

14 April 2022

General Comments

Mixed blessing as ever – the rain has interrupted progress with drilling spring crops but has been helpful in allowing winter crops to pick up fertiliser applied in drier conditions so previous yellowings have largely been corrected. Rain has also helped bring through the early drilled spring crops which are beginning to braird. And hopefully drier weather allows for the remaining spring crop to get in good order. Winter barley crops are carrying a bit of disease and T1 sprays are pending. Winter wheats are visually cleaner with septoria still to become very visible and just a few reports of yellow rust. But we can expect disease pressure to increase now that we have some moisture and the mild winter will have allowed a certain amount of disease to tick over quite happily.

Regional Comments

CAITHNESS

Another change in the weather for the period saw seeders return to the shed with quite a lot of spring seed still to go in the ground. Those that got sowing early are seeing it come through the ground with some spring barley sown near Halkirk on 21/3/2022 through the ground on 10/4/22, a week earlier than last year. Very few cattle turned out to grass yet as growth continues to be slow with applications of fertiliser to grass few and far between.

INVERNESS

In the past fortnight the Inverness area has seen much colder and wetter weather. Snow has been seen a number of times. This cold weather has slowed growth and spring work. Winter wheat and barley are at GS 30 – 31 and looking clean. The first flowers are on oilseed rape. Early sown spring barley is now through the ground.

ABERDEENSHIRE

Snow, sleet, hail & rain probably describes the last 10 days or so of wintry and wet weather, which has hampered sowing of spring crops. Early sown crops however have been under cover and are just starting to emerge. With the forecast set to improve, the early sown crops will hopefully emerge into warm conditions and allow everyone else to start/finish sowing and apply fertiliser. Ground conditions however will need a while to improve, as the ground has fairly taken a soaking during this period and care will need to be taken to avoid damaging soil structure in the rush to

get crops sown. Rain splash diseases such as Rynchosporium & Septoria have enjoyed this period, and are showing up in some winter cereals, but the frosts seem to have helped keep mildew at bay.

BANFF & BUCHAN

The last 10 days has seen the spring work interrupted as the weather has turned much colder with rain, sleet, snow and wind seen at various times. Experiencing four seasons in one day or even hour, is part and parcel of farming in Banff and Buchan after all. Ground conditions have gone from very dry to very wet, with tell-tale puddles remaining in low lying or compacted areas and several good drying days are needed before ground work can continue. Despite the cold weather, this week sees many crops of oilseed rape rapidly approaching flowering. With reports of pollen beetle being seen in some more forward crops, extra vigilance and monitoring is important with crops looking to have good potential and in light of oilseed rape values. Winter barleys also look to have good potential, being quite clean with crops having made good progress over the past week and many are fast approaching their T1 sprays. Winter wheats seem stubbornly slow to get going however, although once again are clean. The first of the spring crops are starting to peep through the ground although have a distinctly brown/ yellow tinge compared to the bright green normally associated with braided barley. Grain prices continue to climb to unprecedented levels, putting further pressure on intensive livestock producers although cattle and sheep farmers are hoping the weather will warm up soon to get grass growing to help reduce feed costs.

KINCARDINESHIRE

A cold, wet and at times snowy couple of weeks has seen spring sowing slow considerably. Early sown spring crops are just emerging, and many crops are sprouted but not emerged yet. Soil temperatures are still cold at around 7 degrees. Spring sowing would be about 50-60 % complete in the area. Winter oilseed rape is at yellow bud stage and is getting its last dose of fertiliser at the moment. Disease levels are low, and crops are looking well in general, but pigeons are still a problem in some areas. Winter wheats are variable in growth stage depending on sowing date. With most crops at late tillering or around GS30. Crops have been hit by the cold weather, but disease levels are generally low. Winter barley is approaching GS31 and there are low levels of Rynchosporium to be found in the crops. The forecast looks to be turning warmer in the next week or so which should allow fertiliser to be applied and spring sowing to be finished. Grass growth is slow in the area.

ANGUS

Cold weather has prevented the development of most crops. Spring barley sowing is almost complete and crops that have been in the ground for over two weeks are only just chitting and few fields have emerged. There is a large variation between early and late sown wheats across Angus with the most advanced fields at approximately growth stage 30. Oilseed rape has continued to advance despite the lower temperatures and most crops have had the welly boot fungicide. Although some potatoes have been planted, many growers are holding off for warmer soil temperatures as they are currently around 7 degrees C.

PERTSHIRE

Cold weather has meant crop growth has slowed somewhat. Winter barley and wheat is mostly around GS30 and disease remains on old leaves. Winter oilseed rape is at yellow bud with light leaf spot sprays having been applied. Spring barley drilling got off to a good start into good but cold seedbeds, with emergence having been fairly slow so far. Whilst many are finished drilling there are still plenty of fields still to be sown but the catchy weather is making it a slow finish.

FIFE

A great spell of dry weather allowed spring cereal sowing to be mostly completed, un-interrupted, by the start of April. The rain showers in the last 10 days were very welcome and brought the earliest sown spring barleys through the ground. They also freshened up winter crops that are getting hold of fertiliser and starting to motor on. Winter barleys and wheats are at or will reach T1 this week and will have T1 fungicides and growth regulators applied as soon as conditions and growth stage allow. Some oilseed rape fields are showing flowers but mostly at green/yellow bud. Some backward/hammered by pigeon fields, are still lower than wellie-boot height. Potato and vegetable crops are busy being established and the earliest planted fields are under plastic!

STIRLINGSHIRE

Winter barleys in the area are starting to bulk and are mostly around GS 30–31, small amounts of mildew are present in crops but overall looking well. Winter wheat leaf areas are bulking but still around the GS 21–25 with some mildew and Septoria present. Oilseed rape crops are at flower bud development stage and recovering well from the pigeon damage. Recently drilled spring barleys are germinating well and are largely at GS10 but developing rapidly with recent rainfall.

LOTHIANS

Winter sown cereals are moving into stem extension albeit recent growth has been checked somewhat by the colder weather over the last couple of weeks, with average daytime temperatures in the region of 5°C. The most forward of wheats have leaf 4 just starting to emerge although typically the majority of crops sit at GS 30. Oilseed rape growers give positive feedback on the crops potential this year and especially for those bringing the crop back into the rotation after an absence there's potential for further yield reward on fresh ground. Good progress on spring cereal drilling has been made although in the main we are still at crop pre-emergence stage. Seedbeds have come down well for the spring cereal ground albeit some min-tilled seedbeds have been compromised by the recent rains.

BORDERS

Spring barley drilling continues, with most earlier drilled crops not yet through the ground. Oilseed rape is ranging from yellow bud stage to start of flowering. Pollen beetle can be found in low to moderate numbers, depending on site. There have also been some incidents of cabbage stem beetle, largely the result of mild winter conditions. Infected plants are visibly stunted in the field, with a brown rot visible on stems. Grubs can be found by cutting into the stem. There is little that can be done at this point in the season. Winter wheat crops are largely at GS30, with low incidents of disease, largely restricted to lower leaves. Winter barley is at GS30 – heading for 31. There are some incidents of *Rhynchosporium* ahead of T1 applications.

LANARKSHIRE

A cooler and wetter spell of weather is now with us; however, all spring crop is in the ground. There are no signs of emergence yet. Areas sown do not seem to be much greater than last year. Any winter crop in need of fertiliser or spraying has been attend to and is now growing rapidly. Lambing and calving is underway for many and stock can be seen in some fields. Grass is not taking off yet. Much of it will have seen slurry but many are waiting for ideal conditions before spreading fertiliser, this year.

AYRSHIRE

Another couple of weeks of changeable weather in Ayrshire with some dry cool days and some milder wetter ones. Ploughing, cultivations and sowing of spring barley have continued when the conditions are right. Winter crops in general are looking well, although some are showing some yellowing near the tramlines. Cooler and wetter conditions have prevented a lot of people getting their spring application of fertiliser onto grassland, but with milder weather forecast these should start to go on now.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

The weather has been cold but dry over the past couple of weeks and as a result crop growth has been slow. Winter barley crops are around growth stage 30-31 with moderate levels of Rhynchosporium present. T1 fungicides will start being applied early next week. Most spring barley crops have been drilled but soil temperatures need to rise to help germination and get the seedlings up through the ground. Slurry and bagged fertiliser has been applied for first cut silages and again some heat would be welcome to get growth moving.

STRANRAER

Ploughing for spring crops is underway, but unsettled weather has delayed progress and many crops are still to be planted. Winter crops are looking well after early nitrogen applications and a return to calmer weather will see spray programmes progress.