

NOTE

This is the sixth and final harvest report of the 2022/23 season and covers the beginning of harvest up to 13 September 2022. It is produced with data collected by RSK ADAS Ltd and compiled by AHDB. The approach used is consistent with previous years allowing comparison of data and provides a snapshot of harvest progress throughout the harvest season. All harvest reports run from Wednesday to Tuesday – with data reported for the week ending on a Tuesday.

Grain and seed moistures from many crops are below the standard 14.5% for barley and wheat, and 8% for oilseed rape. Therefore, the reported yields are unadjusted.

OVERVIEW

Harvest of cereals and oilseed rape (OSR) in GB is now all but complete. There are occasional crops left unharvested in Scotland, although conditions have tended to be adequate for allowing clearance.

Harvest was complete in England and Wales (bar a small area in the North East) by the end of August (Week 8). The remaining area of crops in the North East and parts of Scotland were gradually cleared over the following three weeks. Overall harvest progress in 2022 was earlier than in any of the previous five years, even with the slow finish in parts of Scotland and the North East. The relatively early harvest of 2018 was the closest, with 85% complete by the end of Week 7, compared to 95% complete in 2022. However, the 2018 harvest saw an even more drawn out conclusion, with the last crops harvested in week 11.

After an extended dry period over the summer months, rainfall has been received across most of GB. However, the intensity and frequency of rainfall is highly variable, with flooding in some regions (South West), while other regions have received below average levels. Given harvest was complete for most areas, the recent rainfall had little impact on progress or quality. However, in occasional crops in the North East, Yorkshire and Scotland rainfall has increased the need for drying.

Overall, limited amounts of ergot have been found in wheat and barley samples from central stores. Though in this latest update, there has been increasing reports of ergot noted in the East Midlands in winter wheat and spring wheat samples, as well as small amounts found in winter and spring barley samples.

Recent rainfall has allowed germination of weeds and volunteers in stale seedbeds. This is being controlled via cultivation or pre-drilling glyphosate application.

Where land was cultivated before rainfall, there was rapid wearing of metal on ploughs and cultivators, which has incurred extra costs for some. Recent rainfall has eased cultivation and reduced costs.

Planting of winter OSR started in late August and progressed into September with establishment aided by recent rain. The drilling of winter cereals started in week ending 13 September on lighter land with little to no grass weed issues.

STRAW

For wheat, there has been a good straw yield this year. However, brittle straw from the prolonged dry weather has proved tricky to bale. Baling tended to be completed soon after harvest and there was a greater proportion of straw that was incorporated in late harvested crops to reduce risk of rain delays in baling.

Winter barley straw has been of variable quality, with some hard to bale due to brittleness from being bleached by the sun and some getting smashed. Straw prices have been noted as lower this year, due to high quantities of clean, dry straw being produced.

For spring barley, straw yields are reported to be higher on earlier drilled crops with better establishment. Oat straw saw good yields from winter crops.

WHEAT

WINTER WHEAT

Harvest update

The GB winter wheat harvest is now complete (excluding a few remaining fields in Scotland). This is in line with 2018 and slightly ahead of the 5-year average. However, the bulk of the winter wheat harvest was completed much earlier than the 5-year average. In Week 8 (w/e 30 August), 99% of this year's winter wheat area was harvested, compared with 75% for the five-year average.

Yields

The GB average yield is estimated at 8.4-8.6t/ha, which is higher than the five-year average of 7.9t/ha. On farm, the lower yields were from crops grown on the lighter soils (6.0t/ha), while the best yields of 14t/ha were recorded on heavier soils which retained moisture during the hot and dry weather.

Milling winter wheat yields range from 6.5-11.5t/ha and yields for feed winter wheat have varied from 7.0-14.0t/ha. Again, the higher yields are seen in crops with better establishment in water-retentive soil.

Quality

The rapid harvest of 2022, with no significant rain hold up, has meant that grain quality has been maintained right through to the end. Any changes in quality mostly reflect the variety mix ready for harvest at the time, with many of the better-quality milling wheats harvested first and feed wheats tending to be harvested afterwards. Hagberg falling numbers and specific weights met specification. However, proteins were lower than ideal, with some samples falling below the desired specification for milling wheat. This was often worse for crops where nitrogen uptake was limited by dry conditions at application.

Specific weights – Specific weights were good ranging from 76-82 kg/hl on farm, with the GB average at 78-80kg/hl.

Hagberg falling numbers (HFN) - Hagberg falling numbers on milling varieties remained above specification, with no significant reduction seen as later crops were harvested. Group 1 milling wheats typically had HFNs in excess of 300 seconds, whilst Group 3s averaged around 280 seconds. The GB average is 270-300 seconds.

Protein – Protein levels for group 1 wheats typically ranged from 12.2-12.8%. Lower proteins were reported on Group 2-4 ranging from 10.0-12.1%. There have been occasional rejections as a result of low protein levels. The national average is estimated at 12.3-12.7%.

Moisture levels – Moisture content varied between 11-16%, with slightly higher moistures seen where showers dampened grain. The average for late harvested crops was around 14%. However, the majority of grain harvested earlier in the season was cut at moistures between 13-14%. The GB national average is estimated between 13.5% and 14.5% for the season.

SPRING WHEAT

Harvest update

Spring wheat harvest is now complete. Yields range from 4.0-8.5t/ha, with the lower yields a result of poor establishment on lighter soils, where crops became water stressed during the dry spring and summer.

Proteins are being noted between 12.0-13.5%.

BARLEY

WINTER BARLEY

Harvest update

The GB winter barley harvest for 2022 was completed by week 5 (w/e 09 August), with all regions except the North East and Scotland finishing in week 4 (w/e 02 August).

Very little lodging reported, with less than 1% of the GB crop affected.

Limited amounts of ergot have been found in samples from central stores, which has resulted in downgrades to feed. It is unlikely that these levels are higher than previous years.

Yields

Yields were close to or slightly above average, ranging between 6.0t/ha on the lightest, driest land up to 12.5t/ha on the heaviest land that retained moisture. The GB average winter barley yield is 7.2-7.4t/ha, which is slightly higher than the previous five-year Defra average for UK of 6.9t/ha.

Quality

Specific weights – Specific weights are ranging between 65-72kg/hl on farm, with hybrids producing slightly lower specific weights than two row varieties. The GB average winter barley specific weight is estimated at 66-68kg/hl.

Screenings – Screenings are averaging between 2-3%.

Grain nitrogen (malting varieties) – Reduced N applications due to high costs, combined with dry weather, has resulted in occasional samples recording grain nitrogen levels at 1.5%. However, most samples have been at acceptable levels, ranging between 1.6-1.8%. Grain nitrogen is averaging acceptable levels of 1.6-1.7%.

Moisture – The winter barley crop is averaging 13.5-14.5% moisture content. Very little grain has required drying.

Germination – Successful germination observed in over 95% of crop. Winter barley germination levels are averaging between 95-99%.

SPRING BARLEY

Harvest update

Spring barley harvest in England and Wales was complete in all but the North East by the end of August (week 8), with harvest complete across the North East and Scotland by 13 September (apart from occasional small areas in parts of Scotland).

2022 harvest in Scotland started particularly early with 47% of the area harvested by the end of week 6 (WE 16 August). After a rapid start to harvest, progress slowed slightly. However, the majority of crops were harvested within just 5 weeks, reflecting the overall good conditions in Scotland during harvest. Typically harvest of spring barley in Scotland lasts 7-9 weeks, and often crops remain unharvested into October.

Pockets of ergot have been noted in samples across several regions. Ergot can be detected by optical grain sorters and removed at processing.

Yields

Spring barley yields were above average, with yields for malting varieties ranging from 6.0-9.0t/ha. As is the case with most crops, the yield variation largely reflects moisture availability. Yields for feed varieties ranged from 6.0-10.0t/ha.

The GB average spring barley yield is estimated to be 5.7-6.1t/ha.

Quality

Specific weights - The GB average specific weight is 63-67kg/hl.

Screenings – Screenings have averaged between 2-5%.

Grain nitrogen (malting varieties) – Nitrogen levels have averaged 1.4-1.7%, with malting varieties falling within specification.

Moisture - Moisture content tended to be low, with some crops harvested as low as 11%, but most were harvested at 13-15%. The GB average is 13.5-14.5%.

Germination – The GB average is between 95-99% germination.

WINTER OILSEED RAPE

Harvest update

The 2022 GB WOSR harvest was completed in week 6 (16 August). This is ahead of the five-year average pace of 91% harvested by week 6 but is in line with 2018 progress.

Yields

After four years of poor yields, the results from this year are more positive with yields exceeding the five-year average. This partly reflects a reduction in CSFB damage compared to previous years.

Yields are ranging from 2.1-5.2 t/ha on farm, with average GB yields at 3.2-3.6t/ha. The highest yielding crops established well in autumn in moisture retentive soil and had minimal damage from pests and/or disease.

Quality

Oil content - Oil content is typically ranging between 42-47% on farm, with a GB average of 44-45%.

Moisture - Moisture contents early in harvest occasionally dropped below 6%, and care had to be taken to harvest overnight or in the early hours of the morning to preserve what moisture there was. Average moistures were 7-9% with little requiring drying, but cooling was regularly needed.

OATS

Harvest update

The GB oat harvest was 100% complete in week 9. This is well ahead of the five-year average of 81% complete by week 9. There was good early progress made on winter oat harvest, with a rapid switch to spring oats and relatively unhindered harvest, especially in the north of the country.

Yields

Oat yields are similar to those seen in 2021, and slightly ahead of the five-year average, with winter oats ranging from 6.5-8.0t/ha and spring oats ranging from 5.5-7.0t/ha. The GB average yield for the 2022 oat crop is estimated at 5.4-5.7t/ha.

Quality

Specific weights - Specific weights typically averaging at 55 kg/hl, although lower specific weights were seen in crops affected by water stress. Grains were bright with a clean appearance.

Moisture – Moisture content typically ranged from 12-16% on farm, with national average coming in at 13-14%.