

11 July 2022

General Comments

Winter barley is ripening fast as is oilseed rape. We're seeing ramularia creeping into the winter barley trial sites at SRUC and the risk to the spring crop is still to play out. Certainly, some spring barleys have suffered from the cold, dry and windy conditions earlier in the season and been glad of recent rain. Disease levels in wheat crops are climbing – again cool weather has slowed Septoria but it catches up eventually and symptoms are now pretty rife.

Regional Comments

KIRKWALL

An unsettled period of weather has fallen on the county of late. Whilst most crops have enjoyed the intermittent rain showers, conditions for making good quality silage and hay have certainly been less than perfect. There will be a flurry of activity as soon as the forecast improves, not least because so much mowing is restricted by the 1 July AECS cutting date for wading birds. Spring barley is generally looking well, with flowering about to commence in the most advanced crops.

CAITHNESS

Excellent period of weather sees Spring and Winter crop well ahead of this time last year. Potatoes in the area are also looking very well, whilst turnip germination has been very good, albeit with limited moisture so far but that looks set to change in the coming week. Most silage has been captured in excellent conditions with small areas of hay being secured.

MORAY

Generally, all crops are looking well after the arrival of much-needed rain over the last week or so. Crops on lighter soils are still showing drought stress, particularly noticeable in fields which have burnt up after cutting silage. Spring cereals have been motoring through the growth stages with the grain filling up in many early sown spring barley crops. Winter barley fields are changing in colour now and looking to have good yield potential with big bold grains, hopefully this carries through to harvest, which may be one of the earliest seen in recent years. Weed and pest control in turnips and forage crops is proving tricky with the varied weather conditions.

INVERNESS

In the past fortnight the weather in the Inverness area has been much wetter, with frequent heavy downpours seen. For some this rain was welcome with little heavy rain in the previous month. Spring barleys are now moving from the watery ripe stage into milk development. On the whole crops are clean although *Ramularia* can be seen in some. Winter barley is now at early and soft dough stages, with harvest not far away for some. Winter wheats are in the milk development stage. Swede crops in the area are varied with some significant damage from flea beetle, more consistent rain has helped the late sown crops. Silage and hay making continue although it is challenging between the showers, yields are reportedly good.

BANFF & BUCHAN

The weather continues to be very changeable with rain showers seemingly never too far away. Winter Barleys are now hardening off, look to have the potential for decent yields of grain and straw with some glyphosates to be applied later this week where there is a need for grain, although next week will be more common. Winter wheats are finishing flowering with *Septoria* now starting to make itself more visible recently although the crops are cleaner than normal. Oilseed rapes are also approaching harvest with green starting to give way to light brown in places as pods fill out and like the rest of the winter crops are looking well. Spring crops range from approaching the end of flowering in the early crops to awns just out in the later sown crops, with the last of the fungicides applied or just to be sprayed. Indeed, many of the later crops are looking better than the early sown fields which in many cases were checked by the bad weather in April. Spring crops are very clean despite the weather conditions but with the prices available for grain, robust T2s are justified to keep the crop clean, maintain quality and to try and mitigate any potential *Ramularia* infections. The changeable weather mixed with bright sunshine at flowering won't help in terms of the dreaded "R" word but only time will tell. As we approach harvest, arable farmers are getting machinery and buildings ready although there is concern that rising diesel prices will put a significant dent in cash flow and profits particularly if it is a wet harvest. Thoughts are also turning to next year with recommended lists being published, trial sites visited, and fertilisers bought at levels unthinkable 12 months previously. Potato crops have had a growth spurt in the past fortnight as rogeuing gets underway, initial impressions are that while there is some virus to be found, blackleg is absent at the moment. Silaging continues and the first of the hay crops are soon to be cut.

ANGUS

Heavy but localised showers over the past two weeks have fortunately caused little damage to crops across the region. It looks like harvest is going to be very early this year with some winter barley crops ripening rapidly and oilseed rape is not far behind. If sprayers aren't desiccating the rape this week it is likely they will be going by next week. Ears are out in the spring barley crops and wheats are progressing well. Recent periods of warm and damp weather has increased the blight risk slightly for potato growers who are trying their best to maintain blight spray timings in windy conditions.

FIFE

Winter barley is rapidly ripening, some fields sprayed with glyphosate over the weekend but majority will be into next week before they are sprayed off (if they are going to be sprayed). Grain stores are now being cleaned and bait bags being refreshed and checked. Winter wheats are coming to the end of flowering and disease, in the main, has been suppressed to keep the flag

leaf and head clean. Spring barleys are starting to flower and are largely disease free unless you find an unsprayed area next to a telegraph pole! The protective action of fungicides is easy to prove in these areas. WOSR crops are starting to change colour, the furthest on have seeds turning from green to red/brown in the most developed pods. None of the crops viewed were requiring a recommendation for pre-harvest glyphosate yet.

STIRLINGSHIRE

Winter barleys in the area are all into dough development GS85 and are filling well, in most crops very little green leaf is remaining. Winter wheats are still fairly clean but starting to lose green leaf widely observed at GS75. WOSR starting seed development widely observed at GS 6.4, most seeds green but a few browning seed weevil have been observed consistently in the crop and starting to cause pod damage. SB crops are looking very clean and have tillered well, crops vary from heads halfway out to full heads and starting to flower. Crops have been observed at GS71-73 widely. Crops are still very clean but some traces of Rhynchosporium are present and manganese deficiency.

LOTHIANS

Winter barleys are well advanced and grain ripening appears to be running ahead of the straw such that pulling back the crop reveals a large number of green internodes. Particularly green ears against tramlines and in some crops the addition of wheat volunteers will trigger a pre-harvest glyphosate application for some to reduce drying costs and bring harvest forward. That timing is here in the majority of crops seen. For some farmers the heavy localised downpours experienced over the last week will have alleviated the moisture stress exhibited by crops on the lighter soils back in June. Many wheats have managed to retain a clean flag leaf which is positive news and Septoria lower down appears relatively latent following the T3 round. OSR looks to be 7-10 days away from desiccating

BORDERS

We have had some heavy showers of rain in the past two weeks which has been much needed in some areas of the Borders. Winter barley crops are ripening with grains at dough stage with some crops ready for pre-harvest glyphosate. Areas of lodging can be seen in overlaps in tall crops. Winter wheat has finished flowering with some crops at the water ripe stage. Septoria continues to be the main disease and can be readily found on lower leaves, flag leaf and final leaf one currently remain clean. Spring barley growth stages vary from heads emerging to milky ripe. Most crops are completely free from disease with only the occasional crop with a low levels of Rhynchosporium. Winter oats are at milky ripe and oilseed rape is starting to ripen with earlier crops approaching desiccation.

AYRSHIRE

The weather in Ayrshire continues to be very mixed, with very localised showers and periods of heat, making it hard to get a window to cut silage. Many people are taking their chance this week in the hope that it is more settled towards the weekend. Spring barley crops have pushed on over the past couple of weeks and are in the mid stages of ear emergence, sitting around GS 55 and some fields at GS 59 although maybe a bit on the short side. Winter crops have also continued to grow well over the last fortnight.