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[Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs](#)

National statistics

Cereal and oilseed production in the United Kingdom 2023

Updated 21 December 2023

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production/cereal-and-oilseed-production-in-the-united-kingdom-2023>

This release contains the final estimate of UK 2023 cereal and oilseed harvest.

For detailed area, yield and production results by country and regions in England go to the [accompanying data set \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/crops\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/crops).

Scotland and Northern Ireland have revised their area results for 2022. This release is re-issued to include the revised areas and as a result the United Kingdom area and yield results have been revised. The production data for 2022 is not revised. Overall, the effect of the revision to yields is small and in most cases the yields (t/ha) have remained virtually unchanged. Typically, the scale of revision is -1.0%.

Key points

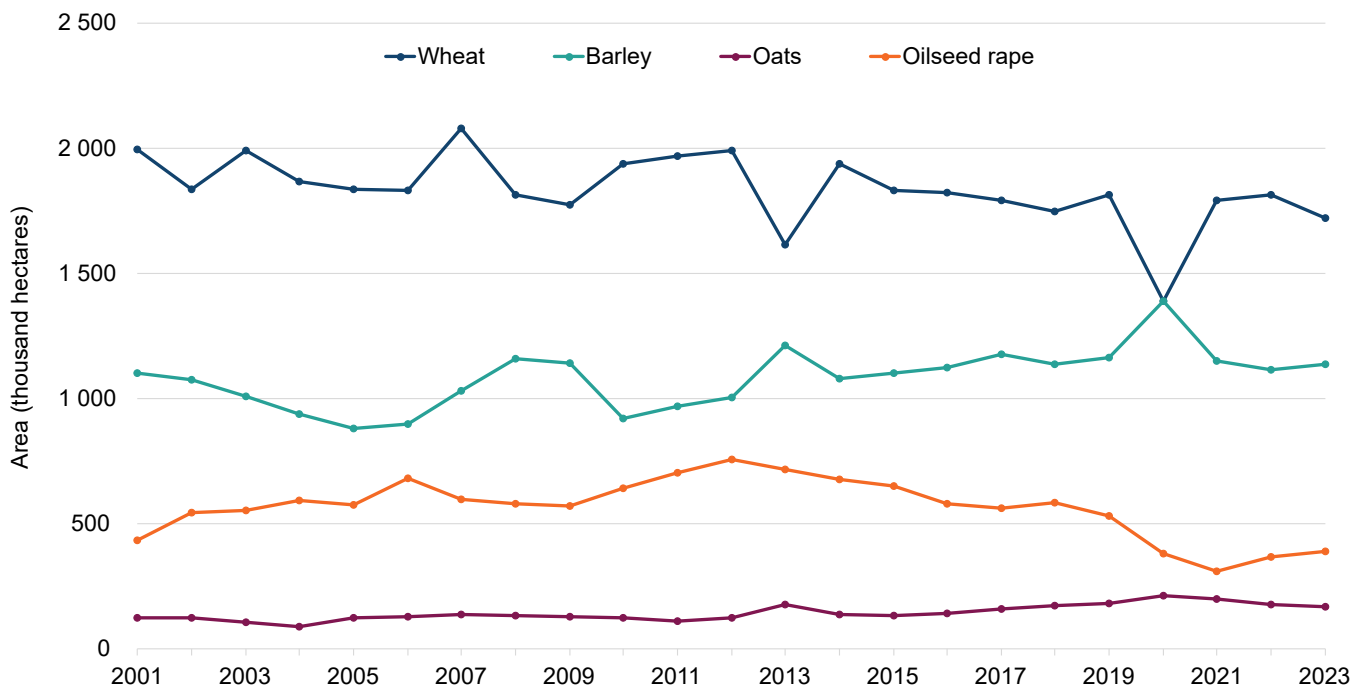
- All the main cereal crops saw reduced yields in 2023 compared to 2022 with areas also falling, except for barley, which saw increases in both winter and spring barley areas.
- The final estimate of the 2023 UK wheat harvest is 14 million tonnes, a decrease of 10% on 2022. This is due to decreases in both yield (-5.2% decrease to 8.1 tonnes per hectare) and area (-5.1% decrease to 1.7 million hectares).
- The final estimate of the 2023 UK barley harvest is just under 7.0 million tonnes, a decrease of 5.7% on 2022. This comprises a 9.9% fall in spring barley production and a 0.2% decrease in winter barley, entirely driven by falls in yield as both winter and spring barley areas saw increases.
- In 2023 oat production fell by 18% to 830 thousand tonnes. This is due to decreases in both area (-5.1% to 167 thousand hectares) and yield (-13% to 5.0 tonnes per hectare).
- Oilseed rape production decreased by 11% to 1.2 million tonnes in 2023. An increase in area of 7.2% was not enough to offset a lower yield down 17% from 2022.
- In 2023, the moisture content for many crops was above the standard 14.5% for cereals. In England the average for wheat was 15.1%, winter and spring barley both averaged 15% and oats 14.6%. The average moisture content for oilseed rape was 8.9%, just below the standard 9%. Data for other countries is not available.

Section 1: Area, yield and production

The unseasonably wet and windy weather hindered the start of the harvest. Localised showers and heavy downpours throughout August caused further disruption, with progress varying throughout the United Kingdom. Conditions were milder in September, however some areas still had lengthy periods of wet weather.

Areas

Figure 1: United Kingdom crop areas

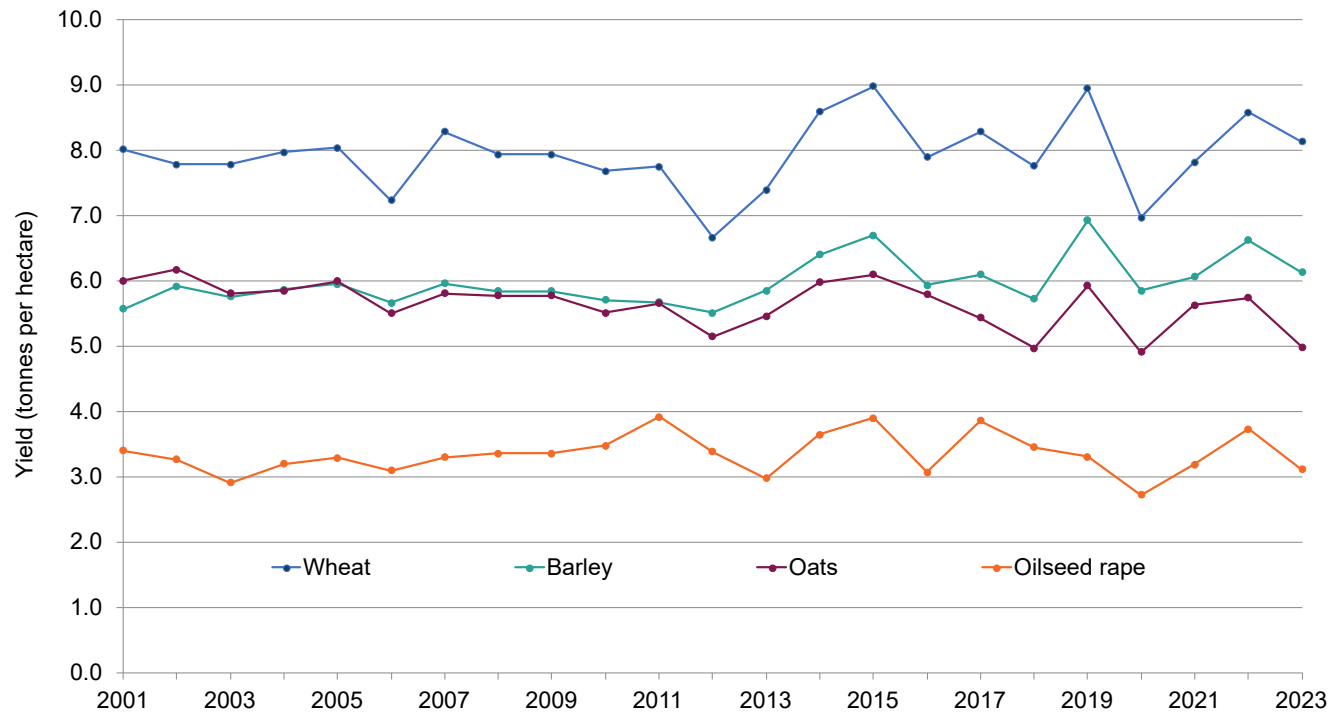


In 2023 wheat area decreased by 5.1% to 1.7 million hectares. This is possibly due to farmers favouring planting barley and oilseed rape which both saw increases in area in 2023 to just over 1.1 million hectares and 391 thousand hectares respectively. The area of oats decreased to 167 thousand hectares.

[Download the full dataset \(https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production)

Yields

Figure 2: United Kingdom crop yields

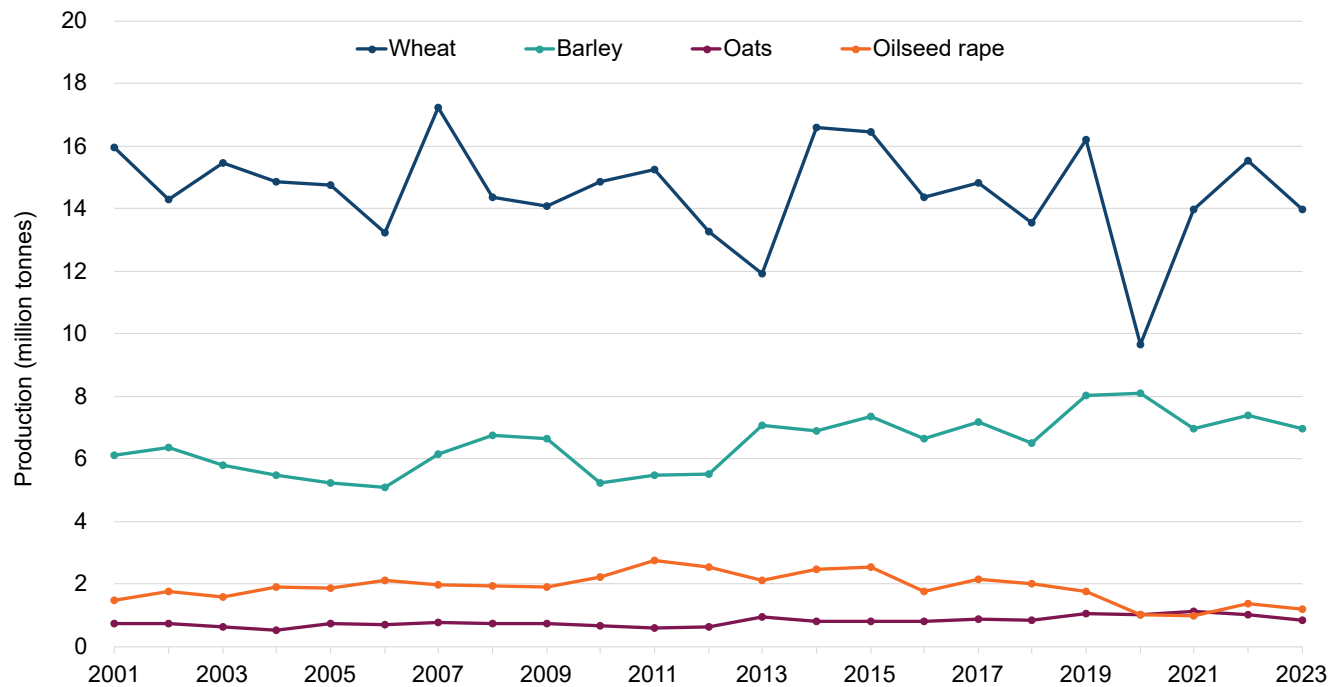


UK main cereal crops and oilseed rape all showed decreases in 2023 (see Figure 2).

[Download the full dataset \(https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production)

Production

Figure 3: United Kingdom crop production



Production for the UK 2023 harvest decreased for all the main cereals and oilseed rape, driven by the decrease in yields seen for all the crops and reduction in area for most. Wheat is still the predominant crop with production of 14 million tonnes (a decrease of 10% on 2022). This is a result of a decrease in both yield (5.2% decrease to 8.1 tonnes per hectare) and area by 5.1% to 1.7 million hectares.

The 2023 UK barley harvest is just under 7.0 million tonnes, a decrease of 5.7% on 2022. This comprised of a 9.9% decrease in spring barley to 3.8 million tonnes and a 0.2% decrease in winter barley to 3.2 million tonnes. Whilst both spring and winter barley areas saw increases this was not enough to offset a fall in yields (10% decrease to 5.5 tonnes per hectare and 4.5% decrease to 7.0 tonnes per hectare respectively).

Oats production fell by 18% to 830 tonnes, falling to its lowest level since 2016. This was driven by decreases in both area and yield. Area decreased by 5.1% to 167 thousand hectares and yield decreased by 13% to 5.0 tonnes per hectare.

Oilseed rape production is 1.2 million tonnes, down 11% on 2022. The 7.2% increase in area was not enough to offset the 17% decrease in yield from 3.7 tonnes per hectare to 3.1 tonnes per hectare.

[Download the full dataset \(https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production)

Section 2 Methodology: Final estimates of 2023 UK cereal and oilseed production

2.1 England

Results are based on final results from the Cereal and Oilseed Rape Production Survey, a representative sample of cereal and oilseed rape growers across English regions and farm sizes and are based on the valid responses from 2,765 holdings (55% response rate).

The Cereal and Oilseed Rape Production Survey gathers data on production tonnages and moisture content for the various cereal and oilseed rape crops and seeks confirmation of the planted areas for these crops gathered from the June Census of Agriculture and Horticulture.

Moisture content adjustment

Production was typically standardised to 14.5% moisture content for cereals and 9.0% for oilseed rape but since 2022, following discussions with stakeholders, we agreed that the production data will only be adjusted for farms which have reported moisture content above 14.5% for cereals and 9.0% for oilseed rape. Any production data which has been reported with lower moisture contents has not been adjusted. In an average year this would make little difference to the production total, e.g. in 2021, this new approach would have reduced wheat production by only 0.1%.

This new methodology gives a more representative estimate of the volume of actual crop available for use in the industry.

For detailed moisture content results for England and the English regions go to the [accompanying data set \(https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production)

2.3 Wales

No yield data were collected for Wales. The Welsh production figures have been estimated on a regional basis within Wales using the final regional results of the June 2022 Survey, extrapolated to match the June 2023 final results, along with the yields for the English regions bordering Wales. Final results for Wales were published on 16 November by the Welsh Government on their [website \(https://gov.wales/survey-agriculture-and-horticulture-june-2022\)](https://gov.wales/survey-agriculture-and-horticulture-june-2022).

For further details contact Agricultural & Rural Affairs Statistics, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ (telephone: Cardiff 03000 255049). E-mail: stats.agric@gov.wales

2.4 Scotland

The 2023 final estimates of yield and production are based on land use areas estimated from the Agricultural Census and production data collected through the Cereal Survey.

The 2022 final estimates of yield and production are based on land use areas estimated from Single Application Form (SAF) data returns. A panel of experts from the Scottish cereal industry also provide their final estimates of harvest yields and these are applied to final figures for areas sown.

For further details contact Scottish Government: RESAS Statistics (Agriculture) Email: agric.stats@gov.scot

2.5 Northern Ireland

Yield figures are derived from an annual survey of cereal farms in NI. Farms are selected from the census population using a stratified random method. DAERA Farm Account Officers complete a cereal survey questionnaire with each farm selected. The information is collated with mean yields calculated for each cereal type. Cereal yields are then combined with the respective cereal areas from the latest census to derive production figures. If you have any queries, please contact DAERAsurveys@daera-ni.gov.uk.

Northern Ireland production figures were carried forward from 2021 to compile the UK final results for 2022. This is due to data not being available at the time of publication in December 2022.

For further details contact DAERAsurveys@daera-ni.gov.uk

2.6 Revisions

On 20 December 2023, United Kingdom cereal and oilseed rape areas were revised to include changes made to Scotland and Northern Ireland areas. As a result yields for 2022 for the UK, Scotland and Northern Ireland have also been revised. There is no change to production for 2022. In most cases yields (t/ha) remain virtually unchanged. Typically, the scale of revision is -1.0%.

2.7 Data notes

The cereal production (tonnage) figures include tail corn, cereals still to be harvested for grain, grain to be crimped and cereals intended for seed production. The figures exclude crops which have become unfit for harvesting, carryover stocks from the 2021 harvest, bought in grain and crops harvested as wholecrop for silage.

2.8 Provisional 2024 harvest statistics

Provisional England results are expected to be published in October 2024, with UK estimates published in December 2024. The definitive publication date will be announced on the [research and statistics \(https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics\)](https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics) webpage on gov.uk.

2.9 Feedback

We welcome feedback and any thoughts to improve the publication further. Please send any feedback to: farming-statistics@defra.gov.uk.

Section 3: What you need to know about this release

3.1 Contact details

Responsible statistician: Charlotte McGinty

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3.2 Accredited official statistics

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. An explanation can be found on the [Office for Statistics Regulation website \(https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/accredited-official-statistics/\)](https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/accredited-official-statistics/). Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in 2014. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards (see contact details above). Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following

improvements:

- Reviewed and amended the validation checks carried out on response data including validation against new administrative data sources to better assure ourselves of the quality of the statistics.
- Enhanced trustworthiness by removing pre-release access

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