

12 May 2022

General Comments

Crops are looking well in the main and spring barley has braided well. The rain and little rise in temperatures has seen a flush of weeds suddenly very visible. Awns are starting to peep in winter barley at some of our trial sites so final sprays are going on. Winter barleys are carrying a bit of disease, especially where T1 sprays were a bit delayed.

Regional Comments

ORKNEY

The spring barley in the county has now all been sown, with most entering good seedbeds. A rise in temperature would now be most welcome. There are widespread reports of severe damage in grassland from grub (cranefly larvae). Perhaps the mild, frost free winters are allowing populations to flourish? There are concerns that the barley will be similarly impacted – particularly where it follows grass – but it is too early to tell. Cattle are slowly being turned out, but a wet winter, cool spring and thousands of overwintering greylag geese have certainly taken their toll on the grass.

CAITHNESS

Another excellent spell of weather has seen all the spring crop in the ground and the earlier sown spring crops are starting to motor now. Winter crop in the area is looking extremely well. A lot of cattle now out to grass and grass growth has improved dramatically in the period. Fertiliser and fuel costs continue to be the main topic of conversation.

INVERNESS

The past fortnight has seen dry and warm weather, this allowed spring sowing to be completed in excellent conditions. The earliest sown spring barleys are now tillering and the later sown are through the ground very quickly. Winter barley is now ranging from GS 49 to 55 and are looking largely clean. Winter wheat is at GS 41 and also looking largely disease free. OSR is now moving from flowering to pod development stage. Potato planting is well underway in the area.

ABERDEENSHIRE

With a showery, windier week, it is a week of mixed blessings, as some crops have been looking for a shower, but the windier weather will have reduced spraying and fertiliser spreading opportunities. The showers are however encouraging a flush of weeds and aiding emergence of later sown spring crops. Spring crop herbicide applications will soon be required. The awns are peeping in the winter barley, the winter oilseed rape is flowering, and winter wheat is starting to thicken up as it grows towards flag leaf emergence. *Rhynchosporium* is causing problems in some fields of winter barley, and traces of light leaf spot have been seen in winter oilseed rape, but generally crops are looking clean at present. The showery weather however will be encouraging disease spread, so growers will need to be on guard. With the leaves coming out on the trees, tatties are also beginning to get sown, and cattle are now out at grass, although some are just out.

BANFF & BUCHAN

The weather continues to be changeable, a couple of glorious sunny days followed by colder, dull spells as well as the odd shower, some of which have been quite heavy. This mix of weather does seem to have kickstarted the growth of crops and grass alike. Winter barleys are now approaching awns peeping with T2s being applied with disease levels variable however crops on the whole are looking very well. Winter wheats are starting to grow away and are receiving their T1 sprays. Oilseed rapes are in flower with the first of the mid flower sprays beginning to be applied and like the winter barley crops are looking well. Spring barley crops are somewhat more mixed with the poor weather at the start of April having taken its toll with blank areas on areas which were compacted or waterlogged or on lighter land, capped. After a slow start however some of the earlier crops are fast approaching their weed spray. Good progress is also being made with potato planting.

KINCARDINESHIRE

Between 15mm and 40mm of rain, depending on area, has fallen in May and this has made a big difference to crops. Winter oilseed rape is well through flowering and a lot of crops look even and in good health. Winter wheat is around GS 37 and is looking well. Disease levels are low and T1 sprays seem to be doing what is required. Winter barley is at awns peeping with some crops the heads are out. Again, disease levels are low, with only small amounts of *Rhynchosporium* found. Spring barley has benefitted from the rain and is looking well in general. Some of the later sown crops have patchy emergence but are now emerging. There has also been a good flush of weeds. Potato planting is progressing well in good conditions. Grass is growing and silage crops look to be bulking up well.

ANGUS

Recent showers have certainly helped the Angus countryside green up over the past few days. There is some disease on winter barley which has brought forward T2 timings to keep the top of the crops clean. Spring barley herbicides are being applied and the last of the nitrogen on the later winter wheat is also keeping sprayers busy. Oilseed rape is flowering and most crops look well.

FIFE

The rain showers through the weekend were much needed to freshen up the spring barley fields, but it does mean that weeds are taking off too! So weed control will be pressing over the next week or so. Winter barleys are at awns peeping, so T2 fungicide recommendations are awaiting application. Rhynchosporium bubbling away that requires controlling in a few fields. Winter wheats range from T1 in one field to approaching T2 in the neighbouring field, depending on sowing date. Septoria can be found on older leaves in those approaching T2 but the rust that was around at T1 seems to have been controlled. Most winter oilseed rape crops have had the sclerotinia mid flowering spray and are looking healthy with only low levels of light leaf spot seen here and there.

PERTSHIRE

Recent rain has freshened crops up with spring cereals now beginning to tiller and the moisture has also produced a good flush of weeds to be taken out. Winter oilseed rape is around full flower with petals now falling and sclerotinia sprays being applied. Winter barley is at ears emerging and close to the T2 fungicide timing with most crops looking fairly clean. Winter wheat crops have now all had the T1 spray and the most advanced have a flag leaf just tipping out. All in all, crops look full of potential with few poor crops around this year.

STIRLINGSHIRE

Winter barleys in the area have progressed well in the last fortnight with crops being observed at GS 52-53 some Rhynchosporium is present in some crops. Winter wheat on the whole is looking clean with GS 37 widely observed with diseases levels relatively low. Winter oilseed rape are well into flowering being observed at GS 4.5, 50% flowering. Spring barley crops have established well and have benefitted from the recent wet weather we have had in the area. Crops have been observed at GS 22.

LOTHIANS

Spring cereals are developing a-pace, tillering freely and quickly increasing on ground coverage. The showery weather of late is encouraging a flush of weeds too and although there's still more emerging, some will be applying a herbicide with a T1 fungicide before the weeds get too shielded out. There is less evidence of manganese deficiency at this stage of the season in the spring barleys. The most forward winter wheats are just showing flag leaves and starting to look more and more promising as the weeks pass. Oilseed rape has branched tremendously with no specific disease threats to report.

BORDERS

The majority of spring barley are tillering, with a flush of weeds now noticeable in the field. Forward winter wheat crops are at GS 33, with leaf 2 unfolded. Leaves are largely clean. Winter barley is at GS 49 (Awns peeping), with some incidents of Rhynchosporium to be found in crops. Winter oilseed rape is ranging from 50% flowered to 90% flowered. There is some light leaf spot to be found in crops. Incidents of stem based disease appears low.

LANARKSHIRE

Rising temperatures and a dry spell followed by some just in time rain, has encouraged growth. Awns can be seen on most winter barley having pushed through any disease challenge. The latest sown spring crops have now emerged and are growing well. Some weeds are also growing well and will need sprayed at the first opportunity. The first silage has been cut at the weekend and is already starting to green up again. In general grass growth is good.

AYRSHIRE

After a dry couple of weeks in Ayrshire, crops were starting to look like they were needing a drink. Over the last few days the rain has returned which has already helped crops and grass to jump. Spring barley looks even and is around GS 13. Heavy showers mean that the ground will need a few days to settle for those needing to get on with any fertiliser applications. Silage ground is looking well, a few people have already taken a cut of silage and there are plenty in the area that are on multi-cut systems just waiting for the weather to go.

STRANRAER

Rainfall in the southwest has been regular and growth has been very pleasing across all crops. Winter wheat is looking like the most promising crop to exceed yield expectations; however the intermittent rain has meant T1 applications are behind. Crops are typically at GS 37. Winter barley is a mixed bag with some crops suffering badly from BYDV and or manganese deficiency despite multiple foliar sprays. Crops range from flagleaf emergence to full ear emergence. Overall winter wheat and winter barleys are about 10 days ahead of last year. Some winter barley varieties have been very disappointing in terms of susceptibility to disease in what has largely been a good year. The mild winter has resulted in the survival of aphid populations despite autumn sprays and we are also seeing some late mildew in the thicker canopy crops. Across the region there is an increase in the area of fodderbeet being sown and more appetite for forage crops and herbal leys as livestock farms look to reduce reliance on fertiliser and concentrate feeds. There are plenty of 1st cut silage crops ready to harvest once the weather settles and they look like they will yield well. Fertiliser prices are expected to increase again next week however with good moisture and growth, the response to N applied is high but it will be critical to maximise this growth by utilising the grass with effective grazing or ensiling.