

29 September 2022

General Comments

Stormy markets; stormy weather. We are definitely moving into more autumnal weather now and your perspective on the weather over the last few weeks will vary depending on your geography. In the main field operations are fairly up to date, winter cereals in and tattie harvest progressing but heavy showers have impeded progress for a few pockets, and straw is still sitting in bouts where the weather has been too catchy to bale. At least the rain has helped bulk swedes where earlier dry conditions were a concern. With a good early start, and warm temperatures winter crops have merged well – but so have volunteer cereals. Pre-emergence herbicide operations are mainly up to date though which is a positive. The warm start has meant a few more reports of flea beetles in oilseed rape, in the main not problematic except on later crops. Keeping a watch for aphids to manage BYDV risk remains important but judge this on the presence of aphids and the actual need.

Regional Comments

KIRKWALL

An estimated 90% of the spring crops will have been harvested, but a significant proportion of the straw is still sitting in bouts. It is no surprise that yields are not fantastic as there was a real lack of summer sunshine. Subsequently, the specific grain weights are lower which effectively means there will be less feeding in a bucket of barley compared to last year. As the weather begins to break, many farmers are cashing in their store cattle before they cause sward damage – even though there is still plenty of grass around.

CAITHNESS

It's a case of on the home straight now for the cereal harvest in the area with a lot of growers getting tidied up over the weekend just past. Still some pockets to be harvested yet but in the main, most are baled up too. A generally stop-start harvest especially the last couple of weeks with small weather windows allowing limited progress. Limited amount of potato harvesting has continued over the period with one producer alternating morning and afternoons between combine and potato harvester as conditions allowed. The increased rainfall in the later part of summer has also given a boost to swedes in the area which have bulked up significantly from what looked a disappointing crop earlier in the season.

MORAY

All of the spring barley crops in lowland Moray have been harvested with, in general, good or very good yields and good quality reported. There are still some unsecured crops further up the hill and the current weather conditions are not helping. We are perhaps seeing a slight increase in winter barley plantings this year with crops currently going in the ground. Oilseed rape crops are now merged and looking good at four to five leaves.

INVERNESS

The past week has seen the weather in the Inverness area become much more autumnal, with cooler temperatures and some localised heavier downpours seen. Winter barley establishment is largely completed with many crops through the ground. Oilseed rape crops are looking well continuing to benefit from the increased moisture recently. Grass growth is slowing in the area with cows begging to be fed and or taken in.

ABERDEENSHIRE

September has continued to be a mixed month of weather, with limited combining and straw baling days, for those in the western half of the county. The showery/squally showers have however helped with germination of winter cereals, but some showers will have caused some sticky sowing conditions for a wee while. Winter barleys are starting to emerge, but the wet showers are aiding annual meadow grass germination as well, so pre-em herbicide sprays are important. Winter oilseed rape is growing away at 4 – 6 leaf stage and is generally beyond slug and cabbage stem flea beetle risk periods. Graminicides are getting applied to control the volunteer cereals now. Some late cut silages have been taken to boost forage stocks, but finishing cattle have been taken inside (between the showers), or are getting fed outside now as well. Tattie lifting is in full flow at present, and although the weather has been a bit mixed in the last fortnight, conditions for lifting are still relatively good (between showers), with good yields being reported.

ANGUS

Growers have turned their attention to the establishment of winter crops, with winter barley all sown and good progress being made on wheats following peas and oilseed rape. The growing crop of oilseed rape has established well, and most crops are now beyond being at risk from slug damage. As is common in Angus at this time of year, there are few roads without trailers on them hauling potatoes across the county. The seed potatoes are being lifted in good condition, however there are concerns about unirrigated ware crops which have likely suffered from the dry summer.

PERTSHIRE

Autumn drilling is progressing well with quite a few now having all winter crops sown. Winter oilseed rape is now mostly well enough advanced to fend off pest attack, but flea beetles have been a problem for a few later sown crops. The growth weather this autumn has meant that anything thrown out the back of the combine had grown with some thick crops of volunteer cereals being seen in following crops. The good weather to date has allowed most to keep up with pre-emergence herbicide applications.

FIFE

99% of combining is completed, even spring beans are cut and in the process of being dried, yields of beans are nothing spectacular but quality seems good. Autumn seeding has started in earnest with winter barley sowing mostly complete and folk are moving into winter wheat sowing. Potato harvest seems to be ahead of normal as folk are reporting that they are seeding wheat into ex-potato ground already, when they usually fight to get it in in late October. EFA Green covers that were sown in early August have fantastic level of cover this year, those still to sow green cover for EFA are reminded that they have to have it sown before the 1st of November and it must remain in place until the 1st of January 2023.

STIRLINGSHIRE

The sowing of winter crops has been going on nonstop since harvest. The earliest fields of winter barley are now just starting to tiller with the majority just emerging. The emerged crops all appear nice and even. Winter oats and winter wheat just recently sown have yet to appear. Oilseed rape crops are now growing away from any damage and are around 2 -3 leaves with a good plant population where they weren't hit by slugs and flea beetle. These crops that were damaged are recovering well.

LOTHIANS

Less rainfall for the last two weeks but still significant enough in the west to get the September month's total, up to, and over 100mm. Eastern coastal regions having had about half this amount so far this month. Germination of autumn cereals has been particularly rapid with early sites having predominantly been min-tilled. Seedbeds are fine and germination even. Post-emergence herbicides are going onto oilseed rape before the rapidly growing cereal volunteers become too competitive. The warm September and early establishment of rape may well predispose to higher populations of rape winter stem weevil, and it'll pay to monitor their presence in crops over the next couple of weeks to see if thresholds are exceeded and a pyrethroid required. New leys are growing away well too but need time still to tiller away before considering weed control. With ground travelling well there's been good opportunity over the last month to rectify any compaction issues, get FYM spread, and lime requirements addressed.

AYRSHIRE

More unsettled weather here in Ayrshire over the last couple of weeks, with some very heavy showers followed by glorious sunshine and temperatures have started to drop. Spring barely is now all combined, with most people having had an average yield of both grain and straw. A lot of cultivations for winter crops has been done and sown. Some of the earlier sown winter barley has started to emerge. Some late cuts of silage have been done over the last week or so. Still a good bit of grass around the region, but with the weather changing, cattle may be starting to come in before too long