

22 June 2023

General Comments

We have a few reports of BYDV in isolated single plants in spring barley – always worth checking out the cause of any yellow or stunted patches. Rust has also crept into spring barley crops – particularly along the coast or in humid field margins under trees. T2 sprays are going on to spring barley crops now and there are very few reports of spotting or ramularia so far. Septoria remains pretty visible in wheat crops but for the most part still on lower leaves. We have a few reports of stem base disease – some of it sharp eyespot rather than common eyespot.

Regional Comments

KIRKWALL

The period of warm weather we've had has significantly accelerated the growth of spring barley which has seen it rocket through the growth stages to catch up with where it should be at this time of year. Many crops are now at or are very close to the stage where awns are visible and those growers who opt for a 2-stage spraying regime are now applying fungicide. The one and only day of rain we've had in weeks has flattened the heavy crops of grass waiting to be made into silage, exposing the unwanted site of broadleaved docks in many fields. The 1 July AECS cutting date cannot come soon enough as the cold weather earlier on followed by a period of drought seems to have brought many crops to seed early.

CAITHNESS

Similar to the rest of the country we have been crying out for rain with crops really starting to struggle, especially the later sown spring crop. A heavy deluge towards the end of the period has really made a difference. Although crops were sown later over the area this spring, the warmth and then moisture has seen them more than catch up with normal sowing times for the area. Swedes, although not sown in great volume in the area anymore, were also struggling with lack of rain. Silage making is well underway and early indications have been of sufficient bulk to meet requirements.

MORAY

T3 sprays have been applied to winter barley which have entered the grain filling stages and beginning to turn colour. Crops look very good overall with potential for good yields. Winter wheat crops have also had or are about to receive their T3 head spray with crops generally mid-way through flowering stage.

There are plenty of pods on winter oilseed rape crops as seed development continues with most seeds still green. The range in growth stages between spring barley crops has shortened with later sown crops now at flag leaf or awns peeping whilst heads are fully out on more advanced crops. Mindful of potential scorch issues in this hot weather period, producers are adjusting their T2 spray programmes and spraying in the evening where possible. Again, possibly due to the hot weather there seems to be an abundance of cereal leaf beetle in many crops causing some damage to flag leaves. Earlier sown turnip crops are looking quite good but later sown crops have been affected by both the lack of moisture and flea beetle.

INVERNESS

Like the rest of the country the Inverness area has been very dry and despite some welcome showers is still in need of more rain. The past few days have seen fairly sustained showers however these have been very localised with a wide variation in the area. Spring barleys are now at GS 51 to 55. Many crops have not tillered well and are looking thin. On lighter, sandier ground crops are burning up, the recent rain may have come too late. Most T2 application have been applied to spring barley. Wheats are generally looking well, with T3 sprays being applied now. Seeds are forming well in OSR, and the rain will help. Winter barley is now at late milk, moving into early dough stage, and without more significant rain it will be an early harvest.

ABERDEENSHIRE

Crops are accelerating through the growth stages due to recent weather, T2 spring barley applications have commenced in some crops, with many having received T1 applications recently.

BANFF & BUCHAN

The long warm, dry spell has given way to much more changeable weather with heavy showers providing some much-needed moisture for crops and grass alike. Winter barleys are beginning to turn, and still need some sunshine over the next few weeks to help grain fill. In terms of disease, there is some rhynchosporium present and with the spring seeing many stressed crops, it would not be a surprise to see ramularia appear. Winter oilseed rapes have finally lost their flowers after what felt like an eternity and pods are starting to fill. Winter Wheats are coming into ear and are receiving their T3s although there is a fair bit of disease at the base of the plant. Spring barleys have caught up after their late start with the first of the T2s now being applied, a little more than 2 months after sowing. Timing is key and with a very short gap between T1 and T2, there will be a temptation to delay the T2 application to awns peeping or beyond. Potato crops are slowly growing although are still some way from "shaking hands" across the drills, with rogueing due to start in the next couple of weeks. Other crops have also been sown from carrots, swedes environmental options and grass re-seeds and following the long, dry spell after sowing, this week's rain, combined with the warm temperatures will help kick start growth.

ANGUS

The rain has finally fallen in Angus, and it was welcomed as the soil was starting to dry out and crops were being burnt on lighter land. Potatoes are making good progress through the growth stages now with many having been planted later than usual. Most of the spring barley crops now have the ears emerging and many will have had the T2 fungicide applied now. Winter barley is now around the soft dough stage and beginning to lighten in colour. Winter wheat is in the flowering stage with T3 applications being applied. The flowers have fallen off the oilseed rape crops, and the pods are filling out with the seeds developing rapidly inside.

PERTSHIRE

Significant rain has fallen over the entire area which has given a much needed boost to crops although some of the later sown spring crops have ready seen tiller numbers reduced in the dry spell. Winter oilseed rape looks well with seeds expanding inside the pods. Winter barley is beginning to change colour with grain around the soft dough stage. Winter wheat crops are at ears emerging or flowering with T3 fungicide applications in full swing. Spring barley crops are generally at awn tip or ears emerged and again the final fungicide applications are going on at present. Winter beans are now into pod set with the early chocolate spot pressure appearing to have reduced, spring beans are at the early flowering stage.

FIFE

Crops could do with a day of steady rain. Winter barleys are starting to turn golden and head size looks good, but some moisture would help with grain fill, disease levels are low. Wheats are starting to flower with good sized heads and Septoria suppressed to the oldest leaves where the spray timings have been achieved. Spring barleys are approaching or already at awns peeping stage and are showing very little disease. Vegetable and potato crops are being irrigated but water levels in rivers are very low. Rain dancers required, so long as they can call up light persistent overnight rain only.

STIRLINGSHIRE

There have been heavy thundery showers sporadically across the area. This has resulted in hay crops being flattened around Stirling and cereal crops flattened around Clackmannan. With the dry weather, winter barley crops on lighter land are ripening fast with loss of most of their green area. Grains look well filled. Winter wheats are all flowering and in some the effects of heavy rain showers can be seen in Septoria moving up the plants in some crops due to rain splash. Apart from that the crops are generally clean. Spring barleys are at ear emergence, again clean with the cereal leaf beetle starting to appear in some crops. Oilseed rape crops are in their pod development phase, little sign of disease or pests.

LOTHIANS

A reprieve from the prolonged dry spell has seen wetter and fresher conditions over the last week with anything from 15mm rain to the east to 35mm rain falling over more westerly regions.

Although helpful, it won't be enough to remedy the drought stress already evident in crops on thinner soils. Winter oats and winter wheat now have noticeable areas senescing prematurely in those fields affected and will inevitably increase screenings at harvest. The majority of wheat crops are at flowering complete (GS69) moving to watery ripe (GS 71). T3 applications are complete and upper plant disease pressure is low. First aphids are migrating onto ears but at relatively low levels. Oilseed rape crops continue to show promise albeit brassica pod midge larvae can be found within pods at low levels as a result of earlier cabbage seed weevil activity. Ear counts in spring barley crops are sub-optimal for many and on later plantings, particularly so. Cereal leaf minor beetle larvae are evident on flag leaves and some T2 applications will have included an insecticide for this reason.

BORDERS

The Borders received a very welcome 25–30 mm of rain on Sunday evening. Spring barley is at GS55 (half of ear emerged above flag leaf ligule), crops are generally very clean due to the lack of rain. T2 fungicide are being applied. Winter barley is at GS 83 (early dough). Ramularia can be found on lower leaves. The crop is starting to senescence. Winter wheat is at GS65 (flowering halfway). Septoria on lower leaves, however flag leaf and leaf 2 appear clean. T3 are being applied. WOSR is at 6,3 (most seeds green). There are symptoms of light leaf spot to be found on stems, however damage doesn't appear to be significant.

LANARKSHIRE

Temperatures have risen and stayed in the mid to high twenties for the past 3 weeks. Plant growth is ahead of schedule with several spring barley crops in the area at GS49. Winter barley is currently between GS75–77 and oilseed rape is at GS80. The abnormally high temperatures and dry weather for an extended period has allowed most farms to take their first cut silage. The dry period has also provided an excellent opportunity to make hay over a month prior to when is typical. On the other hand, parts of the area are now in desperate need of rain with some of the driest farms having scorched grass fields. Looking forward to subsequent cuts its looking likely that some farms will have a lower grass yield than expected due to poor growing conditions.

AYRSHIRE

Following another hot and dry fortnight in Ayrshire there was a small sigh of relief at the weekend when there were some showers, in some cases around 20mm on Sunday evening. Crops, grass and livestock were certainly all needing it. Spring barley crops have been racing through the growth stages, with a lot now at ear emergence, and some crops looking to be fairly short. Winter crops are changing colour as they start to ripen. Plenty of later first cut silages and hay have been take over the last couple of weeks, but many silage re-growths are slow to get away due to lack of rain.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

We have had very little rain in the region over the past two weeks and things are now getting a bit desperate in some areas. Spring crops are struggling badly with most producing their seed heads early due to stress. Crops are clean from disease, but they are very short and not well tillered. Most southernly facing hills and have been burnt badly with no recovery. Winter barley crops have done very well this season, they are clean and generally at GS85-87. Whole crop barley will start in the next couple of days. Grass growth is a major concern in the region. Second cuts should be underway however there is very little to cut, and quality is poor due to stressed plants shooting their heads up early. Rain is forecast for the next week, so fingers crossed we see some moisture to allow growth to catch up.

STRANRAER

There has been a little respite with some rainfall over the weekend, amounting to about 25mm in some areas but a lot more rainfall is needed. Winter barleys are around GS85-87. Spring barleys are varied and with the drought stress are heading with not a lot of substance to them, leaving concerns about straw yields. In forage crops, fodder beet crops are approaching canopy closure whilst sowing of forage rape and kale crops have been delayed due to the lack of moisture to help them germinate. Grass growth is back significantly with mixed results on silage yields depending on cutting dates and if there was any rainfall. Whilst the rainfall was welcome this week the region still resembles a desert on the shallower soils.