

Saltburn Monitor Farm meeting report

Meeting 3: Marketing and varieties

Speaker: Jenna Watts (AHDB), Helen Plant (AHDB)

Date: 23 January 2018

Location: Guisborough Rugby Club

For more information, visit: cereals.ahdb.org.uk/saltburn



Meeting summary – key messages

- The Recommended List (RL) contains a vast amount of data and comparisons between varieties need to be treated with caution
- The RL team welcomes feedback from growers on how to make the information more useful – [take the RL survey](#)
- Look at the five-year averages, not individual years
- Varieties with high disease ratings can suffer breakdowns which can have a huge effect on yield in untreated crops, so caution is needed
- Grain markets are flat at the moment but will not stay like this – analysts have a watch on several areas
- UK prices are high compared with the rest of the world
- The UK situation is currently affected more by events here than by the rest of the world
- The wheat area in England has been declining for the last 10 years, and this is tightening supplies and pushing up the price
- Know your costs and ensure you are making money as soon as you can

Varieties and Recommended Lists

Variety selection

- Lengthy process (five years) in which 3–6 new lines are selected from a starting point of about 800
- Selection criteria are based on quality, agronomy and disease characteristics
- A variety can only be selected if it is better than existing varieties with the potential to bring a more economic return in the market
- Varieties that increase yield more than 2% above the five-year average are automatically selected (as long as their rating for septoria resistance is greater than 5)

New wheat varieties

- Data available online and in the AHDB Recommended Lists for cereals and oilseeds booklet
- Average yield of new varieties is approx. 0.5 t/ha higher than the five-year average of existing varieties

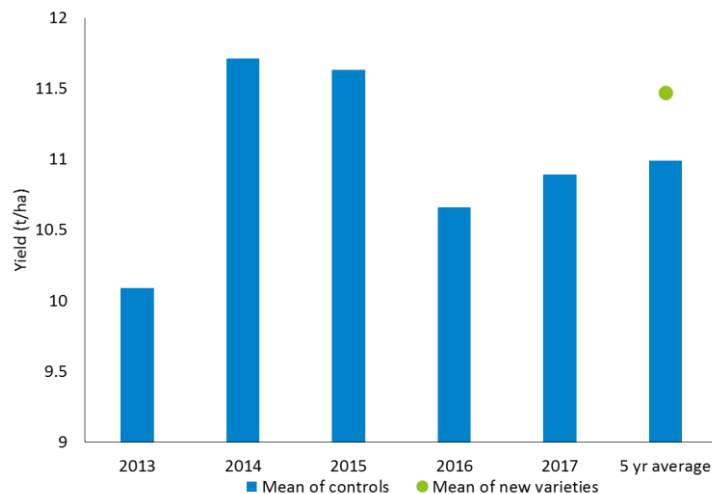


Fig.1. Wheat yields – new compared with existing varieties

- In Group 3, Elicit has good septoria resistance and its untreated yield is significantly higher than KWS Barrel
- In Group 4 soft wheats, new varieties KWS Jackal and Elation both have good resistance to yellow rust (rating 9), good lodging resistance, and Elation has a significantly higher untreated yield than existing variety Leeds
- Group 4 hard wheats – new variety Gleam scores well on yield and lodging resistance

Selecting for yellow rust resistance

- Last year saw a change in the yellow rust population
- In one susceptible variety, the yield reduction in untreated plots compared with the previous year was 5 t/ha
- This is something we need to keep an eye on – a number of varieties have high disease ratings but as we have seen (e.g. in Reflection) this can suddenly change

Winter barley

- 2-row malting varieties Electrum and Coref are early maturing and have good lodging resistance
- 6-row feed variety KWS Astaire has good disease ratings

Oilseed rape

- Ratings are broken down into regions
- 4 new varieties for the North are all stiff strawed and have good lodging resistance
- Architect is a new specialist variety resistant to turnip yellows virus although is slightly lower yielding

Local RL trial: Croft site

- Average yields for winter wheat were approx. 2 t/ha above the UK average
- Spring oats also yielded significantly more than the UK average

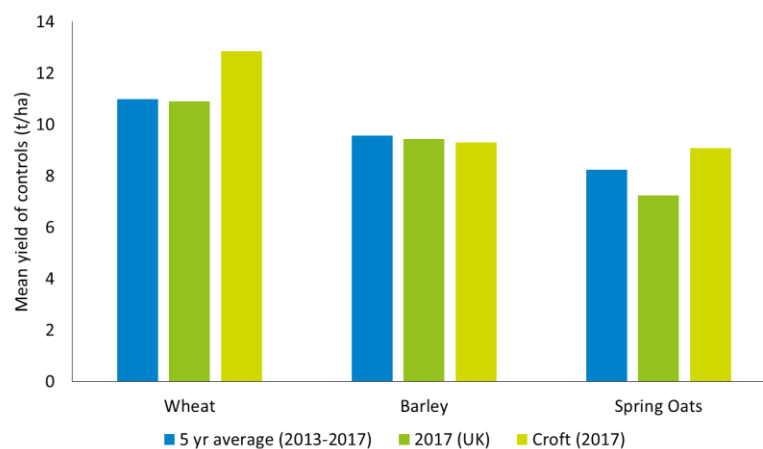
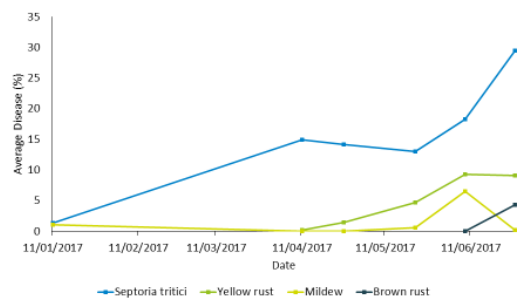


Fig.2 Croft trial results 2017

- The major disease was septoria
- Some varieties had a lot of yellow rust
- The average wheat yield difference between treated and untreated plots was 35% (although the range was very large – see graph below)

- All this information is on the AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds website (note that conclusions shouldn't be made on single trial results): <https://cereals.ahdb.org.uk/varieties/current-trials-and-harvest-results.aspx>

Croft wheat disease 2017



Croft wheat yield

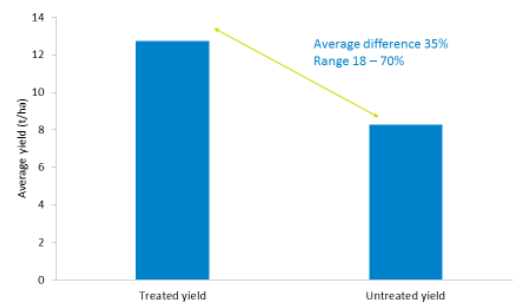


Fig.3. Disease challenges in Croft trial plots and the effect of fungicide treatment

Points raised in discussion

- Is the Recommended List for wheat too big and is it stifling progress?
- What information is available on suitability for early drilling? The RL has information on early and late sowing but the small number of trials can be limiting
- Why are there so many oilseed rape varieties that are not on the RL? A significant number of growers in the room grow these varieties – you tend to keep growing varieties that you know do well on your farm
- If you grow a variety for a particular trait, how do you find a replacement?
- Growers need the ability to interrogate the data more
- Least significant difference (LSD) data indicate that apparent differences in traits between varieties are not real differences – more needs to be made of this and growers need to better understand it
- Untreated yield information is even more important than treated
- Another level in between treated and untreated yield would be helpful that looks at how varieties react under low levels of input – particularly important with cost cutting and preparing for Brexit
- Growing resistant varieties - the risk of a disease breakdown means you can't really afford not to treat
- Use of decimal points in the data – these can be used inaccurately by merchants

The Recommended List can be found on the AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds website [here](#) and the survey can be found [here](#).

Market update

- Markets are currently quite flat and the price of London wheat has been around £140 for the past few months

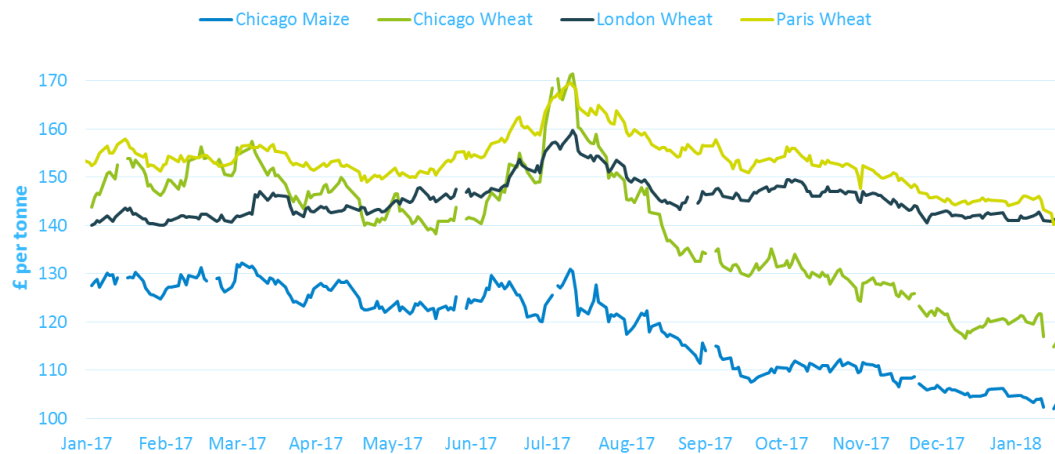


Fig.4. Global grain futures – May 2018 prices

- Our prices are quite high in global terms
- What is happening in the UK is influencing price more than global events so at the moment we are quite supported
- World production is exceeding demand for the fifth consecutive year

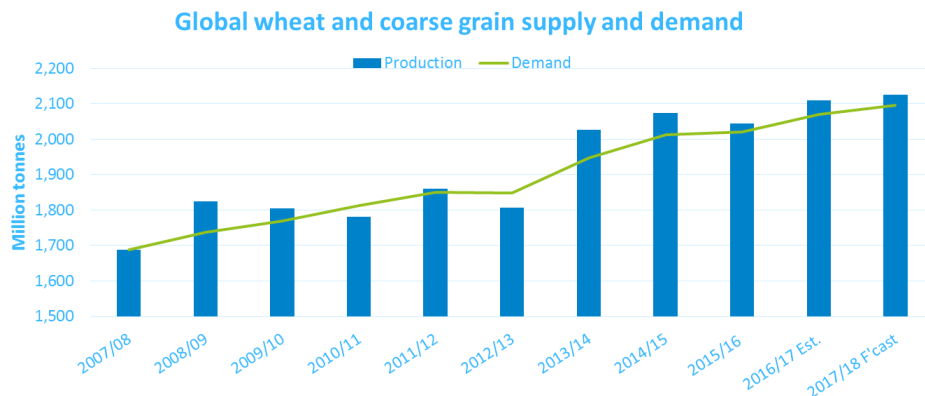


Fig.5. Five consecutive years of grain surplus

- Russia has had an all-time record wheat crop which has dominated supplies, with huge exports
- Global supply and demand graph shows huge growth over the last 10 years
- Global wheat stocks – the graph shows how many days' supply the forecast at the end of the year would equate to
- Europe is almost unique in using wheat for both human and animal consumption – elsewhere it is mainly for humans

Imports and exports

- The area of wheat grown in England has fallen by 15% over the last 10 years – this is driving our markets
- Over the same time the spring barley area has increased
- Increased feed demand for poultry is tightening the wheat supply so we have tended to fluctuate between net importers and net exporters
- Imported grain is more expensive but it has been more processed and is easier to convert into a consistent product so some manufacturers favour it
- We need to do more to combat the threat of imports
- Barley exports have increased
- If we leave the EU without a trade deal, there is a risk that tariffs are about to increase the complexity of the UK market
- We could see imports and exports of grains of different quality and different price bandings
- A rise in the UK price brings the threat of imports

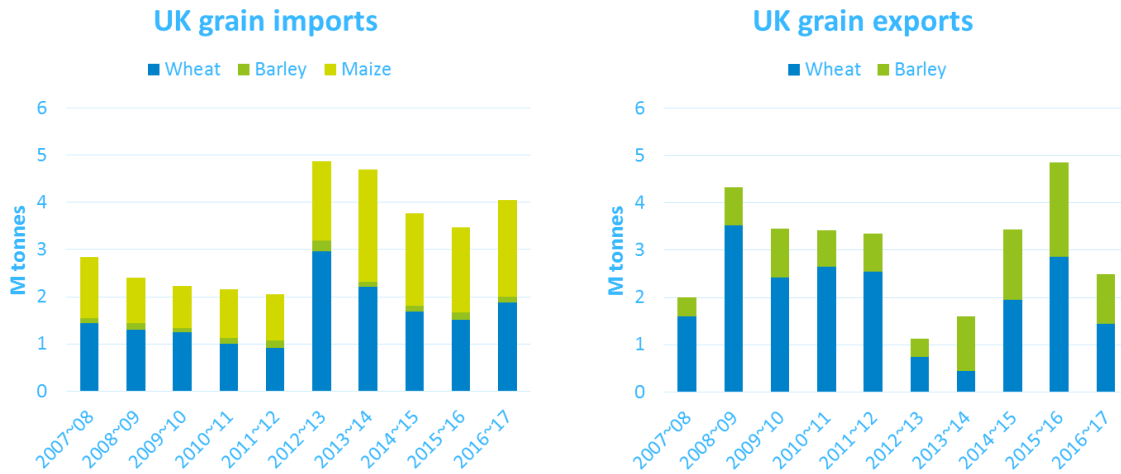


Fig.6. In some years the UK is a net importer and in others a net exporter

Business and price risk management

- Cereal farm income in England is highly dependent on support payments and other income sources – on average
- Income from agriculture contributes less than a quarter of average farm business income

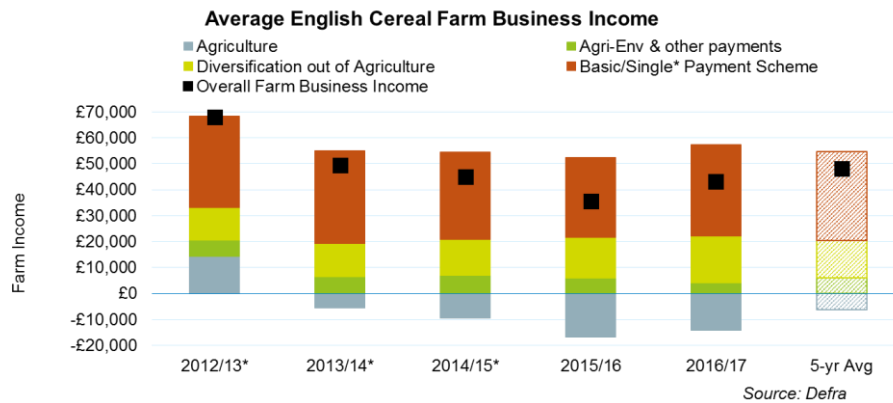


Fig.7 Being average is a risk

- In the changes likely to come with Brexit, being average will not be good enough
- Key factors in building a resilient business that can manage risk effectively are:
 - Relentless cost management
 - Market engagement
 - Collaborative approach
 - Commercial acumen
 - Technical excellence
- Benchmarking – find out your cost of production using AHDB's online tool [Farmbench](#)
- Discuss findings in an arable business group and identify ways to improve your business, including possibilities for collaboration
- Learn from each other – other farmers and technical specialists
- What do the top producers do differently?

Find out more – Links to AHDB information sheets or research

[AHDB Recommended Lists for cereals and oilseeds](#)

Have your say on the RL – how it works now and what you'd like to see in future RL publications, take the survey [here](#).

[Post-Brexit prospects for UK grains](#)

[What might Brexit mean for UK trade in cereal and oilseed products?](#)

[Challenges facing UK grains post-Brexit video](#)

For more information on Brexit, visit ahdb.org.uk/brexit

[AHDB's cereal market news](#)

[AHDB Potato market information](#)

[Market data centre](#)

For more information on cereals and oilseeds markets, visit

cereals.ahdb.org.uk/markets



Next meeting

Date: TBC

Topic: Precision – getting the best out of the information

Time: 11.30

Location: GRUFC, Belmangate, North Yorkshire TS14 7BB

For more information or to find out more about Farmbench, AHDB's benchmarking tool,

contact: Judith Stafford

E: judith.stafford@ahdb.org.uk

M: 07891 556623

 [@Cereals_North](#)

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