

NOTE

This is the third harvest report of the 2023/24 season and covers the beginning of harvest up to 15 August 2023. 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.

Harvest progress data is available for all regions, though harvest is yet to start for certain spring crops in some areas. The areas covered are specified for each crop. The harvest insights in this report are based on information from all regions in GB and the reported ranges within the text reflect and represent the observed on-farm variability.

Grain and seed yields from early harvested crops are adjusted to a moisture content of 14.5% for cereals and 8% for oilseed rape.

OVERVIEW

Since the second report published last week, weather has been variable throughout the UK to the week ending 15 August. For the most part, it has been dry across the country with some sunny spells, with some longer periods of dry weather providing more windows of opportunity for harvesting, aiding progression on the week. However, some regions have continued to experience showers and incidences of localised heavy rainfall, hindering regional and overall national progress.

For winter wheat, 37% of the total area has been harvested, which is below the five-year average of 56% complete by this stage in the season.

Winter barley harvest is near complete (100%), its reported there is a small number of fields left, which is on par with the five-year average of 99%. **Harvest of spring barley is 24% complete**, below the five-year average of 32% complete at this point in the season.

Oat harvest is 34% complete, and **winter oilseed rape harvest is 98% complete**. Progress over the past week has meant that they are both crops are now ahead of the five-year averages of 28% and 93% respectively.

Rainfall remains the main challenge this harvest, but better conditions in the recent week have allowed for more substantial progress to be made as noted above.

There are some reports that recent rainfall has led to sooty mould appearing on some crops, but this is reportedly not as much as expected. It's reported that recent harvest progress will have helped limit negative impacts of this.

WHEAT

WINTER WHEAT

Harvest update

Harvest progress data covers all regions for winter wheat. Winter wheat harvest progression has picked up in the past week as a result of drier conditions. By 15 August, it is estimated that 37% of the GB winter wheat area had been harvested.

Although, there is a large variation in progress, ranging from 2% in Yorkshire to over 60% harvested in the South East. In Yorkshire, it has been reported that priority has been given to harvesting spring barley, especially malting varieties, in an effort to preserve grain quality. As a result, winter wheat harvest progress has been slow during this week.

In some regions, storms and heavy rain have led to reports of lodging, notably in the North East of England. But the overall rate of lodging remains relatively low.

There has been reports of ergot identified in some loads in the East Midlands, but there haven't been any reported rejections currently.

Yields

Early reports point to winter wheat yields being positive across many regions. However, variation across regions is clear, with soil type also impacting this.

In Yorkshire, although winter wheat harvest has not progressed much, it is noted that early yield indications suggest that crops on lighter land have suffered more with lower yields, with water stress towards the end of the growing season causing more grains to be shrivelled.

Early indications of yields on farm are ranging from 5.5 - 12.5 t/ha, with higher yields typically achieved on heavier land than crops on the lighter soils, which previously experienced water stress. Typical average GB winter wheat yields to 15 August 2023 are estimated between 7.7 - 8.3 t/ha, which is currently sitting around the 5-year average. Though as reported earlier, clear variation is seen across the regions.

Quality

With winter wheat harvest progression slow, please note this information is from reports of early-harvested grains and could change as harvest progress.

Specific weights – Specific weights are ranging between 72 - 78 kg/hl on farm. The GB average is currently 74 - 76 kg/hl.

Hagberg falling number (HFN) – Typical HFN are ranging between 260 – 300 nationally. There is limited information regionally, but it's reported that in the East Midlands that early-harvested crops show HFN averaging around 280. In the South East, HFN range between 270 – 320. In the South West HFN are slowly declining, but the majority of high-quality wheat has now been harvested in this region.

Protein – Typical national protein is ranging from 12.5 - 13.0%. There is limited reporting of this information so far but in the East Midlands, early harvested crops show protein content to be at 12.6%.

Moisture – The average grain moisture is around 16.2%, with the GB average set between 16 - 17%. There has been a variation in drying requirements depending on weather, but it is reported that less grain drying (notably in the West Midlands) has been needed over the past week due to drier weather conditions.

BARLEY

WINTER BARLEY

Harvest update

Harvest is now near complete in all regions except Yorkshire and Scotland, which have 1% and 2% left to be harvested, respectively. As of 15 August, 100% (due to rounding) of the GB winter barley area was estimated to be cut.

Yields

Winter barley yields are ranging from 4.0 – 11.0 t/ha on farm, with the higher yields achieved on heavier land. Lower yields have been seen on lighter soils which previously suffered from water stress across most regions.

Typical GB average yields to 15 August 2023 are estimated between 6.7 - 7.1 t/ha, this is currently sitting around the 5-year average.

Quality

Specific weights – Specific weights have been more variable by region, ranging from 58 – 64 kg/hl on farm. The GB typical average is currently 62 – 64 kg/hl.

In the North of England, specific weights are generally lower. It has been reported that in the North East specific weights are ranging from 51 - 66 kg/hl. In Yorkshire, specific weights have not been particularly high at around 62 kg/hl on average. In the Eastern region there is continuing reports of hybrid varieties and crops from lighter land typically having lower specific weights. However, in the South West its reported that specific weights remain in the target range.

Screenings – The GB average for screenings is reported as between 2 – 5%.

Grain nitrogen (malting varieties) – The GB average grain nitrogen indications range between 1.5 – 1.7%.

Moisture – The GB average moisture content is currently 15 – 16%. Though in Scotland, a higher percentage of grain has been dried, with an average starting moisture of 17% being reported.

SPRING BARLEY

Harvest update

Only the earliest sown spring barley crops have been harvested for 2023 so far. It's reported that crops planted in March/April should be ready for harvest in the coming weeks. Due to this, only 24% of the GB spring barley area had been harvested up to 15 August. This is substantially down on last year, where at this point harvest (week 6) was 73% complete.

Harvest is furthest ahead in the South West region where 52% has been cut. Both the West Midlands and Eastern regions are over 50% complete too. Harvest has reportedly still not begun in the North East and Wales, but has started in the North West and Scotland, though progression is limited. In the North West, it's reported that the earlier fields cut are on light soil and were affected by the June drought.

It is reported that crop quality is beginning to decline in some areas. In the North East, some crops have experienced lodging due to the weather. In the West Midlands, later sown crops are not hitting the higher yields and are deteriorating in terms of visual quality – grain is reportedly turning grey through sooty mould. However, there has been very pleasing results from early sown crops (Jan to Feb), especially where organic manures have been applied.

In Scotland, there are issues with secondary tillers and consequently later developing. Harvest looks to be late this year, with much spring barley in Scotland expected to be cut in September, with crops yet to be treated with glyphosate.

Yields

On farm, regional yields range between 5.0 - 9.0 t/ha. There is variation in yields is depending on varieties and soil type, with crops grown on heavier land doing slightly better. The current GB typical average is 5.3 – 5.9 t/ha, slightly improving from report two (data to week ending 08 August).

Quality

Please note that spring barley harvest is slow in comparison to other years, so the volume of processed samples is lower. As a result, quality reports could change once more crops are analysed.

Specific weights – Specific weights for crops harvested so far are reportedly on average. The GB average is currently 62 – 65 kg/hl.

In the East Midlands, it's noted that specific weights are generally good at 65 – 66 kg/hl. In the West Midlands specific weights are typically 64 – 67 kg/hl, but likely to be lower from late sown crops on lighter land. In Yorkshire, specific weights are ranging from 62 – 66 kg/hl.

Screenings – The GB average for screenings is reported to be between 2 – 5%.

Grain nitrogen (malting varieties) – There are reports of low grain nitrogen content for spring barley harvested so far. In the Eastern region, there is variable grain nitrogen content of 1.4 - 2.0%. There is a slight relationship to the drilling date, with crops drilled in February having lower N. In the East Midlands there is low to average grain nitrogen content of 1.6 - 1.8%.

The GB average grain nitrogen current indications range between 1.5 – 1.7%.

Moisture – The GB average moisture content is currently 14 – 16%.

In Yorkshire, it's reported that 40% of grain so far has been dried, with a starting moisture content of around 16%. In The East Midlands, 25% of grain has been dried so far. In the West Midlands, 10 - 15% of grain required drying in the past week to remove about 2% moisture, but most harvested dry at 12.5 - 14.5%. In the Eastern region, 80% of grain has been dried. In the Eastern regions it's reported that malting barley harvest has been

prioritised through concerns about crops lodging, so harvesting from 18% moisture content and drying carefully. In the South West, 55% of grain has been dried so far with moisture content starting at 17 - 18% and coming down to 15%.

OATS

Harvest update

As at week ending 15 August, 34% of the GB oat area was harvested. The oat harvest has progressed well over the past week and all regions have now started harvesting oats though progress varies. Only 5% harvest progress has been reported in Yorkshire, while the Eastern region progression is at 58%, with the South East close behind at 50% complete.

Yields

Yields range between 4.7 – 9.1 t/ha on farm, varying depending on variety and soil type. The GB average yield is currently 4.8 – 5.4 t/ha, slightly reducing on last week's report.

Quality

Specific weights – Specific weights are still overall reported to be acceptable. The typical GB average specific weight is ranging from 50 – 54 kg/hl. Though a large variability is noted in the East Midlands where specific weights are currently reported between 47 – 56 kg/hl. In Yorkshire, specific weights are ranging from 50 - 52 kg/hl but note, only a small area has been harvested in the region up until 15 August.

Moisture – The GB average moisture content is currently at 15 – 16%. Regionally it's noted that 95% of grain so far in the North East has required drying. In Yorkshire, 40% of grain has been dried, with a starting moisture content of 16%. In the South West, 50% has been dried with moisture content starting at 16.9% and coming down to 14.8%. In both the West and East Midlands, much of the crop was harvested dry with only a small amount requiring drying.

WINTER OILSEED RAPE

Harvest update

Harvesting of winter oilseed rape (WOSR) has progressed well over the past week, with 98% of the GB WOSR area harvested to week ending 15 August. With area still to be harvested in the North East, Yorkshire, South East and Scotland. Over the past week Scotland has caught up, with 89% of the WOSR area now harvested to 15 August.

Yields

Yields continue to be largely variable based on region especially and generally poor, ranging from 1.0 – 4.7 t/ha on farm. Low yields have largely been attributed to wet and windy weather, and pest damage.

The typical GB average is currently estimated at 2.8 - 3.0 t/ha, with the lower end of the average increasing from last week (at 2.7 t/ha). Though as reported above, yields are highly variable.

In regions where Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle (CSFB) has affected crops, there has been a resulting impact on yield and crop quality. Pest pressure combined with the hot and dry

conditions in June, led to crops having fewer pods and smaller seed sizes. Wet and windy weather prior to harvest has also reportedly caused a slight increase in seed shedding.

Poorer than normal yields have been reported in the North East, ranging from 3.0 – 4.5 t/ha. In the North West, yields are ranging from 2.5 – 3.5 t/ha. Yields in Yorkshire are reported to be averaging at 3.3 t/ha, there are reports that later sowings suffered very little CSFB damage and have yielded higher than earlier sowings. Yields in the East Midlands are averaging 2.9 t/ha, in the West Midlands this is higher at 3.2 t/ha (though with large variability across the region). In the South of England and the Eastern region yields are reported to be averaging 3.0 t/ha. However, again there is a large degree of variability within the South of England and the Eastern regions. In Scotland, there are some regional variations in yield, ranging from 2.5 t/ha in areas where clubroot has had an impact, up to 4.25 t/ha in other regions.

Quality

Oil content – currently ranging between 42 - 45% on farm, with the GB average currently at 43 – 45%, the same as last week.

Moisture – Moisture contents range from 8 - 20% on farm, with few reports of up to 25%. Large proportions of the crop, especially in the more northern regions have needed to be dried. Smaller volumes require drying in southern regions.

STRAW

Rain has been creating problems for baling this season. Though where improved weather has allowed, its reported that less winter wheat straw is being chopped compared to the week before across some regions. However, there are still reports that in the North more straw is expected to be chopped if wet conditions persist, to make way for cultivations. Furthermore, in Scotland straw is often being baled straight behind the combine to avoid unfavourable weather conditions affecting the straw.

It's reported in the North West that straw yields have not been as good as normally expected. However, in the East straw yields are reportedly good so far, just hindered by the weather. Regional weather has been critical here, as in the South West it's been reported that the warmer drier weather has allowed straw to dry quickly allowing for baling.

Winter barley straw yields have been reported good in regions such as Yorkshire, Eastern, South East and Wales especially when baled ahead of the rain. There have been some reports that quality may have deteriorated where it has laid out for several weeks, notably in Yorkshire. Similar to winter wheat, in the North West its reported that straw yields are lower than normal.

For spring barley straw, yields have been variable. Although much has been chopped due to being too wet to bale, earlier-sown crops are reportedly yielding better. In Yorkshire, straw yields so far have been above average, although most of the crops cut have been those which were earlier sown, with bigger canopies compared to those sown later. Some secondary tillering has meant the straw has been a bit green, so has needed time in the field to wilt before baling. In Eastern regions some straw has been baled but largely chopped as there is plenty of winter barley straw available.

For oats, little straw has been baled yet due to wet weather. Plenty is being chopped and left in the field as it is too wet to bale.