

NOTE

This is the third harvest report of the 2024/25 season and covers from 15 to 28 August 2024, which are the sixth and seventh 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

Harvest has continued to proceed at pace in many areas of the UK. However, some wetter weather has caused delays in the west of the UK and especially, in Northern Ireland. In some cases, little additional acreage has been cut in the past week.

The wheat harvest is now complete, or very close to completion across most of England and Wales. Within England, the wheat harvest is now complete in the East Midlands and South West, while it is nearing completion in the Eastern and South East regions (both 98% complete). The North East has the largest proportion still to cut (50%). Wheat harvesting is currently lagging behind in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Spring barley accounts for most of the areas left to be harvested, though there has still been notable progress over the past fortnight. Across the UK, 32% of spring barley had been cut by 28 August, up from 7% in our last report. With some consecutive dry days, rapid progress with the remaining wheat and spring barley harvests would likely be seen.

The winter barley harvest and oilseed rape harvest are now complete. The average winter barley yield for the UK according to data provided for this survey was 6.12 t/ha, down 13% on the five-year average. For oilseed rape, the indication provided by the survey suggests a UK average yield of 3.00 t/ha, down 7% on the five-year average. However, wider industry conversations suggest that OSR yields may be slightly closer to the five-year average. The full picture will become apparent over the coming weeks.

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 which we've seen, but the larger drop in yields seen for some businesses will pose significant cash flow challenges.

Ergot has emerged as a significant challenge with this year's harvest, and this needs to be managed accordingly. [Recent AHDB analysis](#) looked at indicative cleaning costs.

There are also generally high levels of grass weeds and volunteer cereals within crops, including blackgrass, ryegrass, and brome.

WINTER BARLEY

Harvest update

The winter barley harvest is now complete in the UK. The final parcels of land in Northern Ireland were harvested in the week ending 21 August.

Yields

Yields of winter barley are down 11% on the five-year average yield across the UK. As reported previously, there is significant deviation in yields between regions. Winter barley yields in the Eastern region were up 22% on average, but down in all other regions except the South East, where the five-year average level was seen. The largest winter barley yield decline was observed in the East Midlands, with yields 21% below average.

Quality

With harvest complete, more samples have been processed allowing greater quality insights. 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). There were also some comments regarding increased admix, primarily volunteer cereals or secondary growth. That said, merchants report that the crop is very usable for the domestic market.

Specific weight – Specific weights are coming in between 59 – 72 kg/hl, with an average across all regions 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%. This is a little lower than normal due to a smaller grain size.

Grain nitrogen (for malting varieties) – Nitrogen levels within winter malting barley have averaged 1.5% with a range of 1.3% to 1.6%. This is low for winter malting barley, where maltsters typical look for grain nitrogen of up to 1.75%. This could also prove a challenge for exporting, with a higher nitrogen level required for continental malting (up to 1.85%).

Moisture – The average moisture observed across the UK is 14.2%, with a range from 11.6% to 16%. As such, apart from earlier cut samples, very little has needed drying.

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 WOSR harvest is now complete, with most of the remaining areas cut in the week ending 21 August. The Scottish oilseed rape harvest was completed by 28 August.

Yields

Yields are down across all regions, except the Eastern region. However, as mentioned in the previous report, eastern farms surveyed have lower average yields due to historic cabbage stem flea beetle (CSFB) challenges. Yield declines this season are not entirely due to pest pressure, although pressure was high, anecdotally there have also been challenges with clubroot.

Yields are down 7% across the UK, at an average 3.00t/ha, the greatest decline in yields was reported in South West, down 26% on the five-year average. Large declines in yield were also seen in the West Midlands (down 20%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (down 19%). Yields were better on lighter ground. Conversations with the wider industry suggest that yields across a broader acreage than that survey have not been as poor and 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%. Specialist WOSR crops such as High Oleic and Low Linolenic (HOLL) and High Erucic Acid Rape (HEAR) varieties have reportedly produced oil contents in excess of 47%. 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 10.0% in the South East. Higher reports were seen earlier in the season. One challenge for oilseed rape as harvest progressed was ensuring the crop cooled sufficiently.

OATS

Harvest update

Growers have been progressing with both spring and winter oat harvesting. As of 28 August, 61% of the national crop had been cut, up from 22% in the previous report a fortnight ago. Progress remains ahead of this point last year when 57% had been harvested.

Harvest is now complete in the South and East of England, North West and Wales. Harvest is also well advanced (83% complete) in the West Midlands.

Yields

Oat yields have been variable across the UK, and also between winter and spring oats. On average the yield is down 6%, at 5.12 t/ha, however this is not weighted by variety.

Quality

While limited spring oat samples have yet been analysed, more winter oat samples have been processed. Quality reports may change once more crops are analysed.

Winter oat quality so far has been good, and most samples are of milling specification.

Specific weight – Specific weights have averaged 53 kg/hl so far, with samples bold and of good colour.

Moisture – Moisture content is now averaging 14.5% for all crops harvested to date, with typical regional values ranging from 14.4% to 16.0%.

WHEAT

Harvest update

The wheat harvest in the UK reached 88% complete in the week ending 28 August, up from 37% complete by 14 August. This is ahead of last year's pace (63% complete) and the five-year average (60% complete).

The wheat harvest is reported as complete in the East Midlands, South West, and Wales. Additionally, harvest was reported to be into the closing stages in the Eastern region and South East (both 98% complete), and Yorkshire and the Humber (91% complete). As such, a few dry days this week could see most in England wrap up their wheat harvest.

The wheat harvest in Scotland is 12% complete, and continued dry weather would see significant progress made.

Winter wheat straw yield is highly variable, with some noticeably smaller swaths and some larger swaths.

Yields

Yields in the UK are down 8% on the five-year average. Lower yields are reported in all regions except the Eastern region, where yields were observed slightly above the five-year average.

Yield variability 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

As the number of samples analysed increase protein contents remains low, though the information on other characteristics is more positive.

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.

Protein – Given the dull grain fill period protein contents remain low. UK Flour Millers Group 1 samples have averaged generally 11.5% to 12%, 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 so far is 15.2%.

SPRING BARLEY

Harvest update

The spring barley harvest is now underway across much of the UK and was 32% complete as at 28 August. This is up from 7% in our previous report a fortnight ago, but behind this point last year (42% complete).

Most progress had been made in Yorkshire and the Humber (100% complete), the Eastern region (63%) and the South East (53%). Harvest of spring barley is underway in Scotland, and a few dry days would see rapid progress.

Yields

While initial yield reports for spring barley were promising, these were weighted to the East of England and greater variation is emerging as harvest progresses. The data submitted through this survey to date suggests average yields of spring barley are down 6% on the five-year average. The yields reported in the South East were particularly poor, which may not be fully reflective of the regional picture.

The average yield so far is 5.5t/ha but could be expected to rise with further results from Scotland in the coming weeks. Anecdotally, yields are closer to the five-year average in Scotland than was seen for winter crops.

Quality

More samples are being processed as harvest advances, though so far results are weighted to the South and East of England. The spring malting barley samples seen so far have been particularly good, and the crop is expected to perform well, though the next few weeks will bring more clarity.

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

Screenings – Very good levels are reported, with retentions on a 2.25 mm sieve in excess of 95%.

Grain nitrogen (for malting varieties) – Nitrogen content has averaged 1.45%, with samples ranging from 1.2% to 1.9%. 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 – So far moisture levels are averaging 15.5%.

Germination – Early assessments suggest germination is in excess of 98%.

PULSES

The pulse harvest is 57% complete on average, across the regions which have farms reporting on pulse progress. This excludes Scotland, the North East, the South West of England and Northern Ireland.

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 hectarage, and not weighted.