

8 June 2023

General Comments

It is a period of stress for crops with quite large swings in temperature, with dry prevailing conditions and cool winds drying things even more. Manganese deficiency is showing in a few spring barley crops and growth (since it has been so rapid) is often a little soft and lush. Disease levels in winter crops have been so well established for so long that they haven't changed much. A few more reports of yellow rust in wheat where flag leaf sprays are being applied.

Regional Comments

KIRKWALL

The air temperature has still not risen to where it should be, with daily highs reaching only 11–12°C. That, coupled with very little rainfall in the last month, is making everything a little later than normal. Spring barley is still at the tillering stage and some farmers have concerns of a potential shortage of grass, with grazed fields slow to recover. Things should explode into life in a week or so if the weather forecast of rain and temperature rises are correct.

CAITHNESS

Another fine period of warmth has seen spring crops catching up on “normal” years. The later sown crop looks to be suffering a bit with the lack of moisture, never usually a problem in the area. It has also really boosted the winter crop in the area. Grass growth has been slower in general this year, that said early silage making is underway with bales and pit having been made whilst still in May.

MORAY

The yellow patchwork is disappearing from the landscape as petals have fallen from winter oilseed rape crops and pods start to fill. There is a massive variation in spring barley crops this year with the most advanced crops having flag leaves out, whilst other crops are at mid tillering and some late sown crops just emerging. Most crops are clean with minimal disease but there are some areas of *Rhynchosporium* starting to develop. Heads have emerged on winter wheat crops with some crops just started to flower. Many crops have issues with mildew albeit confined to the lower stem and leaves and some *Septoria* can be found. Winter barley has now come to the end of flowering and is looking very good. The first silage crops have been secured which for some is a bit earlier than usual. Initial signs are of a heavy crop which is just as well as second cuts may be light unless some rainfall arrives. Everywhere is in need of rain.

INVERNESS

The weather in the Inverness area has continued to be hot and dry over the past fortnight. Crops are looking okay for the most part but rain will be needed soon before crops start to suffer. Spring barley is at stem extension stage and looking well, apart from a lack of moisture on lighter ground. Winter Barley and winter wheat overall are clean and looking well. Recently sown swede crops are struggling to establish well in the dry conditions. Silaging is well underway in the area and early reports are that yields are good.

ABERDEENSHIRE

Disease pressure in all crops should continue to be monitored, particularly with the humid conditions experienced over the past few weeks. The earliest winter oilseed rape crops are coming out of flowering. For crops still flowering the AHDB Sclerotinia forecast should continue to be monitored. Spring barley growth stages are very varied due to a wide range of sowing dates. T2 sprays in winter wheat have continued over the past two weeks.

BANFF & BUCHAN

The warm dry spell has seen the countryside start to bloom and while the call was for the rain to stop a few short weeks ago, the pendulum has swung the other way and some areas are looking for moisture to sustain growth, particularly to the east of Buchan where heavy soils have dried out. Winter barleys are now flowering and hopefully the next month or so sees plenty sunshine to fill the grains. Rynchosporium is present in most crops and there is concern that Ramularia will start to appear after a stressful growing season. Winter oilseed rape crops are stubbornly holding onto their flowers, with the flowering period much longer than normal. Estimating mid flower period was difficult and those who went early may be considering a follow-up. Winter wheats are getting T2s although some crops are now booting and not far from ear emergence. Spring barleys have raced through the growth stages so far and many crops have now had T1s applied, although some crops on heavier land are struggling. Observing a 3-week gap after a hormone herbicide for a wild oat spray before cut-off will be very difficult this year. This year has seen more growers apply pre-emergence weed sprays with good results seen on the whole. Potato growers are finished planting and the first of the tatties are starting to peep out from the top of the drills. First cuts of silage are being taken and cattle look to be thriving in the fields as they too enjoy the weather.

KINCARDINESHIRE

A long period of dry, warm, sunny weather has seen crops grow very quickly. Winter oilseed rape in the area is variable with some crops having lost all the flowers and some still in flower. Crops look to be podding well but there are variable levels of light leaf spot depending on treatments and sowing date. Winter wheat is splitting the boot with some earlier crops at ear emergence. There is yellow rust in the area and Septoria levels are variable depending on variety. Winter barley is at the late flower early milk stage and is looking well. Spring barley crops are generally looking good, but some later sown crops are beginning to struggle and in need of rain. Silage making is under way with some decent looking yields of grass however rain is needed to make sure aftermaths return and grazing grass continues to grow.

ANGUS

The sun continues to shine in Angus, although some rain would be welcome to brighten up spring crops! All potatoes are in the ground now, with the earliest planted potatoes starting to emerge. Spring barley continues to move through the growth stages quickly, with many having a T1 application applied. Winter barley ears are fully emerged, however, there remains some Rhynchosporium in most crops. Winter wheat crops have had their T2 applications, with the majority in the booting growth stage. The petals are finally starting to fall off the oilseed rape crops, and the seed pods can be seen developing.

FIFE

The very dry spell of weather has allowed field operations to take place uninterrupted, so potato planting seems complete, and vegetables are up to date. The first irrigators on early planted veg and potatoes swung into operation last week, the first SEPA low water warning email was issued last Friday. Cereal crops are looking well, and winter barley is starting to flower, winter wheats have mostly had their flag leaf fungicide (some yellow rust being found which caused last minute adjustments to T2 fungicide choices) and spring barleys ranging from GS25 to GS39. In the main, disease levels seem to be quite low in spring barley and T1's were more protectant than curative. There are some very lush spring barleys about so growth regulation has been carried out on some crops. Most oilseed rapes are coming to the end of flowering and disease levels look low.

STIRLINGSHIRE

Weather still dry and warm. There hasn't been rain here for the last 11 days. Spring crops drilled early are all through and generally tillering well, the later ones drilled in sandier soils are not as far on as hoped. This warmer weather has brought on their growth stages, but rain needed, these crops are looking quite clean. Winter Barley is into the last stages of flowering; sprays have knocked out most disease with Rhynchosporium only hanging on at the base of the plants. Crops on heavier soils looking well, whereas the crops on lighter soils now showing drought symptoms and some loose smut also found here. Winter wheat crops on the carse are well into the booting stage are looking very even. As usual there is a bit of Septoria damage on the lower leaves, but this is not coming up into upper leaves. Oilseed rape has finished flowering in most places with only the odd later drilled field having any flowers left. The crops are all in pod development phase, there appears little disease pressure and pest presence. Slurry and fertiliser are being applied to the aftermath of first cut silages but waiting for some moisture in most places to get it working.

LOTHIANS

Overall continuing dry into June having seen below average rainfall in May (+/-20-30mm) across the region. Crops are not yet drought stressed but later sown spring cereals appear most affected. Early-sown spring barleys now have flag leaf emerging/emerged and carry higher levels of Rhynchosporium than later sown crops, albeit at low levels. BLW weed control has been effective although outbreaks of coltsfoot have been seen which is difficult to control due to its large tap root. T2 recommendations are going out ahead of the optimum timing (GS45-49) awns first visible to half emerged. Wheats remain relatively clean on top 3 leaves. Mildew is coming into the base of many crops and will need monitoring. First aphid colonies are also evident on leaves. T3 application for fusarium is approaching with the optimum timing coinciding with first

anthers showing (GS61–63). Oilseed rape yield potential continues to look promising given the high level of pod set. Silaging continues, although, for some with heavier crops, wilting has been slow where cloud cover has persisted.

BORDERS

No rain recorded since 19th May and along with warm temperatures late sown spring crops are starting to struggle. The most advanced spring barley crops are at flag leaf just visible, and the crops are very clean. Flowering has been completed and pod development is under way with seeds starting to expand. Light leaf spot can still be found and there appears to be some incidents of sclerotinia on stems. with seeds starting to expand. Winter wheat is ranging flag leaf fully emerged (GS39) to half of head emerging (GS55). Septoria is present, particularly in susceptible varieties, however this appears to have stopped at lower leaves. Forward crops of winter barley are grain fill, many crops appear clean. Rhynchosporium, if seen is low down in the crop in some.

LANARKSHIRE

Spring Barley crops overall are looking well although drier areas within fields are showing stunted, yellowing plants exhibiting signs of stress at the lack of moisture. Nothing that a rain shower would not help! Disease pressure on the main appears to be low and weather conditions have been favourable to allow for spraying programmes to get on top of any weed problems that may have emerged. Silage crops have been taken in good conditions with good yields reported. Many Dairies are now gearing up for their 2nd cut.

AYRSHIRE

The dry spell continues in Ayrshire with most farms having very little or no rain in the last four weeks. Spring crops could do with a shower or two. Spring barley crops are ranging from growth stage 25–29. Many are clean crops, but some are showing a small amount of Ramularia. Most silage fields could also do with some rain, especially those that have already been taken for a cut needing a boost for regrowth. The consistent dry weather is, however, allowing for hay to be made, with a lot of fields sitting with cut hay in the area.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

There has been no rain in the region over the past two weeks and all crops are now desperately needing some moisture. Spring barley crops have been looking very good but are now starting stress on the lighter land. Growth stages are around 32/33 with most crops having received their T1 fungicide applications. Disease pressure is very low due to the dry weather. Winter crops haven't taken as much hurt as the spring crops, with winter barley at the late milk to early dough growth stage. Grass growth has nearly stopped, and fields are browning badly on the lighter land. There are concerns regarding silage yields if this dry weather continues.

STRANRAER

The dry spell continues with the last significant rainfall on 21st May. Despite higher rainfall in the first 5 months of the year in comparison to 2022, May rainfall was only 50% of last years and the

persistent wind throughout the spring has quickly put us in a place where growth is being affected by the dry weather. Winter crops in general look well with winter barleys well through flowering. Later sown spring crops are now beginning to struggle due to dry conditions. Whilst cultivations for grass leys or forage crops have been easy with the good weather, sowing is being delayed until there is some rain forecast. Some second cut silages will be taken this week on dairy farms and look to yield well again; however, rain will be needed for regrowth and grazing fields are starting to struggle with areas with shallower soils starting to burn up.