

NOTE

This is the fifth harvest report of the 2024/25 season and covers from 11 to 25 September 2024, which are the tenth and eleventh weeks of a 'typical' harvest period. It is produced with data collected by The Andersons Centre and compiled by AHDB. Due to the change in data provider, the approach used varies slightly from previous years. The information is based on a sample survey of farmers in the United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland) and will provide figures on harvest progress throughout the harvest season.

For some crops, harvest is still at an earlier stage than others. For these crops, early yield and quality data will likely be skewed to those regions where more harvesting has taken place; they should not be considered representative of the whole country.

Please note that these harvest progress reports are separate from AHDB's Recommended Lists harvest data, which includes results from their variety trials.

Grain and seed yields from early harvested crops are based on farmer reported yields. The percentage deviation between the farmers' reported yield and the five-year average is applied to the regional five-year average quoted by Defra. Yields have been adjusted where moisture is above 14.5% for cereals and 8% for oilseed rape. Moisture levels below 14.5% and 8% have not been adjusted.

OVERVIEW

Harvesting is now into the closing stages, with the drier period in mid-September supporting good progress across the UK. Winter cereal, oilseed and pulse harvests are completed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Only small amounts of spring barley in Scotland and the North East of England remain, while there's still limited areas of spring oats in Scotland to be cut.

The wheat harvest is now all but completed, except in Scotland, where the wheat harvest is 96% complete.

Rainfall over the past few days has slowed progress again and the focus will be on preserving quality, where possible, in later harvested crops. Straw from later cut crops will also be lying wet where it has not yet been baled.

Yields continue to be reported below average across cereals and oilseed rape, though the national estimates for oats and spring barley have improved slightly from the previous report. That said, it is evident just how variable yields are from region-to-region, farm-to-farm and field-to-field. This is not overly surprising given the weather we've seen but the larger drop in yields seen for some businesses will pose significant cash flow challenges.

Ergot is a significant challenge with this year's harvest and needs to be managed accordingly. A [recent AHDB analysis](#) looked at indicative cleaning costs. There are also generally high levels of grass weeds and volunteer cereals within crops.

WINTER BARLEY

Harvest update

The winter barley harvest was completed in the week ending 21 August (week 6 of a typical harvest period). More detail is available in previous reports.

Yields

The final estimate of winter barley yields from this survey is 6.13t/ha, a 13% decline on the five-year average yield across the UK. There was significant deviation in yields between regions.

Quality

Winter malting barley quality is good. Although there have been some lower bushel weights and subsequently lower screenings (retentions on a 2.25 mm sieve), merchants report that the crop is very usable for the domestic market.

Specific weight – Specific weights ranged from 59 – 72 kg/hl, with an average of 64 kg/hl.

Screenings – Screening retentions (on a 2.25 mm sieve) for winter barley are averaging 88% but with a range of 85-98%.

Grain nitrogen (for malting varieties) – Nitrogen levels within winter malting barley have averaged 1.5%, which is low for winter malting barley.

Moisture – The average moisture observed across the UK was 14.2%.

Germination – There are no reported problems with germination in the winter malting crop, with almost all of the crop above 98%.

WINTER OILSEED RAPE

Harvest update

The winter oilseed rape (WOSR) harvest was completed by 28 August. More detail is available in previous reports.

Yields

The final data from this survey indicates yields are down 7% across the UK, at an average of 2.97t/ha. This is a slight decline from the previous report (3.00t/ha). Yield declines this season are not entirely due to pest pressure, although pressure was high. Anecdotally there have also been challenges with clubroot. Conversations with the wider industry suggest that yields across a broader acreage than this survey may be slightly closer to the five-year average.

Quality

Oil content – The average oil content is reported to be 45%, with very few samples below 44%. While part of the driver of low yields has been smaller seed sizes, this has not impacted oil content.

Moisture – Moisture levels for oilseed rape varied from 6.7% in the East to 10% in the South East.

OATS

Harvest update

The winter oat harvest in England and Wales is complete and only a few spring oats remain to be harvested in Scotland.

By 25 September, 99% of the national oat crop had been cut, up from 82% a fortnight ago. Progress is in line with last year when 99% had been harvested.

Yields

Oat yields have been variable across the UK, and also between winter and spring oats. On average the yield of oats is down 3%, at 5.28 t/ha, however this is not weighted by variety. This is a slightly smaller decline from the five-year average than in previous reports, reflecting the inclusion of more results from Scotland.

The largest yield declines in oats (spring and winter combined) are reported in the East Midlands, where yields are reported to be down 14%. Yields are reportedly up in Wales (+18%) and in the South West (+1%).

Quality

Winter oat quality so far has been good, and most samples are of milling specification. Samples are still being analysed for spring oats, but the indications so far are generally positive.

Specific weight – Specific weights are averaging 53 kg/hl, with samples bold and of good colour.

Moisture – Moisture content is averaging 14.6% for all crops harvested to date, with typical regional values ranging from 14.0% to 16.5%.

WHEAT

Harvest update

The wheat harvest in the UK is now all but complete (99.7%) by 25 September, up from 95% complete by 28 August. Wet conditions at the start of the past fortnight had slowed harvesting, but a drier period in the middle enabled better progress to be made. Harvesting is complete in all parts of the UK apart from Scotland, where progress has now passed the 95% mark.

Yields

Yields in the UK are now down 7.3% on the five-year average averaging 7.5t/ha. Lower yields are reported in all regions except the Eastern region, where yields slightly above the five-year average were observed.

Variability of yields is a significant challenge and makes reporting averages difficult. Some growers have managed to produce high yields given the circumstances, but many have seen significant drops.

Quality

Protein contents remain low, though the information on other characteristics is more positive so far.

Specific weight – The specific weight of milling samples has been encouraging, averaging 76 – 78kg/hl. Some feed samples have exceeded 80kg/hl.

Hagberg Falling Number (HFN) – There are no problems reported with Hagberg Falling Numbers, although this is unsurprising given the dry conditions during much of the harvest period in England. Given rainfall in Scotland lower HFNs may be reported in due course as quality is assessed.

Protein – UK Flour Millers Group 1 samples have averaged generally 11.5% to 12.0%, though some samples have exceeded 13%. Anecdotally, the crop will be manageable and there are reports of high volumes of imports of high protein wheat to blend with lower protein UK samples.

Moisture – The average moisture level observed across the UK to date is 15.3%.

SPRING BARLEY

Harvest update

The spring barley harvest is 98% complete in the UK, as of 11 September. This is up 19 percentage points since the previous report (11 September), and similar to the average pace for the time of year (97% complete). There are now only small areas in Scotland and the North East of England remaining, both of which have less than 5% left to gather.

Yields

The average yield in the UK is now estimated at 5.68t/ha. This is up slightly from the previous report, but still represents a 3.4% decline on the five-year average.

Quality

The spring malting barley samples seen so far have been particularly good.

Specific weight – Specific weights are averaging 65 kg/hl. Grains are generally a good size, with specific weights higher than those of winter malting varieties.

Screenings – Retentions on a 2.25 mm sieve are in excess of 95%.

Grain nitrogen (for malting varieties) – Nitrogen content has averaged 1.45%, with samples ranging from 1.2% to 2.0%. Samples at the high end for Nitrogen are few and far between, with the majority of samples in the 1.2% to 1.6% range. This may cause challenges where exports are based on minimum nitrogen specification, with most UK samples falling below this threshold.

Moisture – Moisture levels are averaging 16.5% to date.

Germination – Assessments so far suggest germination is in excess of 98%.

PULSES

The pulse harvest is now completed by all farms surveyed, which have farms reporting on pulse progress. This excludes Scotland, the North East, the South West of England and Northern Ireland. Outside of this survey, there are anecdotal reports of some spring beans still waiting to be cut.

Given the lack of regional yields published on pulses, it is not possible to estimate a national average yield based on the data collected through this survey. There is a wide range of results reported, with yields anywhere from 10% down on average to 72% up. These results are based on a small hectareage, and not weighted.

STRAW

Straw production has anecdotally been variable from farm-to-farm, reflecting the patchiness of crops (especially winter crops) this season.

That said, there are reports of good volumes of straw in various regions and across crops throughout the UK. Straw yields ranging from 3.5-4.5t/ha have been quoted by some but will not be reflective of all. Good straw yields are welcomed by many, especially where yields of grain have been poor.

The [price of straw](#) has declined significantly in recent weeks, a reflection of an increased availability of straw. This may also reflect more choosing to bale straw in response to higher prices this year.

Oat straw is proving to be a challenge this year, taking longer than wheat and barley straw to dry.