

NOTE

This is the fourth harvest report of the 2022/23 season and covers the beginning of harvest up to 16 August 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 early harvested crops are below the standard 14.5% for winter barley and winter wheat, and 8% for oilseed rape. Therefore, the reported yields are unadjusted.

OVERVIEW

Harvest 2022 has continued at a rapid pace and is nearing completion, with 89% of the GB harvest complete as at 16 August. The five-year average for harvest progress by this point in the season (week 6) is 52%.

Winter wheat GB harvest is estimated to be 92% complete now, with the majority of crop left to be cut in the North East and Scotland.

GB **winter oilseed rape (WOSR)** harvest is now complete, with the **winter barley** harvest being completed in week ending 9 August (week 5). **Spring barley** GB harvest is now 73% complete.

As at 16 August, it was estimated that 79% of the GB **oat** area had been harvested.

Drought has now been declared in parts of Eastern and South England following weeks of hot and dry weather. The UK average rainfall for the week ending 9 August 2022 was only 7% of the long-term average (1.0 mm compared to 13.4 mm). The South East was the driest region (0.1 mm), whilst Scotland was the wettest (3.8 mm).

The week ending 16 August 2022 saw another heat wave, with amber weather warnings for extreme heat issued. Localised thunderstorms and rain were seen across parts of GB on Monday.

Hot grain has continued to be an issue, with many farmers only having to condition grain to reach cool enough temperatures for safe storage, rather than physically dry the grain. This has enabled many to save on fuel costs by not running the grain drier. The exception has been where grain has been green/unripe and small amounts have needed to be dried.

There has been a continued backlog of grain in stores, as haulage issues remain, due to shortages of suitable lorries and drivers.

The risk of combine and crop fires has been a major stressor for farmers this season, with increased attention to blowing out filters for dust at the end of the day. Farmers have been combining with water bowsers, and tractors with ploughs positioned close by to act in the event of a crop or combine fire.

STRAW

For wheat, straw is being baled behind the combine with minimal need to leave it lying in the field for drying. In some cases, the straw is being baled at night to capture moisture to reduce brittleness, allowing for easier baling. There have been reports of some straw being difficult to bale, as recent high temperatures have made it brittle.

Winter barley straw is of variable quality this year, with some hard to bale and some getting smashed due to brittleness. For spring barley there are variable straw yields, with higher yields on earlier sown crops due to better crop establishment.

For oat straw, yields have been variable from spring crops depending on the success of establishment, with crops that established well in moisture retentive soil producing more straw. Hot dry weather has encouraged crop ripening, reducing the amount of sticky, green straw, allowing farmers to bale shortly after the combine has harvested the grain.

WHEAT

WINTER WHEAT

Harvest update

92% of the GB winter wheat harvest is complete, well ahead of the five-year average pace by week 6 of 40% complete.

Winter wheat harvest is now complete in the Eastern region and is very near completion in all other regions except Wales, the North East and Scotland. As at 16 August, winter wheat harvest was 80% complete in Wales, 59% complete in the North East and 38% complete in Scotland.

Low levels of mycotoxins are being reported, indicating low fungal burden on the crop. There have been some reports of ergot, but these are isolated incidents that occur each year. Optical grain sorters can identify affected grains and remove them during processing.

Yields

The GB winter wheat yield is currently averaging 8.2 - 8.6t/ha. For crops grown on lighter soils, yields have been ranging from 5.0 - 11.0t/ha on farm. Yields of crops grown on heavier, more water-retentive soils are slightly higher, ranging from 5.0 - 14.0t/ha on farm.

Milling wheat varieties are yielding 6.5 - 12.0 t/ha, with feed wheat ranging between 7.0 - 14.0t/ha. Yield differences are strongly linked to crop establishment and water retention capabilities of the soil.

Quality

Specific weights – Specific weights are varying between 78 - 83kg/hl on farm, with the GB average currently at 78 - 80kg/hl.

Hagberg falling numbers (HFN) - Hagbergs falling numbers are ranging between 280 - 310 seconds and are averaging around 300 seconds. Hagberg falling numbers over 250 seconds are optimum for milling wheat varieties destined for breadmaking.

Protein – Protein levels are varying between 11.0 - 13.5% on farm, with the GB average currently at 12 - 13%. There is variation in protein levels due to the extended dry period following nitrogen application, limiting the uptake for some crops, and impacting protein levels.

Moisture levels - Very little grain drying has been required this year. Cooling grain is a greater priority, to enable safe storage and transport. The GB winter wheat crop is currently averaging 12.9 - 13.7% moisture.

SPRING WHEAT

Harvest update

Spring wheat yields are varying between 4.0 - 8.5 t/ha on farm. The lower yields are from crops with poor establishment and that have been grown on lighter soils, where crops became water stressed during the dry spring and summer affecting grain development and fill.

This spring wheat update is short due to the limited data available for this crop.

BARLEY

WINTER BARLEY

Harvest update

The GB winter barley harvest for 2022 was completed by week 5, with all regions except the North East and Scotland finishing in week 4.

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

There have been limited amounts of ergot found in samples from central stores, which has resulted in some malting barley being downgraded to feed. It is unlikely that these levels are higher than previous years.

Yields

The yield varied 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 – Early samples indicate that winter barley germination levels are averaging between 95 - 99%.

SPRING BARLEY

Harvest update

Spring barley harvest is now underway in all GB regions, with 73% of the GB area harvested to date. Excellent progress has been made over the last week, with the current rate exceeding the five-year average of 19% complete by week 6.

Spring barley harvest is now complete in the Eastern Region and is nearing completion in the East Midlands, West Midlands, South East and South West. Further north, spring barley harvest is ranging from 24% complete in the North East to 75% complete in Yorkshire and the Humberside. Scotland is now 47% complete.

There are pockets of ergot in samples across several regions. Ergot can be detected by optical grain sorters and removed at processing.

Yields

Spring barley yields are currently ranging between 4.8 - 9.0t/ha on farm, with the average 5.5 - 5.9t/ha. As with other crops, the lower yields are from lighter soils which suffered water stress, while the higher yields are from early drilled crops, in heavier soil.

Yields for malting varieties are coming in between 4.4 - 7.8t/ha, with yields of feed varieties between 4.4 - 9.0t/ha.

Quality

Specific weights - Specific weights are ranging between 63 - 70kg/hl on farm and are meeting specification. The GB average is currently 63 - 67kg/hl.

Screenings – Screenings are currently averaging between 1 - 4%.

Grain nitrogen (malting varieties) – Nitrogen levels are ranging between 1.4 - 2.1% on farm, within malting specification. The GB average is 1.4 - 1.8%.

Moisture - Very little grain has needed to be dried with grains placed in the drier for conditioning and cooling. Moisture content is varying between 10 - 15% on farm, with the GB average at 13 - 14%.

Germination – Early sample results suggest that germination is at almost 100%, with few reported problems.

WINTER OILSEED RAPE

Harvest update

The 2022 GB WOSR harvest is now complete. This is ahead of the five-year average pace of 91% harvested by week 6 but is in line with 2018 progress.

Yields

Yields are ranging from 2.1 - 5.2t/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.

CSFB has caused less damage to crops this year and therefore has had less of an impact on yields than in previous years.

Quality

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

Moisture - Very little WOSR has been dried this harvest. Concerns have been around keeping seed cool enough for safe storage and transport, with end users refusing seed above 24°C due to safety concerns. Seed over 30°C has been common this season. Farmers have had to harvest in the early mornings/night for the seed to have a moisture content above 6% to meet specification.

OATS

Harvest update

Rapid progress has been made with the GB oat harvest in the last week, with 79% of the GB area now harvested. This is a high rate of progress compared with the five-year average of 28% harvested by week 6, although brings progress in line with that seen in 2018.

Low mycotoxins reported so far in winter and spring varieties, indicating low fungal burden on the oat crop.

Yields

Winter oats are yielding between 6.5 - 10.0t/ha on farm, with the spring oat yield ranging from 4.7 - 9.5t/ha. The GB average oat yield is currently 5.1 - 5.9t/ha.

Quality

Specific weights - Specific weights are coming in between 49 - 61kg/hl on farm, indicating good quality, dense grains for the higher values. The GB average specific weight is currently 54 - 56kg/hl. Lower specific weights seen in crops that have suffered water stress. The high specific weights are generally being seen in winter crops in moisture retentive soil that received adequate nutrition.

Moisture – Little to no grain has required drying, except for some unripe, green grains that require conditioning to meet specification. Moisture content on farm is ranging from 11 - 15%, with average currently at 12.5 - 13.5%.