

25 May 2023

General Comments

The damp cool spring continues to drive higher than usual disease levels. The winter cereal crops carry the bulk of the disease burden but we have the first reports of *Rhynchosporium* in early drilled spring barley. Although *Septoria* persists in winter wheat crops, in general T1 fungicides have worked well and crops look better than they did. Oilseed rape has flowered for longer than usual and second sprays against sclerotinia applied to crops where there is a previous history.

Regional Comments

KIRKWALL

Although temperatures have risen, it's still been quite cold which has held everything back slightly. The earliest sown spring barley is at the start of tillering, but most are still at the seedling growth stage. Grass has been similarly slow to come with many cattle still indoors. This week should see most of them turned out as long as the weather stays dry. Damage from crane fly larvae has been reported in some grass fields.

CAITHNESS

The past fortnight has seen on the whole warm spells with intermittent showers. These showers are welcome with some the more easterly parts of the area in need of more moisture. Spring barley crops are looking well the majority of crops are now tillering, GS 22-23 with later sown crops at GS 13. All crops are clean and most have received a herbicide application. Winter barley crops are clean and at ear emergence stage. Winter wheat is booting and looking fairly clean. Oilseed rape is in the pod development stage.

MORAY

A recent lift in temperature, although you would hardly know it, combined with further rain has led to good growing conditions and many crops have come on quite a bit in the past fortnight. Winter barley crops are now flowering and looking good with any disease confined to lower leaves. Winter wheat flag leaves are appearing and again are looking in good order although a reasonable amount of *Septoria* can be found but further down the crop. Winter oilseed rape crops are still in full flower with one or two pods starting to appear. Early sown spring barley

crops are looking well at mid tillering and in general very clean, however a number of crops in more upland areas have only just gone in the ground.

INVERNESS

The past fortnight has seen on the whole warm spells with intermittent showers. These showers are welcome with some of the more easterly parts of the area in need of more moisture. Spring barley crops are looking well, the majority of crops are now tillering, GS 22–23 with later sown crops at GS 13. All crops are clean and most have received a herbicide application. Winter Barley crops are clean and at ear emergence stage. Winter wheat is booting and looking fairly clean. OSR is in the pod development stage.

ABERDEENSHIRE

Winter wheat crops vary in growth stages from around 31–39, therefore the earliest crops are reaching T2 timings (GS39). Winter Barley crops are between growth stages 47–51, however the majority of crops are around GS49, first awns visible. Winter Oilseed Rape crops are flowering, sclerotinia risk should continue to be monitored, particularly as the temperatures rise. Spring Barley crops are very varied in growth stages.

BANFF & BUCHAN

Our very strange spring continues to surprise and frustrate in equal measure. Despite the slow start to spring, the heavy rain and general lack of sun and heat, winter crops are not too far behind normal. Winter barleys are a mixed bag with ears now emerging in most crops along unfortunately with *Rhynchosporium*. T2s have been applied with fungicides kept at high rates as fear of ramularia due to the stressful growing season mount. Crops range from very good to below average, depending on how they came through the winter. Winter wheats are rapidly approaching T2 with flag leaves starting to appear, just as *Septoria* becomes more prevalent. Oilseed rape crops are now in full flower at long last and the first of the mid flower sprays are being applied. The protracted flowering period so far is making gauging the time for spraying much more difficult than normal, with the showery weather also increasing the sclerotinia risk. Spring barleys have raced through the ground and so have the weeds unfortunately, with herbicides starting to be applied. Manganese deficiency also appears to be quite common this year and this is being added where necessary. Elsewhere potato growers continue to struggle to get crops planted. Grass is finally growing for stock farmers although there is still some concern about cattle poaching in wetter fields.

ANGUS

Plenty of sunshine in Angus over the last two weeks, allowing for good growing conditions. The majority of potatoes have been planted, with just the final seed potatoes in the ground now. Spring barley has been moving through the growth stages quickly, with the earliest getting T1 applications. Ears in winter barley have completely emerged above the flag leaf ligule and the T2 applications have been applied. Most winter wheat is approaching the time for a T2 application as the flag leaf is fully emerged. Oilseed rape crops are flowering with more than 80% of the flower buds open and will have had a flowering fungicide applied, with exception to oilseed rape crops that had been grazed by pigeons earlier in the season as these are behind.

PERTSHIRE

Sunshine and heat on moist soils is allowing crops to motor through the growth stages now. Winter oilseed rape is most past full flower and now into pod set although the flowering period has been quite long this year. Winter barley is now flowering having had the last fungicides applied, winter wheat is around the flag leaf stage with T2 fungicides being applied at present. Spring barley and oats ranges considerably with the later sown crops at the 3 leaf stage and the earlier crops at GS30 with herbicide, fungicides and trace elements all being applied. Chocolate spot appeared before flowering this year in winter beans this year and required a fungicide to get under control. Grass growth has been exceptional in the last few weeks and many will be making silage in May who don't usually.

FIFE

Warmer weather and some light showers have washed in fertiliser and allowed all crops to green up. Disease levels in winter wheat seem to be under control after T1, although the rapid approach of T2 and a seeming lack of available 1st choice fungicides is worrying – most T2's will be applied over the next 7 to 10 days. Winter barleys are looking well and seem clean after their T2 applications. Spring barleys are at, or are rapidly reaching growth stage 25 – 30 and will require their first fungicide (and a weed control if not applied earlier). Oilseed rape is in full flower, though some fields that were adversely affected by pigeons still have a noticeable split in flowering progress – most of these are using a split flowering fungicide program. A lot of silage fields have been mown over the last couple of days and grass yields look good.

STIRLINGSHIRE

Weather still continues to be mixed, warm then cold but generally dry. Spring crops are all through and generally tillering well. A bit of leatherjacket damage in some out of ley and some poorer emergence in some late sown ones on the Carse. As it warms up they are rapidly going through their growth stages. Winter Barley is now flowering, sprays have cleaned up most disease with Rhynchosporium hanging on at the base of the plants. Winter wheat crops which are in the booting stage are looking very even and clean. As usual there is a bit of Septoria damage on the lower leaves but it is staying down at the bottom of the crop. Oilseed rape is getting to the end of flowering and in the pod development phase, with little disease pressure. First cut silages are now being made, yields seem reasonable.

LOTHIANS

Few places across the Lothians will have seen more than 50mm precipitation so far in May in what has been a relatively dry month to date. Good soil moisture reserves bolstered by early spring rains have helped arable crops develop at a fairly constant pace and the intermittent showers have been particularly welcome for later drilled spring crops. The recent dry spell has enabled spring cereal seedbeds to be consolidated post-emergence where needed, but the dry conditions are also exacerbating the early signs of manganese deficiency, particularly on the lighter soils. Winter wheat has had a recent reprieve from the conditions conducive to septoria infection spreading i.e few rain splash events and few prolonged periods of leaf wetness. New yellow rust outbreaks are however evident in some varieties and T2 applications will have now either have been applied or be imminent. Oilseed rape crops are at GS6.1 (seeds expanding) and the extent of pod development looks promising following a protracted flowering period. Grassland farmers are taking early silages and rising daytime temperatures are increasing grass

growth rates; GrassCheckGB monitored beef and sheep farms in Scotland recording an average of 83.6 kgDM/ha/day mid-month (not dissimilar to 2022).

BORDERS

42mm of rain to date for May along with warm temperatures, has encouraged spring barley to progress with most crops ranging from tillering to beginning of stem extension (GS30). There have been reports of Rhynchosporium in some crops. Flowering has been prolonged in many crops of oilseed rape. Light leaf spot can be found and there appears to be some incidents of sclerotinia on stems. The most forward crops are now with seeds starting to expand. Winter wheat is ranging from flag leaf almost emerged to flag leaf fully emerged (GS39). Septoria is present, particularly in susceptible varieties, however this appears to have stopped at lower leaves. T2 sprays are now imminent on most farms. Forward crops of winter barley are at flowering, many crops appear clean, however there are reports of Rhynchosporium in some.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

The weather has been warm and dry over the past couple of weeks, however some rain is now needed to help this good growth period continue. Winter barley crops are at GS65 (mid flowering) and are relatively clean of disease with there only being a little net blotch and Rhynchosporium present in some crops. Spring barley is generally at the mid/late tillering growth stage and looking well with very little disease present. T1 applications will start being applied in the next week or two. Winter wheat flag leafs are emerging and T2 applications are starting to be applied. Grass growth has been motoring over the past three weeks with many dairy farms having now taken their first cuts. Silage yields have been less than average due to the cold start to the spring but quality is expected to be good.