AHDB HARVEST REPORT

Report 6 – Week 12

Week ending 26 September 2023

NOTE

This is the sixth and final harvest report of the 2023/24 season and covers the beginning of harvest up to 26 September 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 crops in all regions. The reported ranges within the text reflect and represent the observed on-farm variability in crops.

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

Weather conditions have been predominately mild and wet throughout the UK. An average air temperature of 14.2 °C was recorded during the week ending 26 September, which is around the long-term average for this time of year. Across the UK, the average rainfall for the week ending 26 September was 21.0 mm, which is above the long-term average. However, a couple of regions did see below-average rainfall.

Harvesting of winter wheat, winter barley, oats, and OSR are all 100% complete.

Spring barley harvest is currently 99% complete, with only a small proportion of fields remaining in Scotland and the North East of England.

Recent rainfall has allowed for the germination of weeds and volunteers in stale seedbeds, which are being controlled by soil cultivations or applications of glyphosate before drilling. Wet soil conditions have resulted in more farmers reverting to ploughing rather than doing min-till.

Sowing of winter oilseed rape started in mid-August and has continued into September. However, establishment has been variable following a period of hot and dry weather at the beginning of September, as well as crops in several regions already being damaged by CSFB and slugs.

Drilling of winter cereals started from mid-September. However, planting progress has been slow in most regions due to wet conditions.

WHEAT

WINTER WHEAT

Harvest update

Winter wheat harvest in GB is now 100% complete. Progression in the North East, West Midlands finished up last week, while final areas of Scotland finished this week.

Yields

Average weekly yield indications were good, ranging between 5.0 to 12.5 t/ha. Crops on heavier land typically achieved slightly higher yields than those on lighter soils, which suffered from water stress.

As of 26 September, the average GB winter wheat yield for all crops harvested is estimated at 7.8 - 8.2 t/ha, unchanged from two weeks ago. This yield range is sitting around the five-year average.

Quality

Specific weights – Specific weights have been more variable, ranging from 71 to 78 kg/hl nationally. The GB average is currently 73 – 75 kg/hl, unchanged from the last report a fortnight ago.

Hagberg falling number (HFN) – Typical HFN are ranging between 200 – 220 nationally, unchanged from a fortnight ago. Hagberg falling numbers held up fairly well but declined gradually towards the end of harvest.

Protein – Typical national protein content ranges from 12.5 – 13.0%, the same from a fortnight ago.

Moisture – The GB average is estimated at 15.0 – 17.0%. The range has increased from a fortnight ago where it was 15.0 – 16.0%.

BARLEY

WINTER BARLEY

Harvest update

As reported four weeks ago, harvest is now complete in all regions.

Yields

Overall harvest yield indications were good, ranging between 6.2 to 9.0 t/ha. Crops on heavier land typically achieved slightly higher yields than those on lighter soils which suffered from water stress.

The typical GB average yield for all winter barley is estimated between 6.8 – 7.2 t/ha, sitting around the five–year average.

Quality

Specific weights – Specific weights have varied by region, ranging from 58 – 64 kg/hl on farm. The GB typical average is currently 63 – 65 kg/hl.

Screenings – Screenings are low, typically between 2–5%.

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

Germination (malting varieties) – The GB average germination rate is reported as 96 – 98%.

Moisture – Average grain moistures ranged between 14 - 18% because of widespread wet weather at the beginning of harvest. The GB average moisture content is estimated 15 – 16%.

SPRING BARLEY

Harvest update

For spring barley, 99% of the total harvest has been completed, increasing from 87% harvested a fortnight ago. There are just small pockets in the North East and Scotland that still need to be harvested. Recent wet weather has delayed final cutting, and more drying has been required for crops harvested in between rain showers.

Yields

On farm, regional yields over the week range between 4.0 – 9.0 t/ha, with the range slightly widening from a fortnight ago. Crops grown on heavier land have performed slightly better, as have earlier sown crops in general.

The current GB typical average for all crops harvested to date is 5.2 – 5.5 t/ha, continuing to reduce from report 5 (data to 12 September). This range continues to be below the previous five-year average of 5.8 t/ha.

Quality

Specific weights – Specific weights have been acceptable, if a little variable, ranging from 58 to 65 kg/hl. The GB average is currently 59 – 62 kg/hl, decreasing slightly from a fortnight ago (61 – 63 kg/hl).

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

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

Germination (malting varieties) – Germination levels in general have been between 96% to 98%, although there were reports from Scotland and the West Midlands of some crops failing germination tests over the last fortnight.

Notably in Scotland, there have been reports of failed germination tests (i.e., low 90s) resulting in rejections. Sound grain is being diluted by immature secondary grains, which are also raising nitrogen readings.

The GB average germination rate is reported as 96 – 98%, the same as a fortnight ago.

Moisture – The GB average is estimated at 14.0 – 17.0%.

OATS

Harvest update

The oat harvest is now complete in all regions, with the North West and West Midlands finishing up last week, and Yorkshire and Scotland finishing this week.

Yields

Regional on-farm yields generally ranged between 5.7 - 8.6 t/ha for winter oats, and 3.7 - 8.5 t/ha for spring oats, both the same as a fortnight ago. As with other crops, sowing date and soil type are key influences on the yield achieved. Seasonal yields were mostly on par with the 5-year average, however, some later sown spring oats yielded poorly.

The GB average yield estimate for winter and spring oats harvested by 26 September 2023 is currently 5.0 – 5.4 t/ha, with the range slightly tightening from a fortnight ago (4.9 – 5.5 t/ha) as harvest finished.

Quality

Specific weights – Specific weights are generally reported to be acceptable, albeit variable on a national scale typically ranging from 48 – 54 kg/hl over the harvest.

The GB specific weights for oats are estimated at 49 – 52 kg/hl, down from the 50 – 53 Kg/hl reported a fortnight ago.

Moisture – The GB average moisture content is currently at 14.5 – 16.0%, with the high end increasing slightly on a fortnight ago.

WINTER OILSEED RAPE

Harvest update

Harvest is complete in all regions.

Yields

The typical GB average is estimated at 2.8 – 3.0 t/ha, below the five-year average.

Lower yields were primarily a result of inclement weather during the growing season, as well as significant pest damage in some regions, particularly from Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle (CSFB).

Quality

Oil content – GB average is estimated at 43 – 44%.

Moisture – Moisture contents generally ranged from 8 – 12% on farm.

STRAW

Over harvest straw yields have been variable across regions, with late sown crops seeing generally poor yields. Towards the end of harvest a lot of straw has started to look weathered. It has been reported that later harvest crops straw was being baled where possible, but a lot has been chopped due to wet conditions and lower straw quality.