvest windows have been limited, often only a few hours a day, with difficult conditions, wet ground and increasingly lodged crops all causing their own challenges.

Despite the challenges faced over the last fortnight by 1 August an estimated 70% of the winter barley and 75% of the winter oilseed rape crop had been harvested. Harvest of both crops was nearly complete in the Midlands, South and East of England. This brings the GB cereal and oilseed harvest to date to 21% complete, ahead of the five year average progress of 16% by the start of August.

Weather

Unsettled weather affected much of GB between 20 July and 1 August, which coupled with cool conditions, gave little opportunity for crops to dry out, slowing the national harvest. Example rainfall data from AHDB trial sites shows total rainfall of 40mm over the last two weeks for Norfolk (Deopham), 55mm for Herefordshire (Lydbury North) and 49mm for East Yorkshire (Ulceby).

Harvest Progress

Winter barley and winter oilseed rape crops were ripe and ready for harvest over the last two weeks. It has been the unsettled weather and limited harvest windows that have slowed harvest progress, rather than the availability of crops ready for harvest. In most regions harvest was only possible for 3-5 hours on 3-4 days per week, and therefore, the areas of crop cleared were limited. Where harvest was possible crops were often harvested at high moisture contents and drying has been required for the majority- 50% dried in the East Midlands, increasing to 100% for the Eastern region.

The good early start made to harvest in WE 18 July, and slow but steady progress made over the last fortnight means that an estimated 21% of the GB cereal and oilseeds area has been harvested to date. This remains slightly ahead of the five year average progress of 16% by the start of August.

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 available to show national harvest progress against previous years.

Winter wheat

A start was made to the winter wheat harvest in the last week of July, with just over 1% of the GB area harvested from the Midlands south. Crops in the South and East are ripe but not overripe so are still standing well, with only an estimated 2% of the crop affected by lodging. Early yields appear to be close to or slightly above the farm average but with only small areas of early maturing varieties harvested it is a biased picture. Greater clarity will be possible as more crops are harvested over the next week or two.

Winter barley

By WE 1 August winter barley harvest was 70% complete (50% complete by WE 25 July). Despite the unsettled conditions over the last fortnight, progress of the winter barley harvest has been maintained at about 20-25% of the crop area each week. This rate of progress is ahead of most recent years, and ahead of the five year average of

38% complete by the start of August. In the southern and central regions harvest is drawing to a close with harvest between 75% - 95% complete. Further north regions are between 30-70% complete depending on frequency of showers and speed of crop drying.

Yields

Yield data is currently only available for the Midlands, Southern and Eastern England. Farm yields have tended to be close to or slightly above the farm average, with some particularly good yields reported in the Eastern region and some of the southern counties. Based on the yields from these regions the indication is that national yields will be above the 5 year average (6.8 t/ha) in the region of 6.9-7.1 t/ha, although as later harvested crops and those from the north are assessed this figure may change. Farm yields reported to date have ranged from 4.0-10.0 t/ha. The better yields have tended to come from the heavier soil types with more available water. These soil types have tended to yield 6.0-9.5 t/ha, whereas on light land yields have ranged between 4.0-8.5 t/ha, with the poorest yields on the lightest soils.

It is estimated that 7% of the national winter barley crop is affected by lodging, with the worst affected region being Yorkshire at 17% of the winter barley area being affected by lodging. Recent heavy rain combined with crops being ripe and ready for harvest have both contributed to increased lodging this season.

Quality

The quality of early harvested crops was good and in most cases quality reports remain good. However, where harvest has been delayed and crops are affected by lodging there is concern that the quality of later harvested crops will be impacted.

- **Specific weight** – average slightly low at 63kg/hl, wide range of 52-68kg/hl, particularly wide range in Yorkshire.
- **Screenings** – High in some areas, typical range between 5-8%.
- **Grain Nitrogen (malting varieties)** – average at 1.6%, *range 1.3-1.8%*.
- **Moisture** – average 15%, *range 10-18%*. Most crops harvested in the last fortnight have required drying, coming in at higher than ideal moisture contents (16%).
- **Germination** – no issues mentioned, most reports 97-98%.

Spring Barley

A start to the spring barley harvest was made in the last week of July, with an estimated 1% of the GB area harvested in the Midlands, East and South. It is too early to get a clear picture on yield but based on the early harvested crops in these regions yields are close to or slightly below the farm average.

It is estimated that 3% of the GB spring barley areas has lodged to some extent, although in the Eastern region the problem is worse. An estimated 25% of the area is affected in Cambridgeshire, with some sprouting in the ear apparent.

Oats

Small areas (<1%) of the GB winter oat area were harvested in Southern England and the Midlands over the last week. This progress is similar to most recent years, except for 2014 where good conditions allowed 20% of the crop area to be harvested by the end of July. No quality data are available but early winter oat yields are close to the farm average.

Winter oilseed rape

An estimated 75% of the GB winter oilseed rape area had been harvested by 1 August, with just under 40% harvested before 25 July. Unsettled weather and on off harvest opportunities have slowed progress compared to potential. Nonetheless, significant areas have been cleared each week and progress remains well ahead of the 5 year average progress of 25% of the crop area harvested before the start of August.

Harvest is almost complete in the Eastern region with large areas also harvested in the South East and South West (>90% complete) to date. In the Midlands, 70-80% of the area had been harvested up to 1 August, whilst in the North East and Yorkshire oilseed rape harvest is an estimated 60% complete.

Lodging is estimated to have affected 4% of the GB winter oilseed rape area, with up to 10% of crops affected in the West Midlands. Disease levels are low but weeds are an issue with high thistle and cleaver levels affecting a small proportion of crops.

Yields

Early indications based on English crops, mostly from the south and east indicate that the majority of crops are yielding close to the farm average, with occasional crops, especially in the South West yielding slightly above the farm average. Based on this information the early estimate of the national average yield is 3.4-3.6 t/ha. Farm yields have typically ranged from 2.3-5.2 t/ha, with crops on lighter land tending to yield lower than those on heavy land.

Quality

Quality data to date is based on samples harvested from the Midlands and Southern England.

- **Moisture** – weekly average 11%, *range 8-12%*. Most crops did not require drying over the last week as they were typically harvested between 8-9% moisture content. In the

South West around 30% of crops required drying down from a moisture content of 12%.

- **Oil content** – average is good at 45%, range of 44-47% reported.
- **Specific Weight** – 68-70 kg/hl.

