

13 October 2022

## General Comments

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Harvest and autumn drilling have progressed well, and potato lifting is in the final stages. There have been a few reports of common scab which is not surprising given the dry conditions. Winter wheat drilling will continue for a little while yet but most of the autumn drilled crop is now in and established with few reports of slugs or aphids yet, which is all to the good.

## Regional Comments

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### KIRKWALL

It's been over a fortnight since we've had 2 consecutive dry days making it impossible to get the last few hundred acres of barley straw baled up. With the sustained rainfall saturating the land, much of the store cattle have either been sold or taken indoors.

Hundreds of cull cows are also being cashed in, with the prospect of them all being replaced highly questionable due to the current poor economic conditions and lack of confidence in the sector.

### CAITHNESS

Another mixed period of weather has seen very little happening, other than fields of straw being cleared and the last small pockets of combining being completed. Potatoes are, more or less, all lifted in the area too. Winter crop looks to have got a great start. Grass remains plentiful but some cattle are being housed as ground starts to get wetter. Winter fodder stocks appear to be very good in the area.

### ABERDEENSHIRE

Winter cereals are beginning to emerge now and are generally looking quite good. Winter wheat is still getting sown in some places, but reports of slug damage also require growers to remain vigilant and monitor for problems at this vulnerable period. Oilseed rape crops are also generally looking quite good and are in good condition to face the winter, with crops getting autumn sprays for light leaf spot and rape winter stem weevil. Most tatties are lifted now, with reports of good yields. Some late cuts of silage are still being taken, to make full use of available grass.

## **BANFF & BUCHAN**

Harvest is now finished in Banff and Buchan apart from the odd field of straw which has still to be baled, with opportunities for it to dry out fairly limited over the past fortnight. Most sowing has been completed although any settled spell still brings out a few seed drills trying to get in some more wheat. Winter barleys came through the ground very quickly and look well whereas wheat crops have taken longer to emerge with ground conditions now quite wet. Oilseed rapes have also established well, with green strips now bright yellow as volunteer barleys have been sprayed off. Next up will be Light Leaf Spot Sprays with decisions also to be made about whether an insecticide needs to be added. More and more growers seem keen to sort out fertiliser requirements for the year ahead, noticeably earlier than normal and understandable given how prices can be pulled or jump upwards at short notice. While there are good malting contracts on offer and high futures prices for next autumn providing comfort that a margin can be made, paying for inputs will put cashflows under severe pressure until next harvest.

## **KINCARDINESHIRE**

A decent spell of weather over the past few weeks has seen autumn sowing continue in good conditions. WB and WW are establishing well with later sown crops taking a little longer to emerge due to cooling soil temperatures. Oilseed rape has established well with some crops looking very advanced coming into winter. Potato harvest is nearing completion with average yields and good quality reported so far. Grass is still growing although a bit slower and conditions have been good for cattle currently outside.

## **ANGUS**

Kind weather has prevailed in Angus which has allowed potato lifting to commence with growers reporting good conditions, however skin set has been slow which has resulted in some growers having to stop. Cereal establishment has been good, with low slug pressure and wheats emerging well. Although most growers are up to date with sowing it is expected that some late sown wheats will be put in after ware potatoes as the conditions are still favourable. Oilseed rape crops are advanced, with growers now considering light leaf spot sprays and tidy up herbicides.

## **PERTSHIRE**

Autumn drilling continues into reasonable seedbeds with most now drilled up apart from some fields which still have potatoes to be lifted. Winter oilseed rape crops are well advanced due to the early drilling this year with many crops at almost full ground cover. Light leaf spot pressure may well be higher this year with the more advanced crops and the timing for this fungicide is approaching. There are also many well-advanced winter cereal crops this year and care should be taken to look out for aphids although frosts should begin to control these soon. Some of the most advanced cereals will be grazed off with lambs in the winter to hold them back and remove diseased leaves as well as providing some good feed for lambs.

## **FIFE**

Wet weather over the last couple of weeks has made potato harvest more difficult and therefore slowed down the seeding of wheat post potatoes. Earlier sown wheat and barley fields are established well, with good leaf cover already. Pre-emergent weed control seems to have worked quite well so far. Warm soil temperature and moisture are allowing crops to establish rapidly this autumn, but also suits slugs, so an eye will need to be kept on the later sown crops to manage the

slug threat. WOSR crops are well advanced with an eye now looking to light leaf spot control and any necessary weed tidy up.

## **STIRLINGSHIRE**

Winter barleys and winter oats have established well and on the whole are looking strong. Early sown winter wheats are rowing up nicely, later sown crops have been held up with recent wet weather but will still establish well. Some growers have been unable to roll and spray crops due to catchy weather over the last few weeks. Weed control could suffer, so post emergence control will be crucial. OSR crops have established well and have grown away from slug and flea beetle damage. Leave growth is progressing well, pigeon control may start to become a concern but no reports so far.

## **BORDERS**

Germination of winter cereals have been helped by warm soil temperatures and a further 28mm of rain for October, so far. Drilling of winter wheat continues, with seed beds in fine condition. Disease pressure on winter cereals appears low. Many farmers are now preparing for winter ploughing ahead of spring cereals, with lime being applied, ideally 6 months before crop establishment, where required. Oilseed rape crops are at 8–9 leaf stage, with some backward crops suffering from slug damage. Forward winter barley crops are at tillering with others at leaf 2 emerged. Most crops having received a pre-emergence herbicide. Fields designated for potatoes can now be soil tested for PCN.

## **LANARKSHIRE**

Any winter barley sown has now emerged, with most plants showing at least 2 leaves. Later sown winter wheat is just starting to show through the ground. There is little sign of disease or weed pressure at this stage. Despite the long periods of dry conditions earlier in the year, spells of very heavy rain have led to poor ground conditions. Although temperatures are dropping, they are still suitable for growth. The wet weather is starting to show on grazed grass, with some deciding to house stock rather than risking damage to pasture.

## **AYRSHIRE**

The unsettled weather in Ayrshire has continued over the last fortnight, with dry days being a rare sight. Ground conditions will soon start to really take a hit with rain in the forecast for most of the month. Temperatures have also started to drop. Most cover crops are now in the ground. Despite there being a good bit of grass about, the wet conditions have meant that cows have started to come in for the winter and more will likely come in over the next week or so.

## **DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY**

The weather has finally turned and its starting feel more like Autumn. All winter barley crops are in the ground, and most are emerged and looking well. Grass growth has finally slowed down and ground conditions are getting wetter, which will result in cattle being housed within the next week or two. Silage 2022 is finished with most reporting good yields over the summer and having plenty forage for the winter. Forage crops have had a fantastic growing season and are generally looking very good.

## **STRANRAER**

Winter sowing has largely been quite early this year with many winter wheats sown before October had arrived. Crops have germinated well into good soil conditions, but current weather could impede autumn herbicide applications. Early sowing was timed well as the last two weeks have seen approximately 80mm of rain across the area and ground conditions are beginning to deteriorate. Rainfall in the area is on track to be approximately 100mm more than 2021 but still below the 5-year average. Thoughts are turning to housing cattle and moving stock onto forage crops. There are a few more fodder beet crops in the ground with one crop weighing in at 29tDM/ha and a few others expected to yield higher. For those feeding fodder beet ensure you have planned your transition for cattle onto the crop as the transition period will make or break how successful the winter is on crop. We have also seen a case where 3 cows and calves have died from suspected bloat after grazing high clover swards. Further investigations are still underway but with a move to spread less Nitrogen and encourage clovers care must be taken in how we manage these swards to ensure we are getting the benefit without health implications.