

26 May 2022

General Comments

Inevitably the weather begins to average out and after a prolonged dry spell we are back to rain. Crops still look well though and the key feature remains how advanced the season is. Spraying by the calendar is certainly not a good plan for this season.

Regional Comments

KIRKWALL

Rising temperatures and plenty of rain has once again transformed Orkney back into a green and pleasant land. Spring barley crops have established better than last year when conditions were too dry initially. However, there are reports of severe damage from leatherjackets in some crops. Grass has grown well during May, and a dry forecast would see the first silage being mown in the county. But, like the barley, there are many established grass fields which have been hit by crane fly larvae. Thankfully these pests are now entering their dormant pre-pupating phase where they will not be able to create any more havoc this year.

CAITHNESS

A good growing period with some proper heat at last, albeit with some showers has seen winter crop and most spring crop really prosper. However, some farmers are reporting extensive damage to spring crop by grub, with some fields having to be resown. The limited areas of potatoes grown in the area have been planted in excellent conditions with some turnips now being sown. Grass growth has obviously also accelerated in the period.

MORAY

A mixed spell of weather this past fortnight, has brought some much-needed rain but little in the way of sunshine or increased temperatures. Early sown spring barley crops are looking well at mid tillering, and in general very clean and herbicides have been applied. Heads have emerged in winter barley crops which are looking good with any disease confined to lower leaves. Winter wheat flag leaves are appearing and again are looking in good order although a reasonable amount of Septoria can be found, but further down in the crop. Winter oilseed rape crops are losing their petals, with one or two pods starting to appear.

INVERNESS

The past fortnight in the Inverness area has seen a mixture of warm weather, with temperature in the high teens, and moderate to heavy rain. This has made for very good growing conditions with all crops looking the better for it. Spring barleys have benefitted most from the warm wet weather, early crops are now at stem extension and later sown crops are tillering. Winter barley is now flowering and with very low levels of disease seen. Winter wheat is at GS41 to 45 and looking clean. OSR is looking well and moving into pod development. Grass growth is also looking good, with most cows not turned out and silage fields are bulking up.

ABERDEENSHIRE

After a lovely growthy week last week, we have had a showery, windy week, which will have no doubt played havoc with spraying operations. Crops have perked up nicely after the showers of rain which have been much needed, and although disease levels in most crops appear low at present, I am sure diseases will be enjoying the conditions as well, so vigilance is required. Second OSR flowering sprays have been applied and flag leaf in winter wheat is emerging. The growthy weather has encouraged a flush of weeds in spring crops and weeds sprays and T1 fungicide sprays are being applied.

BANFF & BUCHAN

The last fortnight has seen a spell of more changeable weather and some much needed rainfall. Oilseed rape crops have received their mid flower sprays and the crops are now losing their bright yellow lustre as the petals start to fall. Oilseed rape crops are looking very well and hopefully this will translate into yields to capitalise on the high values being offered for new crop. Winter Barleys also look to have good potential, now with the ear fully emerged although are a bit more mixed in terms of disease with Rhynchosporium present. Winter wheats are moving towards their T2 after a slow start, although again disease is being found. Spring crops have finally got going after a slow start with the recent rains almost acting as a catalyst to their growth. Weed sprays are being applied and given that the spring barleys may well race through the growth stages, wild oats sprays could be a challenge. Elsewhere, potatoes have been planted and grass is now growing with the first of the silages soon to be cut.

ANGUS

Crops across the county look generally excellent due to the kind weather recently. However, the frequent showers and blustery days have made good spraying weather hard to come by. Wheat is at T2 timing in most cases, and we have seen volunteer potatoes in a range of crops, potentially due to the lack of winter frost. Oilseed rape is beginning to turn with even the latest crops past the halfway flowering mark. Winter barleys have had the T2's and are generally clean, however a few growers have noted that this year's winter barley is very tall. Spring barley weed sprays have done an excellent job, and most crops are now nearing T1, if they are not already there.

PERTHSHIRE

Warm but showery weather has proven ideal for crop growth even if less suitable for spraying. Crops are motoring on now with oilseed rape mostly past flowering and into pod development,

winter barley in ear and beginning to flower, winter wheat at flag leaf and all with low disease levels. Spring cereals are at late tillering and beginning stem extension and have received herbicides and trace elements and now onto T1 fungicides. Thoughts have turned to next year's cropping, for many much earlier than usual as people try to secure fertiliser for next season.

FIFE

Fife cereals and WOSR are looking very well. Disease levels are fairly low, although some Rhynchosporium can be seen in spring barley crops that are waiting for a weather window to have their T1 fungicide applied. Forward wheats have had their T2 fungicides applied, with later sown crops approaching full flag leaf this week. Septoria can be found on lower leaves, but its suppression with the T2 spray should be ok so long as timings are not stretched due to windy weather! Oilseed rape is reaching the end of flowering with very little sign of disease present. Veg and some potato fields have irrigators running in them already. First of the silage fields have been cut and gathered, so 6 weeks from now silage sampling can start.

STIRLINGSHIRE

Winter barleys in the area have progressed well in the last fortnight, with crops being observed just at the start of flowering and well into it GS62-65. Winter wheat mostly looking very clean, early head emergence observed GS 43-46. WOSR are through flowering with pod development at GS 5.8 90% pod development. SB crops have tillered well (4-6 tillers) having benefitted from recent wet weather. Crops have been observed at GS 31-32 widely. Spraying has been hampered in recent weeks with windy conditions and frequent rain showers putting pressure on sprayer workloads in the area.

LOTHIANS

It's been a relatively dry month so far with rainfall typically in the region of 26-32mm to the 24th of the month. That is somewhat down on last year's range of 84-116mm for May. Despite the drier conditions, crops look 'growthy' and spring barley certainly seems to be pushing on through the growth stages and is now approaching the start of stem extension and T2 application timing. The only crops of spring barley that seem to be struggling are those last to go in, I would envisage because it has become progressively drier as we've moved from March to May. Spring barleys do appear very clean and manganese deficiency is not readily expressing itself yet. T2's will go on wheats now as conditions allow and Septoria still remains confined to the lower canopy. Oilseed rape has had an uninterrupted flowering window which bodes well for pod set. Winter barleys appear plenty tall enough despite the dry conditions and must be a welcome sight for those requiring straw. Spring beans and dry harvesting pea crops are few and far between, but establishment looks promising.

BORDERS

27mm of rain for May has been welcome, with cereal crops advancing quickly and 1st cut silage crops beginning to be cut. Spring barley is ranging from tillering to GS32 with most crops free from disease. Windy conditions have limited spraying opportunities and some herbicides are still to be applied. Spring oats are at GS30 with mildew present in some crops. T2 flag leaf sprays are being applied to winter wheat crops with Septoria present on lower leaves and the more forward

now at GS43 (mid boot stage). Winter barley is at GS65 (mid flowering), with incidence of *Rhynchosporium* in some crops. Oilseed rape crops are at GS 6:2 (seeds are full sized and translucent) incidents of stem-based disease is minimal. Potato planting is complete and early planted crops will soon receive first blight spray.

LANARKSHIRE

Reasonable temperatures and adequate rainfall have been helping all crops to flourish. The early stages of grain development can be seen on most winter barley and flag leaves are visible on winter wheat. Good growing conditions have seen all spring barley progressing well. Any fears for crops sown late into a dry seed bed have been unjustified as they are racing through the growth stages. Disease and weed pressure have been low and, despite plenty of rain, ground conditions have allowed for application of fertiliser and crop protection products. The changeable weather has not been so good for silage makers. Along with the cereal crops, grass has also been racing through the growth stages and quality is starting to drop.

AYRSHIRE

Weather has continued to be unsettled in the area with patchy showers and mixtures of temperatures. Some fields of spring barley are beginning to look stressed with the cooler wetter weather and showing manganese deficiency. Most spring barley crops are between GS19 and GS21. Some plants are starting to show signs of *Ramularia* on individual leaves. Winter crops are generally looking well. The weather has also played havoc with those trying to get first cut silages in with some heavy showers catching a lot of people out over the last week and ground starting to get tender, so first cuts have generally been wet but overall are heavy crops.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

The past warm wet weather has resulted in some great growing conditions. Most if not all, winter barley crops are looking tremendous with little disease. Most of the winter barleys are at growth stage GS 61-65 with their ears out and flowering. Spring barleys are also looking good especially the earlier drilled crops. Spring barley are ranging from mid tillering to GS32. Crops are clean of disease and T1 fungicides and herbicides are being applied. Grass growth has been phenomenal considering many farmers have reduced their nitrogen inputs. Harvesting is proving extremely difficult with the unsettled weather and many farmers have made wetter silage than they would have liked.

STRANRAER

Grass growth is by far the hot topic in the Southwest. The mild temperatures and consistent rain have resulted in some bumper first cut yields, in some cases filling the 2nd cut pit as well as 1st cut pit. However, harvesting conditions have not been ideal so there are large amounts of effluent being produced and some reports of pit slippage. Spring cereals have had successful germination and are experiencing rapid growth, but again the catchy weather is delaying progress of spraying. Winter cereals are on track for an early harvest and look like they will yield well. Account will need to be taken this year for the nutrient offtakes from any increased yields of grain and grass.