

22 July 2021

## General comments

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Pest and disease levels are starting to play out in crops and some of the early decisions to reduce inputs are starting to look either wise or foolish. We've seen examples in both.

There has been quite a lot of chatter on social media about new 'super-Septoria' strains in Cougar and related varieties. Our view is that the type of foci being seen are within the bounds of what we know about Septoria. Cougar we know is susceptible (very susceptible in glasshouse experiments). We have seen some gappy spray programmes this year with normal growth stages so far off the norm early in the season and also some reduced inputs (generally a sensible response to low-risk weather conditions). These weaknesses in programmes in combination with what we know about fungicide resistance and also the lack of chlorothalonil in programmes this year has probably allowed foci of Septoria in susceptible varieties. Septoria we know is highly adaptable and the foci of Septoria in crops of Cougar and Cougar-related varieties is not out-with the norms. We are not seeing anything dramatic in Scottish trials.

## Regional comments

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### Orkney

The unusually long dry spell continues to prevail and some private bore holes have dried up with more expected to do so over the coming days. Scottish Water are already having to use road tankers to supplement storage levels at various sites throughout the county, and with virtually no rain forecast for the remainder of the month, things are only going to get worse. Grassland is burning up on some land, and there are instances where fields intended for 2nd cut silage are having to be grazed. Direct reseeds are also struggling to establish. On the upside, lots of excellent green tinged hay has been made and the spring barley is at the grain fill stage and relatively disease free apart from some ramularia and net blotch.

### Caithness

Crops really are motoring now after yet another excellent period of growing weather. More or less caught up on last year which is quite something given the start of the growing season this year. The

very dry conditions have certainly not helped turnip growth rates in the area. Some excellent quality hay being made in the area with silage being made in the best conditions for a number of years.

## **Moray**

The region has seen some rain in the past fortnight but not a lot. As a result, both cereals and grassland continue to show signs of heat stress. Winter barley harvest will soon be upon us, before the end of the month, as the crop dies off now. The heads on winter wheat crops are starting to fill up as grain fill enters the early dough stage, with flag leaves still fairly clean. The seeds in winter oilseed rape pods are now brown or dark brown and crops look good in general. The earlier sown spring barley crops have now just entered the grain filling stage, early-milk, whilst the later sown crops are still flowering. Ramularia can easily be found on several crops. There are a lot of good-looking hay crops either still lying in the swath or recently baled, farmers having enjoyed a fantastic spell of warm dry weather and doing what you're supposed to do when the sun shines.

## **Inverness**

In the last crop report I mentioned some very welcome showers of rain, unfortunately that was the last rain that most of the area saw. As in the previous report some crops are suffering from the lack of moisture and grain fill will be compromised. Winter barley is now ripe and ready to cut, with combines beginning to move in the area. Winter wheat is at the late milk stage moving into early dough and looking clean. Spring barley is now in the milk development stage on average, some crops are seeing low levels of Ramularia present. Patches of spring barley can be seen burning off in lighter soils and on stony braes. OSR seeds are now turning brown. On the positive side the dry weather has allowed a lot of excellent quality hay to be made in the area.

## **Aberdeenshire**

Much of the weather over the past fortnight has remained dry, helping to keep disease pressure low. The earliest of the winter barley crops have now been desiccated. Oilseed rape desiccation is expected to begin in the next fortnight. Some susceptible varieties of wheat are showing some levels of mildew.

## **Banff & Buchan**

The last 10 days has seen a great spell of weather in Buchan, with sunshine and high temperatures combining to provide us with the sort of weather many would travel many miles to enjoy. Winter Barleys are now being sprayed off and although the crops are quite mixed, the recent sunshine has helped fill out the grain. Winter Oilseed Rapes are still quite green however and pod midge has been seen on the endriggs of some crops. Winter wheats have remained fairly clean and are still a while away with the first of the spring barley just about to turn. Ramularia has been seen in some crops although hopefully it is too late in the day to do any appreciable damage. Some blind grain sites are also being seen in the spring barleys. Roguing is ongoing in the potatoes and the spell of settled dry weather should be keeping disease at bay. Silage aftermaths have greened up again, which will be needed as the dry weather has slowed up grass growth although like ourselves, the grazing cattle seem to be enjoying the sunshine. July sees hay being made in Buchan and the hot and sunny weather has seen hay being baled up in record time.

## **Kincardineshire**

The past few weeks have seen constant sunshine and the winter barley has come on at great speed. Several crops have now been sprayed off with round up and combining will commence in the next 10-14 days. Spring barley is looking well and disease free and reasonably thick crops. Spring oats are generally looking well but some crops are thin and a bit short on tiller numbers possibly due to the dry weather earlier in the season. Potato crops are all looking great and now flowering. Winter wheat still showing signs of mildew in the lower stems but clean of Septoria. Some crops looking shorter than normal but yield potential still looking well. Oilseed rape has podded well but is still a bit off from swathing/desiccation.

## **Angus**

Within the past fortnight the winter barely requiring round up has been sprayed, starting the countdown to harvest. Continuation of hot and sunny weather has made rogueing crops the best way to gain a tan in the UK, however, more brome has been found this year around endriggs and near grass margins. Oilseed rape is senescing, and winter wheat is mid grain filling. Irrigators are working overtime in many potato crops.

## **Perthshire**

Crops are coming on quickly now with the recent hot weather. Winter barley is awaiting the combine, winter oilseed rape is about ready to be sprayed off although brassica pod midge damage can be found in some crops. Winter wheat and winter oats are beginning to change colour in the earlier areas and likewise with spring barley.

## **Fife**

Winter barleys are rapidly approaching harvest. The hike in glyphosate prices seems to be reducing the area to be pre-harvest sprayed, a few endriggs here and there rather than whole fields are to have glyphosate this harvest. Spring barley awns are turning golden and some flag leaves are showing signs of Ramularia but overall disease control has been good. Winter wheats are milky to doughy ripe with Septoria held low down in most crops. WOSR has not reached the stage of glyphosate and Pod-Stick application as seeds are still very green. This will soon change with these high temperature sunny days.

## **Lothians**

Rainfall recorded to date this month ranges from an average high of 53mm in central and western parts to an average low of 38mm with progressing east toward the coast. May's high rainfall, for some areas over 100mm, is now expressing itself as further leaf tissue loss to Septoria infection and causing some to challenge the disease rating scores given to certain varieties. Yellow rust is only notable by its general absence, perhaps killed off by the hot dry conditions of late and re-affirms the emphasis back on Septoria as the main potential yield robber. Winter wheat is either side of GS 73 (Early milk), smaller flag leaves curling through heat stress. Winter barley at GS 85-87 (hard dough) through to GS 92 (grain hard) for some grains and straw nodes appear green compared to ear ripening development stages. Oilseed rape has suffered pod midge larval damage, more so on endriggs, having laid eggs via holes left in seed pods by seed weevils earlier. Unaffected pods on

the lower raceme have seeds just starting to turn reddish/brown. The oilseed rape crops inspected are 10 days and more away from optimal desiccation timings.

## **Borders**

Hot sunny weather has been pushing the crops on with winter barley harvest underway. Some winter barley crops are 5–7 days off harvest having recently been sprayed with glyphosate. Spring barley is changing colour, grains have started dough development with crops at early to mid-dough. Ramularia is now evident in earlier sown crops. Winter wheat the grains have started dough development with growth stages ranging from late milk to early dough. The upper leaves remain green. Septoria is present on leaf 2 and 3. Oilseed rape fields are ripening with seeds ranging from green to mottled to brown. Plans for desiccation are being made, with recommendations going out.

## **Stirling**

The dry weather has brought on many crops with the winter barleys particularly on the lighter ground close to harvest. There is little green leaf left on the rest. Some fields have areas flattened by crows, particularly near trees. Winter wheats are ripening well, however where there are root issues like take all, then patches of white heads are now showing in the fields. There is some yellow rust about. Spring barleys are clean with a bit of ramularia on the flag leaf. Oilseed rape has been desiccated ready to harvest. With the good dry spell there are bales of hay everywhere with little left to cut.

## **Lanarkshire**

Recent weather conditions have been extremely warm and dry, with very little rain having fallen over the last month or so. Harvesting of winter crops has already begun and is well underway in some areas. Spring crops are beginning to show signs of heat stress and could do with some much-needed rain. The warm weather has also taken its toll on grassland, with sandy and rocky areas burning badly. Silage season is still well underway, however, further cuts will undoubtedly be lesser in quantity and later taken than hoped, due to the lack of rain recently.

## **Ayrshire**

The dry weather in Ayrshire has continued over the past 2 weeks with little, to no rainfall. This has allowed farmers to continue to make good hay and second cut silages are underway, with reports of some heavier yields. The drier weather is starting to show in the spring barley with the fields ranging between half and full ear emergence (GS55–GS59). Crop length generally being short and leaves are showing a low level of Ramularia. Winter crops are looking well, with the winter wheat in early dough (GS83).

## **Dumfries & Galloway**

We have had some glorious hot dry weather over the past three weeks and as a result winter barley harvest is now underway. Grain and straw yield reports have been good so far and grain moisture content is down at 11–12%. Spring barley is around growth stage 84 soft dough and looking reasonably good. There has been plenty hay made over the past couple of weeks. Grass silage second cuts are underway but yields are down. Lighter stonier land is burning quite badly and

recently sown forage crops and reseeds are all in desperate need of a drink. Hopefully some signs of rain will appear soon.

## **Stranraer**

Harvest is well underway in Winter Barley crops across the far west of the region, with the heavier farms in the Machars due to start towards the end of this week. Crops are standing well and there is cautious optimism about grain and straw yields. Earlier sown Spring Barleys are ripening well with some wholecrops already harvested. Whilst the arable growers are delighted with the weather, anyone with grass is very concerned about the dry conditions. Silage yields are well back with some second cuts taken early as the grass is burning off completely. If dairy cows are not already housed, they are being buffer fed quite heavily and some beef farmers have even started feeding silage to cows with bulls. Much of the lighter land is resembling the Prairies.