

11 May 2023

General Comments

Septoria levels remain high in winter barley crops with some suggestions that the prevalent variety Skyscraper is particularly bad. In SRUC trials all varieties are affected, and sow date is the major driver. It looks as if yellow rust is here for the season, with some more reports of the disease around the country. Winter barley is also carrying higher than average levels of Rhynchosporium and has leapt rapidly from T1 sprays to awns emerging so the timing of T2 sprays may need adjusting. Emergence of spring crops seems good although a few wet hollows or end-riggs have been redrilled. There has also been a significant flush of weeds now.

Regional Comments

KIRKWALL

The weather has only just started to warm up and as a result, most of the spring barley is either just breaking the soil surface or still not appearing at all. Everything is about 2 weeks behind last year and the lack of grass and subsequent delay in getting cows out with the bull makes any hope of achieving an early and tight calving next spring extremely unlikely.

CAITHNESS

Still some pockets of spring crops being sown these past few days with grass seeding also being undertaken. A very cold period has seen little growth in either the spring sown crops or grass which is shown with limited numbers of cattle out to grass in the area so far, aided by plenty of fodder stocks on most farms in the area.

MORAY

Winter oilseed rape crops across the county are now in full flower and their pungent smell fills the air. Flag leaves are out in winter barley crops and indeed awns are peeping in the more advanced crops. Moderate levels of Rhynchosporium are present but this may increase after the recent showery weather. Winter wheat crops look to be thickening up as they approach flag leaf stage. Again, moderate levels of Septoria are present. Spring barley crops have braided well and the later sown crops are being top dressed this week. With the cold temperatures grass growth has been slow but is now starting to move on a bit. More potato crops are being planted this week.

ABERDEENSHIRE

The variable weather has continued over the past few weeks, some dry spells have allowed spring sowing to recommence. Spring barley crops are therefore very varied in growth stages– some crops are still being sown, whilst furthest on crops are at the tillering stage. The past couple of days have been warmer and humid, therefore disease should continue to be monitored. The AHDB forecasting tool is a useful tool to help with monitoring Sclerotinia risk in winter oilseed rape.

BANFF & BUCHAN

The last couple of weeks has seen most of the spring crops sown at last, although there are some of the more inland and later areas still with areas to sow. Remarkably many of the crops have come racing through the ground despite the stop–start nature of the spring so far. With several fields receiving pre–emergence herbicide applications, there should be no excuses about it being too dry for them to work effectively this year. Winter barleys have jumped through the growth stages and no sooner were T1s done and dusted, T2s are on us with awns almost peeping in the more forward crops. Getting some last–minute growth regulators applied is a challenge with spraying opportunities limited. Crops are quite short at the moment but a combination of heat and the abundant moisture in the soil could see a late surge of soft growth. Winter wheats are getting their T1 sprays and have come through the winter well. The countryside has finally turned yellow as oilseed rapes are in flower although gauging mid–point for the crucial spray will even more difficult than normal this year. Potato planting is ongoing, albeit slowly although today's heavy rain has brought things to a crashing halt again. Grass growth remains slow, with grass fields filling up with livestock.

KINCARDINESHIRE

What was a settled spell of weather has changed into a period of mixed weather with rain most days. Spring barley sowing is just about complete in the area and crops that are in the ground are emerging well. Winter oilseed rape is in full flower with variable levels of light leaf spot in them. Winter barley is at the awns peeping stage. T1's have given Rhynchosporium a check but there are still crops with disease present. T2's will be applied very soon. Winter wheat is generally looking well. T1's have been applied and disease seems to be under control for now. Potato planting is a stop start affair but is progressing, conditions are a little wetter than ideal. Grass is growing but a few colder nights have limited growth.

ANGUS

There has been a cold and wet start to May in Angus. Despite the delayed spring barley sowing, crops are now in the ground and good progress has been made planting potatoes. The spring crops are emerging, and three leaves have unfolded in the earliest fields. Awns are emerging in winter barley and crops are approaching T2 applications. Similarly, most winter wheat will have had a T1 application and is moving through the growth stages quickly. Oilseed rape crops are early to mid–flowering.

PERTSHIRE

Showery weather continues and whilst most spring cereals have been planted there are still a few planned fields remaining unsown yet. Spring cereals have had their challenges this year with some capping and / or flooded out low lying areas due to heavy rains after drilling. Winter oilseed rape is mostly in full flower and receiving fungicides for Sclerotinia. Winter barley crops are now at awn emergence and ready for the T2 fungicide and winter wheat is approaching flag leaf peeping out. Spray windows have been limited over the last week or two, but most are managing to keep reasonably well up to date.

FIFE

A cold a blowy week followed by a warmer showery and foggy weekend has seen crops slow in their development slightly. Winter wheat T1 fungicides were applied towards the 5th of May where weather conditions permitted. Winter barleys have first awns peeping so T2 fungicide applications are being considered, some of the most forward crops had T2 applied over the weekend. Spring barley fields are emerging and look to be rowing up well. WOSR crops are starting to flower but everything from early green bud to flowering can be found in the same field, split flowering sprays are being considered due to an expected lengthened flowering period. Potato planting is drawing to an end, and vegetable planting is moving at pace. Silage fields are bulking up and a lot of cattle have been let out into grazing fields.

STIRLINGSHIRE

We have had a real mixed weather since the last update, a lot of rain and cold snaps but some days of moderately high temperatures. The spring crops have appeared but are variable with some crops just coming up and others starting to tiller. Thoughts are that spring crops are lagging behind last year, though winter crops are doing quite well. The Winter Barley is motoring on, however Rhynchosporium present on leaf three in some crops. Awns that are first to appear are twisted in some crops showing stress most likely caused by frosts. Mildew is present in some crops too. The winter wheat crops are looking very even and clean, smaller plants than we would like but no cause for concern, small percentage of Septoria present on lower leaves. Nothing much to report since last update here. A few incidences of leaf minors stripping leaves but no major yield implications from this. Oilseed rape is still flowering, with little disease pressure, and there are still few pollen beetles about due to the continued cold weather so they are not impacting crop performance just now. Grass is now here across the county and most animals will be turned out by the end of next week, ground conditions have dried up and a bit of heat in the ground has things growing steadily now.

LOTHIANS

Most places have seen 20mm of rain this month so far. April saw 40mm typically across the Lothians so we could be on course for similar values for May. The recent rain has been welcome on the recent spring drillings and will keep the crops growing on. Grass too has flushed with the rains and warmer temperatures and there appears to be plenty of dry matter ahead of stock out at grass. Daytime temperatures have reached 17°C lately, moving up from the 11°C more typical of early May. Winter cereals are fairly consistent in development, the forward crops of barley being at awn-tipping and most forward wheats have Leaf 2 emerging. Rhynchosporium is evident in

barleys and wheats vary considerably in the levels of Septoria infection depending to some extent on rotational position and varietal susceptibility. Skyscraper appears particularly susceptible this season. There's little evidence of eyespot so far. Mid-flowering sprays are going on oilseed rape and early pod set looks encouraging along the length of the raceme. Cabbage stem weevils are easy to find and in some crops exceed the damage threshold of 1 per 2 plants. Worth walking out into the crop away from the endriggs to establish numbers.

BORDERS

32mm of rain to date for May along with warm temperatures has encouraged spring barley establishment, with forward spring barley crops now at three leaves emerged (GS13), with a flush of broadleaved weeds beginning to peep through the ground. Flowering is almost complete on forward oilseed rape crops (GS 4.9), with flowering sprays either applied or poised to be applied. Pollen beetle can be found at below threshold numbers. light leaf spot can be found and stem-based disease appears low. Winter wheat is at stem extension with leaf 2 emerging. There are reports of high levels of Septoria in susceptible varieties. The majority of T1 sprays have been applied, however poor weather has caused delays on some farms. Forward crops of winter barley are at awns peeping. There are reports of Rhynchosporium in some crops. The indications are that it will be a high risk ramularia year.

LANARKSHIRE

Although, still not high for the time of year, temperatures have risen, and plant growth has become more obvious. Winter barley is now showing awns with even the latest sown spring barley coming through the ground. Unsettled weather has meant that chances for fertiliser and plant protection applications have been few and far between. However lower temperatures have helped reduce the fungal disease burden. The wetter spring has led to an absence of early silage cut this year, so far. Grass is starting to grow well and housed stock is now starting to be turned out to the fields.

AYRSHIRE

After a drier spell, cereals, forage crops and grass were starting to need a shower of rain, which came this week within excess of 20mmm in some areas on Monday. Although a lot of the spring barley has been later sown it has emerged well, however some of those crops that were sown earlier have struggled with Manganese deficiency. Winter cereals have suffered with the wet winter, crops are looking thin with earlier ear emergence, so poorer yields are expected. The first silage was taken here in Ayrshire at the beginning of May, which for many of the multi-cut farms is earlier than usual. These cuts have generally been lighter and lacking bulk, but the regrowth has been good and a heavier second cut is expected, with some looking like their second cut will also be in May!

STRANRAER

Winter crops are starting to finally grow some biomass, but the late Spring has put crops around 2 weeks later than last year. Many winter barleys have flag leaf extended with winter wheats at GS 37. T1 sprays have been delayed and this is expected to cause some issues with timing for T2 sprays. Septoria is present in many crops due to the delays with spray timings caused by the weather. WOSR crops are at mid flowering and are up to date with spray applications. Spring plantings have been drawn out with some still to be sown, inevitably leading to a protracted harvest window. Another inch of rain yesterday just enough to hold plantings up further. Maize and fodder beet crops are sown and there a few spring bean crops sown for wholecrop. A few early fields have been taken for 1st cut but again some heat is required to boost grass growth.