

1 September 2022

General Comments

New sown oilseed rape and wheat crops have benefitted from the rain and early sown examples have braided well. We have a few reports of flea beetles around coastal areas of Angus and Fife so check crops carefully. Rain has also greened up grass and forage crops. Potato harvest has started earlier than normal.

Regional Comments

KIRKWALL

Spring barley harvest is underway, albeit for crimping and urea treatment of conventional barley, and propcorning of early bere and Scandinavian varieties only. The harvest of conventional 2 row barley for propcorning is yet to start. Whilst sunshine has not been plentiful this summer, the mild temperatures and regular light rainfall has made the grass grow at unprecedented levels. As a result, every business has a bumper level of winter keep, and grazing grass is still abundant. Hopefully the ground conditions will remain firm to allow the livestock to eat it rather than the geese.

CAITHNESS

Spring Barley harvest is well underway with early indications of very good quality, yield being good but less straw. Moisture rates straight off the combine have been excellent so hopefully a reduction in drying costs for producers. Preparation for winter sowing is well underway with ploughing completed in good, dry conditions.

MORAY

Spring barley harvest continues in Moray with pockets of the County still uncut. On the whole though there have been excellent conditions for combining throughout the day (and night) with a few growers achieving the rare feat of being completely finished before the end of August. Yields have been generally good or very good and quality is also good with low Nitrogen levels widespread. A couple of wheat crops are still to be cut but again what harvest has been earlier this year. Winter oilseed rape crops have been established and preparations are underway for winter barley too. Cover crops are also going into the ground in great conditions.

INVERNESS

The past fortnight has seen the weather in the Inverness area continue to be dry and favourable for harvest. Any showers have been localised and short. Harvest will be nearing an end for most in the area, with probably one third or less of the spring barley crop remaining to be cut. Yields are reported to be average to good. This looks to be fortunate considering there was some very dry spells throughout the growing season. Quality is reported to be good as well. The dry conditions also means that straw is being baled in good conditions following the combine. Winter rape has been sown and has largely established well, getting just enough moisture at drilling.

ABERDEENSHIRE

The weather has remained reasonably settled through the last couple of weeks, allowing most people to at least make a start to harvest with majority well on now. Quality and yield reports seem to be very good so far. Majority of oil seed rape is in the ground and emerging with some reports of flea beetle starting in some crops.

BANFF & BUCHAN

Another settled spell of weather has seen harvest continue at great speed across Banff and Buchan with many growers enjoying the novelty of both starting and finishing their harvest in the month of August. Yields are better than expected with malting quality also good. With grain being cut around 16%, this also means little or no drying is required – a welcome bonus given energy prices. Most spring barleys have been cut apart from later sown fields with wheat and oat crops also being harvested. As the combines start to be put away again, this week has seen the beginning of the potato harvest – a sure sign that summer is giving way to autumn. Attention is also turning to next year's crops with oilseed rape now all sown with ploughs flat out to make ground ready for winter barley and wheat. With such good progress, patience may well be needed to avoid sowing too early. Fertiliser and energy costs continue to be hot topics of conversation with potato growers especially facing up to potentially very expensive storage periods this winter. Grass growth has been fairly slow, unsurprisingly so given the dry weather and cattle farmers are busy baling straw, with straw yields better than feared and the good weather meaning that it can be baled in good order. With not much straw being chopped, treating straw is being considered by some to build up winter fodder stocks following a disappointing second cut of silage. Some store lambs have appeared in fields however finishing up the harvest has taken priority in the meantime for most farmers.

KINCARDINESHIRE

A slightly more unsettled spell of weather in the area has seen harvest progress slow a little. Spring barley harvest is well on in the south of the area with a few farms finished while in the west of the area harvest is in its early stages. Yield reports are average for grain with no reports of any issues with screenings, skinnings or germination. Straw yields are variable depending on soil type and rain during the season. Winter wheat harvest is progressing again with average yields and variable straw yields. There is a good proportion of straw being chopped for those farms that don't need it for livestock. Winter oilseed rape has been sown and is emerging well. There are signs of flea beetle so growers should be vigilant. Grass is beginning to grow again after the rain. Some farms have taken their 2nd cut with some waiting to see if it bulks further.

ANGUS

Catchy weather has made finishing harvest a challenge for many growers in Angus. Yield reports have been good, considering the low rainfall during the growing season. Grain quality has also been pleasing and many farms have reported low nitrogens in spring barleys. New season oilseed rape is through the ground with the first true leaf emerging in the most forward crops. Although flea beetle pressure seems to be low, some damage is visible in crops towards the coast.

PERTSHIRE

The end of harvest is turning out to be much more catchy than the beginning, however most people are now well through harvest with some being finished completely. Yields have generally been good with some fields on lighter land not fairing so well after the dry spell. New crop oilseed rape has mostly now been drilled and emergence has been quick. Volunteer cereals in non-ploughed crops of OSR have been quick to emerge with the warm soils and showers of rain which will need controlled but so far flea beetle damage has been minimal. A bit of winter wheat has been sown on some of the early land but most will wait for another week or two before drilling.

FIFE

Very little harvesting took place over the last week, although combines did reappear in fields in the last 2 days. Another rain shower this morning will probably have put paid to hopes for harvesting today! A couple of days with a stiff breeze and some sunshine would see the end of 2022 harvest. Reports of yield and quality are mostly good across barleys, wheat and WOSR, low moisture at harvest has allowed combines to run easily and grain driers to sit idle. This will have saved a lot in fuel and man hours. Monitoring of bulk heaps for hotspots and pests should be maintained to avoid any issues at the end user. Oilseed rape has been sown in good conditions due to timely rain, with a lot established using zero or minimum tillage techniques this year. Germination seems to be even, without too much slug damage or signs of flea beetle, this can quickly change so monitoring of the developing plant is required.

STIRLINGSHIRE

Rain stopped harvesting on and off over the last fortnight, but the majority of winter cropping is harvested, just a few fields of winter wheat to finish. Spring Barleys the vast majority of farms are well though their acreages, some heavier land with later sown crops have been late to ripen. Some fields have taken a beating with the heavy rain and are going down in places, more so those in Oats. Oilseed Rape is being sown into good conditions with enough moisture to encourage establishment however soils are still very dry some meaningful rainfall would be welcome to get winter crops establishing well.

LOTHIANS

Pockets of wheat and spring barley remain to be cut and reflect the variation in rainfall experienced at a more local level; areas in mid Lothian for example having up to 50mm over the last fortnight. Feedback on cereal yields harvested has been very positive and for the majority a rapid, low-cost harvest, with high specific weights, low nitrogens in the malting barleys, moderate protein levels in quality wheats and above average yields. Soils are holding a surprising amount of moisture given the summer we've had and new-crop rape is in and emerged for many with some choosing to make

a start on wheats. Beans aren't far off cutting, although some crops have senesced prematurely and may not bode so well for yield. Ware crops understandably are struggling.

BORDERS

Harvest is almost complete across the Borders with farmers 2 weeks ahead of where they usually are. There are above average yields being reported in spring barley and winter wheat and with plenty of straw. Demand for straw is now easing. Nitrogen in malting barley is lower than average and quality is good. Oilseed rape is now being sown. Although there has been little rain there has been enough for germination, with the first fields planted coming through.

LANARKSHIRE

With the weather not being as settled as forecast, harvest has slowed down in the area. Some spring barley has been cut with the remainder ready to go when conditions improve. Rainfall has not been enough to adversely affect ground conditions, but enough to stop combines moving. Where harvest has been completed, there is little sign of any field work. It is still early in the season and the exception to this is a field of direct drilled winter barley that is already through the ground. Grass is still growing well, and cuts of silage are still being taken. This includes planned third cuts and fields being cleared due to the abundance of grass. It is unlikely that there will be a shortage of forage this winter.

AYRSHIRE

A dry spell over the last week has seen the start of Spring Barley combining and with most of the week set to be settled, a lot more will be harvested. A lot of straw has been baled. A few people are also taking advantage of the decent weather to get silage cut.

STRANRAER

The weather has been largely dry for the last couple of weeks with intermittent showers which are welcome when we hear about the dry weather in other areas of the country. Spring Barley harvests are underway with yields about average for the area and with very low grain moisture content – a welcome saving on drying costs. Ground conditions are still very good and there has been plentiful straw across the cereal harvests. There is still silage making underway, and grass growth on this side of the country is still quite pleasing, especially for those who have invested in fertiliser.