

AHDB Harvest Report
Report 5 – Week 9
Week ending 9th September 2021

Summary

This is the fifth report of the 2021/22 season, with data covering the period 25 August – 07 September 2021. It is produced with data collected by RSK ADAS Ltd and compiled by AHDB.

Over the last fortnight, more settled weather has been welcomed across most of the country. However, conditions have largely been cool, with crops being slow to dry. Morning dews have also worked to slow progress. As a result, roughly 80-90% of crops harvested this period have required drying, with only those cleared in the last few really warm days consistently dropping below 15% moisture. Coastal areas, particularly in the North East, have been affected by heavy dews and sea frets. This has shortened possible harvest windows. Further south, conditions have been better for most. This has allowed good rates of clearance during the period. By the weekend of the 4/5 September, temperatures had risen, allowing good harvest conditions for any remaining crops.

The unsettled weather has resulted in significant variability in conditions across the UK. Scotland has been largely dry, with only a few showers, while the North East and Eastern regions have suffered showers, humidity and dews. Other regions have been largely settled, with some drizzle. Indeed, the South East, South West and Wales recorded hot temperatures for the time of year by the end of the period, peaking at 28°C on Monday 6 September.

Winter wheat harvest is now drawing to a close in several parts of the UK, now standing at 90% complete. This is almost double the clearance rate quoted a fortnight ago (46%). Now slightly ahead of the five-year average (89%), this follows the slowest start since 2017. At 6-percentage points ahead of progress this time last year, progress now only sits behind 2018 and 2019 at this point since 2015. Harvest of group 1 and 2 wheats had largely been completed before this period, with most of the harvested crops this fortnight group 3 and 4 varieties.

The **winter barley** harvest is now complete in all regions, as is the **winter oilseed rape**.

The **spring barley** harvest has progressed well since the last report and is nearing completion in several regions. Nationally, 85% of the crop is now cleared, some 12-percentage points ahead of the five-year average. This is also the fastest clearance rate at this point in time since at least 2014, ahead of 2019's rapid progress (83% by week 9 of harvest). The North East has been the last region to start spring barley harvest, with just 5% of the crop cut by this point.

Now the **winter oat** harvest is complete, the focus has now turned to **spring oat** varieties over the past fortnight. Combined progress of both winter and spring varieties nationally stands at 77%, slightly back on the five-year average (82%) and only ahead of 2020 (75%) at this point in harvest. Northern regions of England have the highest percentage of crop still to clear, with the North East 18% complete and Yorkshire & The Humber at 44% complete. However, 64% of the Scottish crop has now been cleared, with the largely dry conditions expediting progress.

Winter wheat yields continue to remain close to average as harvest has progressed, ranging between 8.1-8.3t/ha versus a five-year average of 8.0t/ha (2016-2020). Current farm yields are ranging between 6.0-14.0t/ha, with plenty of early reports in excess of 10.0t/ha. Milling wheats are

ranging between 6.2-12.5t/ha. Second wheats have performed well (where take-all was not an issue), with yields in line with first wheats.

Spring barley yield reports are good, with early harvested crops yielding ahead of the five-year average at 5.8-6.2t/ha (versus 5.7t/ha). Farm yields have ranged from 5.0-10.0t/ha, with malting yields typically about a tonne lower than feed. In addition, heavier land yields have been slightly better than lighter soils, although the lighter land has yielded well compared to normal.

Current winter oat yields range from 4.8-8.5t/ha. Spring oat yields are, in many cases, matching winter yields, ranging from 4.4-8.5t/ha. Milling crops are posting yields between 6.5-8.0t/ha, with naked oats at the lower end of the range.

Winter barley yields are slightly above the 2016-2020 average (6.8t/ha) at 6.9-7.1t/ha. They are ranging between 4.4-10.5t/ha, with the lowest yields reported on light land. Malting barley yields are typically around 6.5-6.8t/ha.

Winter oilseed rape yields are slightly better than average, at 3.3-3.5t/ha (five-year average of 3.3t/ha). Strong crops have yielded particularly well this year, especially those on heavy land. However, there are a small proportion of crops that had a poor early start, suffered pigeon damage or rabbit grazing, or Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle (CSFB) damage, and these yields have suffered accordingly.

Specific weights for winter wheat tend to be slightly on the lower side at 73-77kg/hl. The protein content of milling varieties typically range from 10.5-13.5%, with lower protein contents reported on some of the higher yielding crops. Hagberg falling numbers have held up well in most regions, although little of the crop harvested in the last week has been for analysis yet.

Most spring barley crops tested so far have germination over 99%. However, there are early indications of problems with germination on some later harvested crops from parts of southern and eastern England. Early specific weights of 60-65kg/hl are reported. Grain nitrogen ranges from 1.3-1.8%, but more samples are low rather than high. Screenings to date are lower than for winter barley, typically 1-5%.

Specific weights have been ranging between 42-62kg/hl for oats, with winter varieties slightly lower than spring.

Winter barley grain nitrogen levels have typically ranged between 1.4-1.6%. Specific weights are low in most regions, although slightly better reports from the West Midlands and North West. Germination levels have fallen on later harvested crops to 90-92%, and will fail malting specifications.

Oil content for WOSR is around 44%, but some low oil contents have been reported.

Straw

Straw yields for all crops remain good. Baling contractors are having to play "catch up", due to wet or green straw lying in swathes in fields and requiring tedding before baling.

Winter wheat

Harvest update

As at 7 September, the winter wheat harvest was 90% complete nationally. The rate of progress has increased significantly over the past two weeks, now standing at 6 percentage points above last year at this point and similar to the five-year average (89%). Many regions in England are nearing completion, although the North East of England remains a little behind (71%) and Northern, Eastern and Western areas of Scotland. However, the Scottish winter wheat harvest is unusually early this year, with wheat crops often harvested before spring barley.

Harvest of group 1 and 2 wheats had been largely completely before this week, with most crops harvested group 3 and 4 varieties.

Yields

Yields have remained close to average, between 8.1-8.3t/ha (against a five-year average of 8.0t/ha). Current ranges are from 6.0-14.0t/ha, with plenty of early reports of crops over 10.0t/ha. Milling wheats are ranging between 6.2-12.5t/ha.

Second wheats have performed well (where take-all was not an issue), with yields in line with first wheats.

Quality

Specific weights tend to be on the lower side, at 73-77kg/hl. There are occasional reports of up to 80-90kg/hl, but also reports of specific weights dropping to 68kg/hl. The South East has reported occasional crops with very low specific weights, dropping to 55-60kg/hl in the worst crops.

Hagberg falling numbers (HFN) in most regions have held up well, with reports of group 1 and 2 milling varieties returning Hagbergs of 275-325 seconds. However, little of the crop harvested over the last week has been analysed yet. Where harvest has been particularly delayed in parts of the Midlands, Hagbergs of less than 250 seconds have been reported on group 1 and 2 varieties. In some cases, these have dropped to 90-180 for group 3 biscuit wheat, with the West Midlands reporting particularly low HFN's.

Protein content for milling varieties is typically ranging between 10.5-13.5%. Lower protein contents have been reported on some of the higher yielding crops (10+t/ha). In Eastern regions, protein levels over 13% are quoted, higher than most regions.

Moisture content. All regions have needed the grain drier this fortnight, with moisture levels ranging from 14-24%. However, less grain has been dried in Scotland compared to normal. Even where moisture levels were lower, grain was put through the drier to remove weed seeds and clean the grains. In the North East, patchy showers and heavy dews have led farmers to take harvesting opportunities when they can, resulting in harvesting moisture between 20-24%.

Overall **mycotoxin** levels are low, with few reports of rejections. However, **ergot** is present in occasional batches, reported in the East Midlands. Some poor **Septoria** control has been in the Firefly variety in Yorkshire

Spring wheat

Harvest update

Spring wheat harvest has commenced in a few regions. Initial reports indicate that crops are yielding well so far. However, ergot has been seen in samples and in crops where high blackgrass burden is present.

Winter barley

Harvest update

Harvest is complete now in most regions, as has been seen by this point in harvest since at least 2014.

Yields

Yields are close to, to slightly improved, on the five-year average this season (6.8t/ha), between 6.9-7.1t/ha. Ranges from 4.4-10.5t/ha have been reported, with the lowest yields on light land. Malting barley yields are typically around 6.5-8.5t/ha.

Quality

Grain nitrogen levels typically range between 1.4-1.6%, with occasional reports of them dropping to 1.3%.

Specific weights are low in most regions (typically 60-64kg/hl). Slightly better weights are reported in the West Midlands and North West (66kg/hl). They are tending slightly higher on two row varieties than six row.

Germination levels of recently harvested crops are dropping. Those harvested early were typically over 98%, but more recent results show levels around 95-98%. However, later harvested crops affected by lodging have dropped to 90-92% and will fail malting specification.

About 20% of the GB crop was affected by **lodging**. In Eastern regions, the last winter barley to be harvested had been delayed by lodged or flat crops. The South East reports that 25% of the crop was lodged.

Moisture content has ranged from 14-20%.

Spring barley

Harvest update

Nationally, 85% of the crop is now harvested, 12-percentage points ahead of the five-year average and at a similar rate to 2019. Progress has been significant, and substantial quantities have been harvested in most regions in England, Wales and Scotland, with over 70% harvested.

The North East of England has been the last region to start, with only 5% of the crop harvested this week. Here, progress has been limited by heavy dews, drizzle and sea fret. The South East, while 95% harvested, has reported variable maturity across the region. Some crops have been ready for harvest, whereas others are only now receiving glyphosate and therefore a further seven days away from harvest commencing.

Yields

Early yields are good (5.8-6.2t/ha), ahead of the five-year average (5.7t/ha). Farm yields reported to date have ranged from 5.0-10.0t/ha, with malting varieties typically about a tonne lower than feed. Heavy land yields are also slightly higher than those from crops on lighter land.

The best yields are reporting off well drained heavy land in Yorkshire. Light land has yielded well compared to normal, with minimal impacts of water stress observed this season. Some of the best crops have pushed yields up to 8.0t/ha.

Brackling remains an issue, with affected crops seeing decreased yields as a result.

Quality

Most crops tested so far have **germination** over 99%. However, there are some early indications of problems with germination in some later harvested crops from parts of southern and eastern England.

Early **specific weights** range from 62-65kg/hl. **Grain nitrogen** ranges from 1.4-1.7%, but more samples are low rather than high. In the South West, dry weather in the last week has maintained grain quality, with 1.65% being quoted. **Screenings** to date are lower than winter barley, typically 1-5%.

Lodging is present, with variable reports received. Up to 40% of the crop has been affected in the South West. Other regions that have not reported lodging have not seen incidence higher than 15%.

Moisture levels have ranged as wide as 14-21%. Some producers have been able to avoid the grain drier on crop harvested during dry days. Those that have dried have had to take care to not affect germination. In the North West, moistures have been between 14-16%. Those that home feed spring barley are mixing wet and dry grains together to reduce the need for drying.

Oats

Harvest update

Harvest of winter oats is now complete, the focus turning to spring varieties over the past fortnight. Nationally, the total oat harvest progress stands at 77% complete, 5-percentage points behind the five-year average, but 2-percentage points ahead of progress this time last year.

Yields

Current winter oat yields range between 4.8-8.5t/ha. Spring oat yields in many cases are matching winter varieties, ranging from 4.4-8.5t/ha. Milling crops are typically between 6.5-8.0t/ha, with naked oats at the lower end of the range. In the North West, spring oats have largely been winter varieties sown in the spring, with good yields reported and quality holding up well.

Quality

Specific weights have generally been within milling specification, sitting between 50-54kg/hl. However ranges as wide as 42-62kg/hl have been reported. Winter varieties are tending to have lower specific weights than spring. In the West Midlands, the Mascani variety is producing good samples, with pleasing specific weights. Conversely, the Eastern region is seeing disappointing specific weights on winter varieties, especially where crops have lodged. They've seen high levels of trash in winter samples, indicating they were not fully ripe when harvested.

Moisture. Harvest is typically starting at 18% moisture, although where stems were green, this has resulted in moistures increasing as the grain passes through the combine. Where crops are not quite ripe, farmers are waiting for 15% moisture before starting harvest.

Winter Oilseed Rape

Harvest update

Winter oilseed rape (WOSR) harvest is now complete, as is standard for this point in harvest.

Yields

WOSR yields are close, or slightly better, than the five-year average (3.3t/ha), ranging between 3.3-3.5t/ha. Good crops have yielded particularly well this year, with regular reports of over 4.0t/ha and occasional reports of over 5.0t/ha. Heavy land has yielded particularly well, but lighter land has also yielded well this season, with 3.5-4.5t/ha typical. A small proportion of crops that had a poor early

start, suffered pigeon or rabbit grazing, or CSFB damage have suffered yield losses, dropping down to about 1.0-3.0t/ha.

Quality

Oil content for WOSR is tending to be around 44%, but some low oil percentages have been reported. This is especially where desiccation was a little early, with oil contents falling to around 40-42%.

In Eastern areas, higher yields have been reported in Norfolk away from **CSFB** pressure. In Essex and Cambs, lower yields are quoted in regions of CSFB pressure.

The majority of crops harvested in England during the last week were harvested at less than 9% **moisture**, although a few started with moistures of 11%. An estimated 80% of the volume harvested this week required drying. Moistures were higher in Scotland and Wales.