UK MALTING BARLEY HARVEST REVIEW 2024

The UK malting barley harvest is now complete and the overall picture is one of reasonable quality and good supply. Winter malting barley can be summarised as variable with predominantly low nitrogen crops and grain retention levels similar to 2023. Winter barley yields are recorded at 10-15% less than the 5-year average. Conversely, the spring barley harvest in the UK has seen low nitrogen crops throughout all regions with good retention levels and yields described as better than average.

Winter barley harvest in England commenced mid-July and was completed in most regions by mid-August. Quality of the 2024 crop in England was characterised by low nitrogen, largely as a consequence of continued rainfall during the growing season. This rainfall and lack of sunshine throughout spring and summer lead to very variable grain retention levels. Scotland's winter malting barley quality mostly mirrored that of England in terms of nitrogen and grain size. Across the UK the weather had a significant impact on yields in that they were less than the 5-year average.

Spring barley planting began on some lighter land in England in January, lasting through to mid/end of April and extending through to May in Scotland. Harvest in England and Wales commenced early August completing in most regions by mid-September. Harvest in Northeast England and Scotland commenced mid-August, this being a result of late planting due to the wet spring. Nitrogen content of both the English and Scottish Spring barley crops were very low, ideal for the distilling industry. It would be fair to say that some of the Spring barley destined for the UK brewing industry has been lower nitrogen than desired. Initial yield forecasts for both England and Scotland are that crops have performed well achieving better than the 5-year average. Regarding Scotland and especially Aberdeenshire, one noticeable negative of the 2024 Spring barley harvest has been the instances of ergot found in deliveries to all northern intake destinations. In fact, the number of deliveries containing ergot has been the highest for many years, perhaps the highest levels ever recorded.

Most malting barley crops reached specification as below:

- **Specific weight** – UK Winter barley average estimated at 59-72kg/hl; Spring barley are averaging 65kg/hl.
- **Grain Nitrogen (malting varieties)** – Winter barley averaged 1.3-1.6%. Spring barley averaged 1.2-1.8%
- **Screenings** – Winter barley typically in 4-6% range. Spring barley ranged between 1-3%.
- **Moisture** - Winter barley averaged 14-17% moisture content. Spring barley averaged between 14-18%.
- **Germination (malting varieties)** – Winter barley typically averaging between 96-98%; Spring barley average is also between 96-98%.

Surveys

Spring Barley variety		Planet	Laureate	Sassy	Diablo	Firefoxx	Fairing	Others
Nitrogen	%	1.54	1.39	1.22	1.33	1.37	1.82	1.59
Screenings <2.25mm	%	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.4	1.8	3.1	2.8
Retention >2.5mm	%	93.8	86.2	84.3	96.1	95.0	92.8	93.7
Moisture	%	14.4	16.2	17.6	17.1	17.2	16.6	16.4

Winter Barley variety		Flagon	Craft	Maris Otter	Others	Winter Average	Spring Average	Total Average
Nitrogen	%	1.38	1.50	1.41	1.60	1.51	1.38	1.40
Screenings <2.25mm	%	4.3	3.2	5.5	4.2	3.9	2.0	2.3
Retention >2.5mm	%	88.0	90.4	85.6	88.3	89.0	88.3	88.4
Moisture	%	14.2	14.6	14.3	15.5	14.8	16.5	16.3

MAGB Mycotoxin Monitoring

Harvest 2024

Reports from malting intakes generally point to a low incidence of most mycotoxins; a full picture will be available once retained barley samples have been analysed in due diligence surveys.

Ergot, however, was highly prevalent across many regions. This also included Scotland which has seen lower levels in most years.

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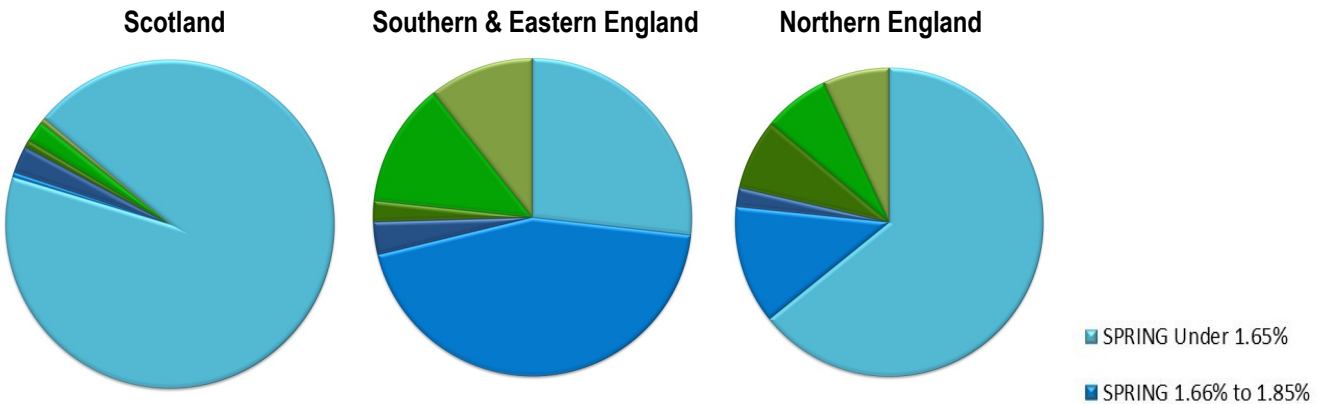
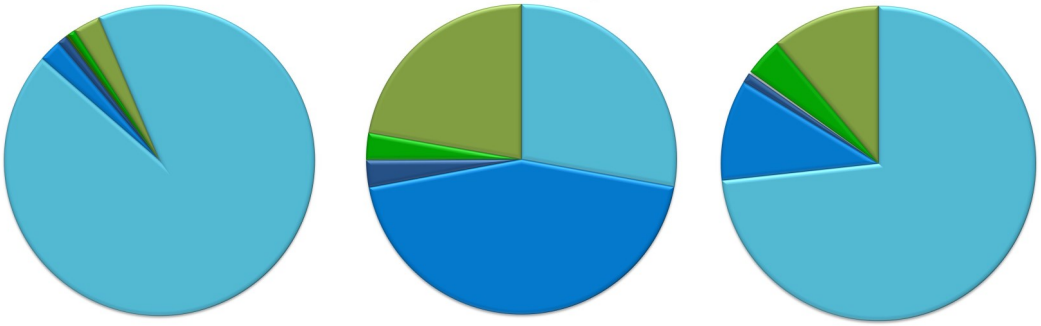
Wish List 2024 by nitrogen band



Actual Contractual Purchases* 2024 by nitrogen band (upto 30th September 2024)



*Actual barley received differed from original contracts, most notably in lower tonnages in higher nitrogen bands.

The barley growing areas of the UK are largely on the east of the country, with particular concentrations in East Anglia, Yorkshire and the east of Scotland. These easterly areas have soils and climate suited for producing excellent quality malting barleys.

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