

28 April 2022

## General Comments

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A spell of dry weather and some chilly winds have left a few crops tipped, but in the main both winter and the emerging spring crops all look well. The dry spell has been good for drying up disease in the winter wheats in particular, and the yellow rust that threatened a few weeks ago is still to really take hold which is helpful. It has also helped dry up Septoria which has made it easier for growers to hold off T1 treatments until T1 proper (leaf 3 fully emerged) – it is always a more anxious wait when disease levels look to be climbing.

## Regional Comments

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### ORKNEY

The last 7 days have seen a flurry of activity on the land, with farmers finally finding suitable ground conditions for sowing spring barley. Prior to this, there was only a very tiny window of opportunity on the very driest land when a small percentage of farmers were lucky to sow before a period of heavy rainfall. These early sown crops are just breaking the surface. With the week ahead promising to be dry, all of the barley in the county should be sown before the start of May. Grass is beginning to green up, particularly where slurry has been applied. Very little granular fertiliser has been spread onto grass as temperatures have been too low to risk losing any benefit of this extremely expensive input

### CAITHNESS

Improved weather in this period has seen a lot of catching up with spring seeding nearing completion in the area, albeit with a split sowing season. The earlier sown stuff has been slower coming through the ground with temperatures lowering. Some grass seed is now going in with conditions improving. Cattle starting to appear out now but grass is still fairly limited. Fertiliser spreaders have also been pretty conspicuous by their absence until this last week.

### MORAY

Most of the spring crops are now in the ground but with a wide variation in drilling dates, sometimes on the same farm, for spring barley with some sown on the last few days of March and some just planted in the last few days of April. The earlier sown spring barley crops are looking well at around the three-leaf stage. T1 sprays have been applied to winter cereals with barley now well past GS32 and wheat crops not far behind on average around GS31-32. There was some mildew present in both wheat and barley but the aforementioned spray plans should have helped. Winter oilseed

rape crops are now flowering with most at mid flower stage. Potato planting operations are well under way and the last remaining strawed-down carrots are being lifted.

## **ABERDEENSHIRE**

With drier weather sowing has been going on in earnest and much needed T1 sprays onto winter barleys, as well as spring herbicide sprays on winter crops and fertiliser applications. The early sown spring barleys are emerging nicely in most places, but the wet weather has shown up the wet patches and emergence appears patchy in these places. With *Rhynchosporium* and mildew pressure having been high, disease is starting to emerge in winter barleys as it jumps through the stem extension growth stages, and patches of *Septoria* have been seen in winter wheat. Winter barley flag leaves are starting to emerge in forward crops, and Winter wheat is approaching growth stage 31-32. Fertiliser is also getting applied to grass now, with some cattle getting put out to grass as well.

## **BANFF & BUCHAN**

A return to drier weather has seen sowing continue although it still remains colder than normal for the time of year. Although many have finished, in some areas, such as the heavier east of the area, there is still a bit to do. The wet weather at the start of the month has taken its toll, with some wet areas left unsown and in those fields sown before the weather broke, blank patches in low lying or compacted areas. The early barleys are now coming through and with some much needed warmth will soon catch up. Oilseed rapes are looking well and are just beginning to flower with winter barleys having reached stem extension and have received their T1. In both crops, fertiliser is all applied, crops have come through the winter looking well and although disease levels are fairly low, with big prices at harvest being offered, prevention is better than cure. Winter wheats continue their slow progress. Potato growers have started ridging up, and planting will soon start. April sees the big store cattle sales and stirks have started appearing in fields although grass growth is slow- once again more sunshine and heat is needed to get things going.

## **KINCARDINESHIRE**

The weather has warmed up slightly although night time temperatures are still cold. This has meant crops are growing away slowly but disease levels are generally low. Winter barley has had its T1 sprays and there are signs of *Rhynchosporium* in some crops. Crops are thick and full of potential. Winter wheat is around the T1 timing. Disease levels are low. Winter oilseed rape is at mid flower and again a little variable with some fields having been grazed heavily by pigeons. Spring barley is emerging and looks really good with even emergence in most cases. Potatoes are being planted but soil conditions are a bit raw beneath the surface. Grass is growing well and cattle have been turned out. Dare I say it a night of rain would do all crops a bit of good to allow fertiliser to wash in.

## **ANGUS**

Spring barley is through the ground in most cases, with the most advanced crops at the three leaf stage. The recent dry winds have kept disease levels in check, however, they have also brought most sprayers to a standstill. Winter crops looks very good across the county, with most winter barleys having received T1's in the previous weeks. Earlier wheats have had a T1 application, however, it will be this week that the later sown crops will be nearing that spray timing. Oilseed

rape varies, with some crops at mid flowering while others are just starting to flower. Potato planting is in full swing and ground conditions are very good currently.

## **PERTSHIRE**

Dry but cool weather has allowed the last of the drilling of spring cereals to happen and potato planting is also well through in good conditions. Winter oilseed rape is now in full flower and sclerotinia sprays are being applied. Winter barleys are into stem extension with flag leaves emerged in more forward crops. Winter wheat crops are generally at the T1 timing or beyond with Septoria being present on lower leaves of the less resistant varieties. Spring crops range from recently sown through to around 3 leaf with the first of the post emergence herbicides being applied.

## **FIFE**

All fields are very dry and would benefit from a couple of nights of gentle, persistent rain. Spring barleys are germinating quickly but will soon require rain to wash in applied fertilisers. Winter wheats have mostly had their T1 fungicides and some herbicides. The late sown wheats are around GS30 with some showing signs of yellow rust developing. Winter barleys are generally looking well after their T1 fungicide and seem to be getting hold of fertiliser applied at a similar time to the T1. Winter oilseed rape is starting to flower but a lot of fields have a wide range of plant growth stages. Only low levels of pollen beetle have been seen. Vegetable and potato planting is progressing well in the dry weather but early planted vegetables, under plastic are starting to need water.

## **STIRLINGSHIRE**

The weather has now turned wet and most winter crops are looking well with little disease about. Some of the late sown winter wheats are just coming through. Winter barleys are now tillering well and there are some traces of Rhynchosporium about. Winter wheats are yet to tiller but are clean of disease. The winter oilseed rape crops are now very well established and growing well.

## **LOTHIANS**

Drier and colder as the month closes out would be a fair description of the weather of late with winter crops slow to move. Spring crops are all but in and the majority of spring cereals are at 2-3 leaf stage. Those who drilled in showery conditions have been able to consolidate the seedbeds recently, now that the crops are up and away. September drilled wheats are leaf 3 fully-emerged and October drilled wheats are leaf 3 half-emerged. T1 timing is here therefore, if not applied already. Septoria pressure appears modest currently and one might say less advanced than this time last year. Yellow rust is very hard to find and there are no obvious indications that eyespot is developing in those more prone continuous cereal situations. Early spring weed control in winter wheat, especially of annual meadow grass, has been very effective with Hatra (0.8l/ha) and Hurricane (0.1l/h).

## **BORDERS**

A dry April but the ground is slow to warm up. Potato planting is underway but the soil is 'raw' underneath. Spring Barley is sown with the last of the fields being rolled. Earlier sown crops are

starting to tiller and flushes of weeds can be found. Winter barley is progressing well with awns peeping on some crops. The majority of crops are clean, but where a T1 spray has been delayed Rhynchosporium can be found. Septoria can be found on lower leaves in winter wheat. Wheat is at GS30–31, ready for their T1 fungicides. Winter Oats are slow to progress with crops at late tillering and some at GS30. Oilseed rape is mid flowering with low levels of pests and disease.

## **LANARKSHIRE**

Winter crops are continuing to grow well with the flag leaf visible in some early sown winter barley. A spell of dry weather has encouraged some late sowing of spring barley. Ground conditions have been ideal and soil temperature are rising. The lack of moisture may be of concern where the crop has not emerged yet. Grass growth has really got underway, and the turnout of winter housed stock has started in earnest. Some multicut silage advocates are talking about a first cut in two or three weeks.

## **AYRSHIRE**

A spate of continuing dry weather has let many farmers here in Ayrshire get on the ground and get sowing done, but there have been calls for rain. In some cases crops have started to emerge, with spring barley coming through, likely at GS11–13. Winter crops seem to be responding to a much needed but expensive dressing of fertiliser and are looking fantastic. Farmers are still taking the opportunity to get on with slurry and dung, with some cattle and young stock going out. Some winter crops are just coming into ear emergence, which is early and at the current rate of growth some farms will be looking to cut silage in early May. Going by IACS cropping plans it does look as though there will be more cropping here in Ayrshire this year, with higher proportions of spring barley for stock feed and wheat going in, the counterbalance to that being that less potatoes will be grown.

## **DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY**

It has been very dry and cool over the past couple of weeks and all crops are now in need of some rain. Spring barley crops are in the ground and most are at the 2/3 leaves growth stage. Winter barley crops are looking very good and have received their T1 spray applications and the last of their nitrogen applications. Crops are ranging from growth stage 32 to flag leaf out. Everything is in need of some moisture and once we get it, growth rates will take off!

## **STRANRAER**

The recent winds and dry spell have dried soils out and have made for a relatively easy Spring in terms of getting field work done. Winter crops look strong and any early disease and weed control has now been applied. Spring cereals have established well and with rain in the forecast for the weekend this should be well timed to keep them going on. The first silage cuts have been taken for those with surplus covers. Grass growth has been good and above average to date, a relief to many who held off their usual first fertiliser application on grazing ground. However like the spring crops, we are looking for a bit rain to dissolve any fertiliser applied and keep growth kicking on. With good grass growth and bit of grass in front of stock this is an ideal opportunity to look at using paddock grazing throughout the summer to maximise our use of grass and reduce fertiliser.