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| **Mixed yields mid-harvest in Scotland** | 00/00/00 |

Across the country harvest is well underway and initial results are looking promising according to Scotland’s BASF agronomy manager Scott Milne and arable farmer of the year, Scott Campbell.

“Overall, we’ve fared better up here in Scotland than our counterparts in England,” says Mr Milne. “We don’t have the same black-grass pressure as parts of England, so our earlier drilling dates meant, on the whole, crops were in the ground and established before the worst of the wet weather hit last autumn, and that’s showing in the harvest results.”

“There are some exceptions. Oilseed rape (OSR) results are very mixed, winter barley didn’t tiller well and some herbicide programmes were interrupted. But there are some good spring barley yields, the wheat has potential and potatoes are looking very promising.”

**SPRING BARLEY**

Mr Campbell started combining his spring barley last Sunday (23rd August) on his 415ha farm in Aberdeenshire. “The field of Diablo that we cut at the weekend yielded 7.5t/ha with nitrogen at 1.3%. It’s a small area but a good start,” he says.

“There’s a fair amount of skinning,” notes Mr Milne. “Which may cause issues for those crops going for malting. The reason is unclear at the moment – it could be a several factors including the rain we’ve had pre-harvest. Last Tuesday we had over 82mm in just two hours.”

“We’re at the stage now where we could do with the rain stopping so we can get cracking with the spring barley.”

Mr Campbell has 200ha of spring barley and 40ha of winter wheat still to combine he hopes the weather continues to be kind. “Although it’s been wet, the rain hasn’t affected us too much yet. Fingers crossed it stays that way and we can bring in the remaining crops safely.”

**WINTER BARLEY**

“On the whole, winter barley struggled this year,” says Mr Milne. “The wet winter weather meant many crops were very patchy and poorly tillered. There are some good crops around but generally it’s been a hard year for winter barley.”

Mr Campbell has been conducting a variety trial on his farm, comparing the gross margins of KWS Tower and Syngenta Kingsbarn. Yielding 9.6t/ha and 10.45t/ha, respectively.

“Kingsbarn had the higher gross margin despite its higher seed and input costs, but there was only £10/ha between the two.”

“I’m pleased with the yields of both varieties,” he says. “But I need to be. With winter barley I need the yield to balance the low prices and high input costs.”

**OSR**

“On the whole rape crops have performed well and better than expected at 4.5t/ha,” notes Mr Milne.

Mr Campbell’s crop of Platinum averaged 4.2t/ha. “We’ve one field that hadn’t seen OSR for nine years due to sclerotinia and that’s yielded 4.9t/ha.”

“We got oil content results back today. Our crop averaged 45.5%. We’d 11% moisture content at harvest which is really good for here. Overall, I’m quite happy with the crop’s performance,” he says.

With this year’s OSR going into the ground now, Mr Milne points out the importance of pre-ems. “Last year many growers waited to see whether crops had established before applying herbicides. But the weather broke and by the time conditions were suitable for spraying, weeds were too big. It’s good to see more pre-ems going on this year,” he says.

**POTATOES**

“Most of the seed potatoes have been burnt down already,” observes Mr Milne.

“The late blight has been kept under control with sprays at 7 day intervals and across the country, crops are looking very good. One of the hardest part this year has been virus control and that’s going to a bigger challenge next year with the revocation of various insecticides.”

**WINTER WHEAT**

Harvesting of winter wheat is still a week or two away and according to Mr Milne, there’s potential for some good yields.

“Herbicides performed well against annual meadow grass. Where pre-ems were applied last autumn, they did a good job. Though those that relied on post-ems later in the season found they hit crops hard.”

“While we saw some Septoria coming in to crops towards the end of July, there’s generally been lower disease pressure. Still, you can see how the effects of a robust T2. Those crops have held onto green leaf area longer in comparison with those that had a weaker fungicide.”

Mr Campbell’s winter wheat was still looking green a fortnight ago. “I’m wondering whether an application of Revystar® XE at T2 has helped kept it that bit greener, that bit longer,” he says.

Mr Milne reports that the drilling of next year’s crop is already underway on some farms, though the bulk of Scotland’s winter wheat acreage will be sown in September as usual.

**WINTER** **OATS**

Winter oats have been grown on Mr Campbell’s farm for the first time since 1986. “They’ve yielded really well and we’re looking to double our area next year, using them as a break crop ahead of winter wheat.”

Mr Campbell will be growing the varieties Eagle and Dalguise. “Oats don’t need many fungicide applications. We’ll be mainly be protecting these crops from crown rust and mildew which are easier and cheaper to control than yellow rust and Septoria in wheat, for example.”

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