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Teagasc Specialist TILLAGE CROPS REPORT Harvest Report



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Headlines

- The overall production of cereals for 2018 is estimated to be approx. **1.8 million tonnes**, down from 2.3 million tonnes in 2017. This 500,000 tonne reduction from 2017 is significantly below the 5 year rolling average of 2.3 million tonnes. It is the smallest recorded harvest since 1995.
- The total cereal area continues to fall. The area of cereals reduced by 4.9% in 2018 to 258,000 hectares from 271,700 hectares in 2017. In 2013 the total cereal area planted was 307,800 hectares.
- Yields of all cereals were below average as late planting of spring crops and a summer drought had a significant impact on crop yield. The greatest impact of the drought was on yields in the south and east while the north and west were least affected.
- The value of straw increased significantly in 2018. Lower than normal straw yields combined with the overall reduced area planted and an increasing demand has resulted in straw price increases of 50-100% per bale in some areas.

Produced by the Crops Knowledge Transfer Department, Teagasc, Oak Park, Carlow

Estimated Cereal Production 2018

Table 1: Cereal Area, Yield & Production for 2017 and 2018

	Cereal Area ('000 ha)				Yield (t/ha)		Cereal Production ('000 tonnes)			
	2018 ¹	2017*	Diff*	%*	2018**	2017*	2018	2017*	Diff ('000 tonnes)	%
W. Wheat	53.9	60.3	-6.4	-11%	8.91	10.4	480	615	-134.6	-22%
S. Wheat	3.5	6.8	-3.3	-48%	6.68	8.2	24	56	-32.1	-58%
W. Barley	57.2	65	-7.8	-12%	8.80	9.1	503	592	-88.2	-15%
S. Barley	126.2	115.2	11.0	10%	5.62	7.9	710	910	-200.5	-22%
W. Oats	10.1	14.4	-4.3	-30%	7.82	8.9	79	128	-49.3	-38%
S. Oats	7.5	10	-2.5	-25%	5.70	7.6	43	76	-33.1	-44%
Total Cereals	258	272	-13	-4.9%	-	-	1839	2377	-538	-23%

Totals may not agree due to rounding-off

¹Preliminary DAFM figures

* Data taken from www.cso.ie

** Teagasc yield estimates

Harvest 2018

Harvest 2018 started in June with winter barley which is the earliest start to a harvest in many years. Generally harvesting conditions were excellent across the country. Most crops were harvested earlier than normal and at low moistures. The summer drought had a significant impact on yields and had its biggest impact in the southeast of the country. Farmers in

western and northern counties were least affected and many farms achieved their average yields. Grain moistures were very low at the start and for most of the harvest but some late harvested crops had slightly above average moisture levels. Most straw was baled up quickly after harvest with little or no tedding required to dry it out.

Cereal Quality & Straw 2018

Cereal grain moistures were below average for all crops. Despite the drought grain quality was close to average in 2018 with final dried grain easily surpassing the minimum quality parameters.

Straw was baled and removed from fields with little additional expense while the price increased by

between 50 and 100% depending on the area. Straw yield was slightly below average in winter crops but straw yield was substantially below average in spring planted cereals.

Table 2: Cereal Harvest Quality & Straw 2018

Cereal Harvest Quality Summary 2018			
	Moisture (%)	Hectolitre Weight (as harvested) (Kg/hl)	Straw Price*
	Avg.	Avg.	€/ha
W. Wheat	17.9	74.3	297
S. Wheat	18.4	73.7	208
W. Barley	17.2	65.0	356
S. Barley	17.5	63.9	178
W. Oats	16.7	53.4	326
S. Oats	17.2	52.6	208

*straw on the ledge, not baled, at harvest

Winter Wheat

The area of winter wheat decreased by 11% in 2018 to 53,902ha. This was as a direct result of the poor planting conditions in autumn 2017. Crop establishment was adequate even in later sown crops and crops emerged well from the winter. Disease levels were relatively low throughout the main growing season, as lower than average rainfall in late spring and early summer reduced the disease pressure significantly. While many crops failed to meet their full yield potential sporadic rainfall events

had a significant positive impact on yield. The south and east suffered the worst effects of the drought while the north and west suffered less. Yields of winter wheat were below average at approx. 8.9 t/ha (7.8-10.25 t/ha), this is below the 5 year rolling average of 10.06 t/ha. First wheats' after break crops yielded relatively well while continuous wheats' were poorer in most cases. Grain quality was good at 74.3 kg/hl with average harvest moistures of 17.9%.

Winter Barley

The area of winter barley decreased by 12% in 2018 to 57,175ha. Again this was largely due to the poor weather conditions in autumn 2017. Rhynchosporium and mildew were evident in early April but were controlled during stem extension. BYDV symptoms were less common in crops than in 2017. Drought again had a significant impact on yields with a wide range of crop yields from 6.9t/ha to 10.5t/ha recorded. Crops that received rainfall in late May or early June yielded significantly better than those that didn't.

Winter barley yields were below average in 2018 at 8.8t/ha and almost 0.3t/ha lower than 2017. Again yields were slightly higher in the northern and western half of the country compared to the south and southeast. Grain quality was good at 65.0 kg/hl with average harvest grain moistures at 17.2%, however some barley was harvested at exceptionally low moistures of 14%.

Winter Oats

The winter oat area fell significantly to 10,100ha, down 30% from 2017. Like other autumn crops, oats established reasonably well and emerged well from the winter. Foliar disease levels were moderate however mildew was present in most crops in spring but tended to dry up later in the season. Average

yields were well below 2017 levels at 7.8t/ha (6.0 – 8.75t/ha) which is below the five year average of 8.62 t/ha. Quality was very mixed with specific weights averaging 53.4 kg/hl however some crops were well below this, average harvest grain moisture of 16.7%.

Spring Wheat

Spring wheat area decreased by 3,300 ha (-48%) in 2018, to 3,500 ha due to the very poor conditions in March for planting. Late planting had a negative impact on yields. Most crops suffered from the drought with many displaying various different nutrient deficiencies. However crops had low levels

of foliar diseases throughout the growing season although mildew was evident in some crops in the north and west. Average yields were low at 6.68 t/ha (range 4.0 – 9.8t/ha), which is well below to the 5 year average of 8.08 t/ha. Grain quality was good at 73.7 kg/hl with most grain harvested below 20% MC.

Spring Barley

The area of spring barley planted increased by 11% in 2018 to 126,169 ha, compared to 2017. This was mainly due to a lack of cropping options available to growers when planting began in April. The relaxation of the 3 crop rule also facilitated the planting of barley on farms that would otherwise exceed their limits for greening. Crops emerged very quickly and progressed through the growth stages very quickly. Again crops that received no rainfall showed signs of various nutrient deficiencies and this resulted in significant numbers of tillers being lost in the crops. This was

particularly evident in the east and southeast of the country. Despite the late planting BYDV levels were low, disease levels were also very low and significant savings were made on fungicides in some cases.

Nationally, spring barley recorded average yields of 5.6 t/ha (2.5 – 9.0 t/ha). This is below the 5 year average of 7.2 t/ha and the lowest average yield since 2002. Grain moisture averaged at 17.5% with average hectolitre weights of 63.9 kg/hl.

Spring Oats

The spring oat area decreased significantly to 7,500 ha in 2018 a decrease of 25% on 2017. This again was a result of the poor soil conditions throughout March. Almost all crops were drilled in April into good conditions. Foliar diseases were low during the most

of the season due to the drought. The national yield was 5.7 t/ha (range 3.9 – 7.1 t/ha), a decrease of over 1.2 t/ha compared to the 5 year average of 7.12t/ha. The grain quality averaged 52.6 kg/hl, with harvested grain at 17.2% moisture content.

Oilseed Rape

The area of winter oilseed rape increased from 7,765 to 8,882 ha in 2018 an increase of 14%. Crops established very well and developed good canopies due to earlier sowing and a mild winter. The cold spring slowed development and crops flowered later than in 2017. Foliar disease levels (Phoma & Light Leaf Spot) were reported to be low in 2018. Nationally,

crops yields were average at 4.2 t/ha (3.0 – 5.5 t/ha) with low moistures of 9.6%.

The spring rape area was 1,634 ha. Spring oilseed rape crops yielded 2.5 t/ha (2.0 – 3.1 t/ha) with reasonable moistures of 12.0%.

Spring Beans

The area of spring beans decreased in 2018 to 6967ha due to the late spring. The area of spring beans combined with winter beans and other proteins was 8,442 hectares and will result in an increase in the protein payment to growers for 2018.

Spring crops in general were sown at least a month later than normal with most planted in mid-late

April. The later planting combined with the drought resulted in shorter plants and low pod numbers. This had a major impact on yields with many crops yielding less than 2.5 tonnes per hectare.

Potatoes

The total area of potatoes including seed and earlies has decreased again in 2018 by 1000 hectares to 8,175 hectares this equates to a 6% reduction in area compared to 2017. Due to the poor spring very little of the early crops were planted and indeed planting of the main crop potatoes only started in late April and early May. The early summer drought had a very significant effect on both quality and yields this year with secondary growths common in many crops.

However blight levels were very low as a consequence of the dry weather. Harvesting began approximately three weeks later than normal but conditions for most of the crop harvest were excellent. In fact soils were so dry that bruising of the crop became a concern for many growers. Yields are reported to be significantly lower than 2017 which may result in tight supplies in spring 2019. The Bord Bia yield dig results are expected by the end of November.

Winter crops 2018/19

Table 3: Estimated Winter Cereal Areas for 2018/9 & Relevant Comparisons

	2019*	2018**	Diff (ha)	% Diff
W. Wheat	62,000	53,900	+8,100	+15
W. Barley	75,000	57,200	+17,800	+31
W. Oats	12,000	10,100	+1,900	+19
Total Winter Cereals	149,000	121,200	+27800	+23
Winter Oilseed Rape	8,900	8,900	0	0
Winter Beans	800	760	+40	+5

*Teagasc estimates

**CSO Data

The assistance of the CSO with the statistics is gratefully acknowledged.

As always, Teagasc advise growers to complete a financial review of their cropping program before committing to land rental decisions in 2018/9. A free excel calculator is available to help growers estimate crop budgets at www.teagasc.ie/crops/crops/crops-margins--ecrops.

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