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Cereal and Oilseed Rape Harvest 2020 First Estimates

6th October 2020



Cereal and Oilseed Rape Harvest 2020 First Estimates

Introduction

Overall, 2020 is predicted to be a good year for the cereal harvest in Scotland, with total cereal production slightly higher than 2019.

It has been a good year for spring barley and oats with yield estimates expected to increase by 7 and 11 per cent.

However, wet planting and harvesting conditions have contributed to decreases for winter crops. Particularly winter barley, where decreases in area and yield are predicted to lead to a 21 per cent decrease in production.

Variability is expected across Scotland, with some areas benefiting from milder winter conditions.

How first estimates are calculated

Our annual harvest first estimates are based on advice from industry experts on expected yields. We combine this with census results for the areas grown to estimate the total amount of production.

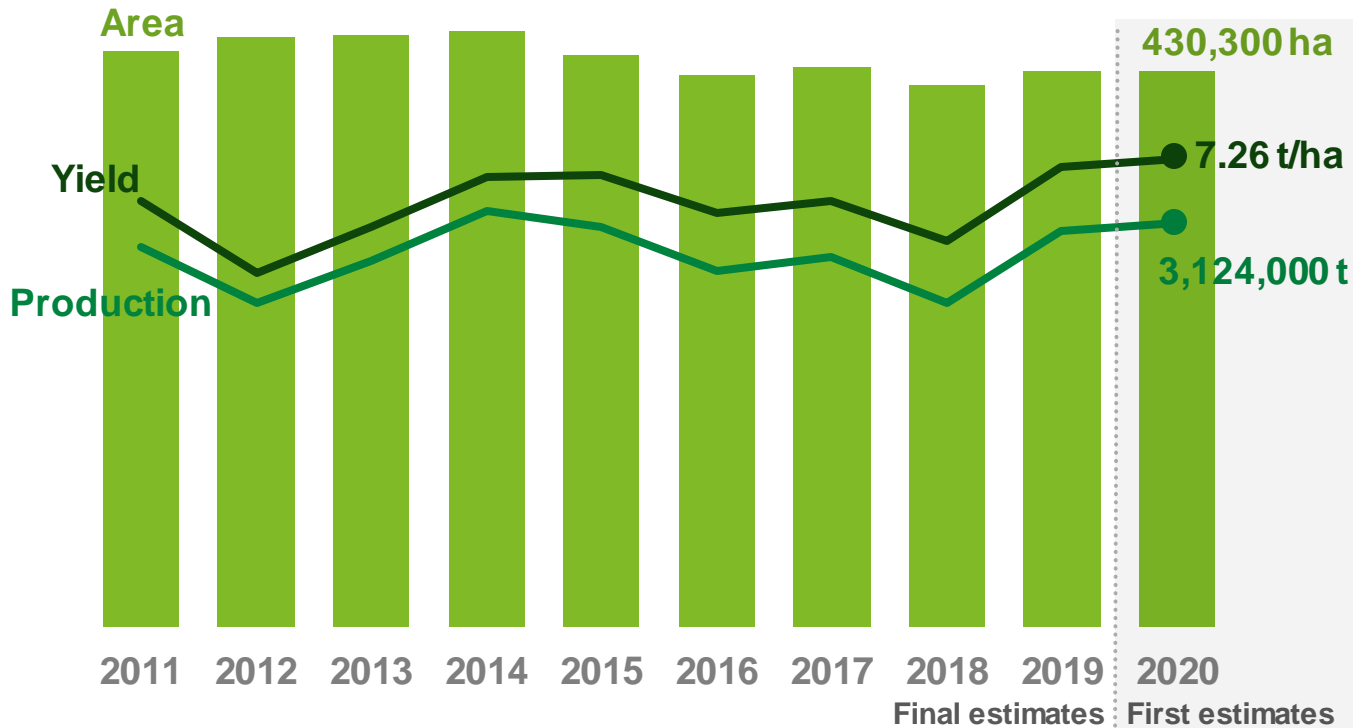
First estimates monitor cereal production

The EU and Scottish Government use the data as an early indicator of harvest problems.

First estimates are fairly accurate

The data collected on areas grown is very good. However, differences in the first and final yield estimates can vary as more information is collected once the harvest has been completed.

First estimates suggest a good year for the overall 2020 harvest



Commonly used terms

Hectares: the official measurement of agricultural land. One hectare is 10,000 square meters or roughly the same as a full-size rugby pitch.

Production: the total amount of crops that are produced measured in metric tonnes.

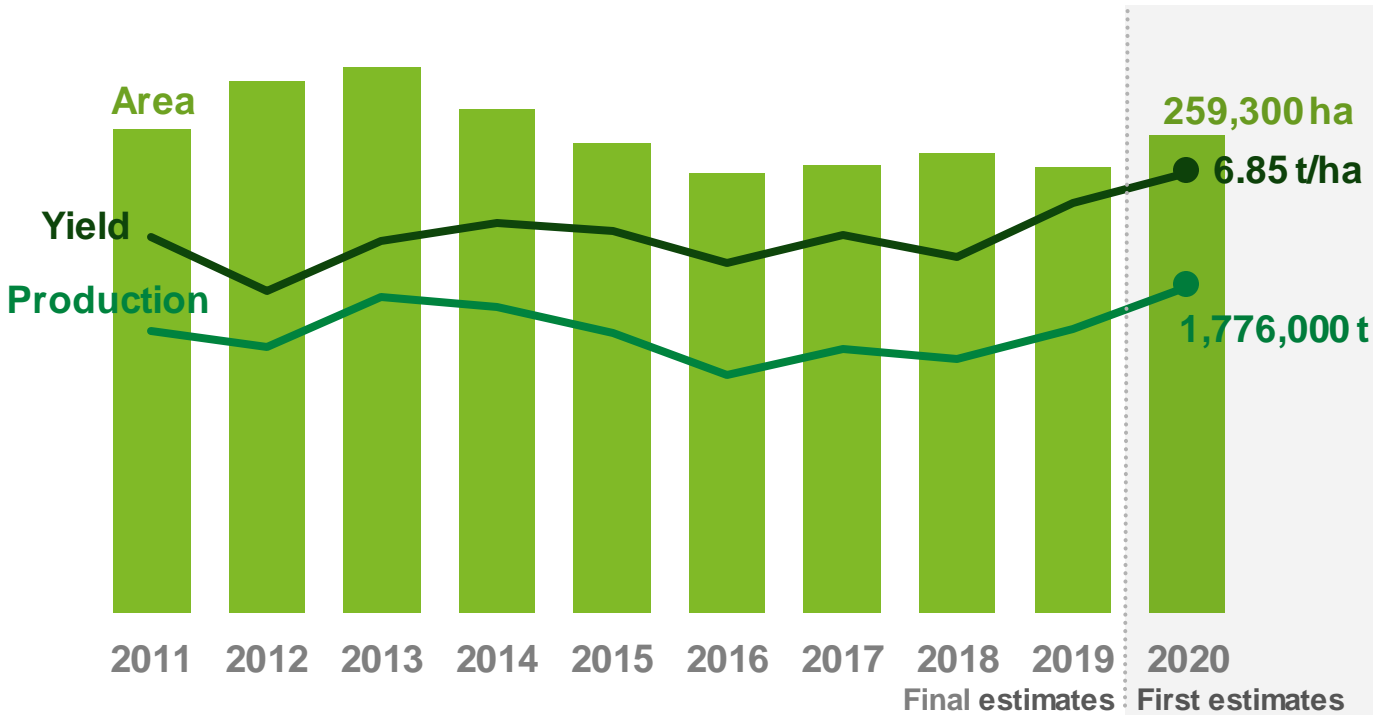
Yield: the amount of produce, weighed in tonnes, that is harvested per hectare of land.

Overall, 2020 has been another good year for the cereal harvest, with some small predicted increases for total cereal yield and production.

However, while it has been a good year for spring barley and oats, other crops are expecting to see decreases in yield and production.

Wet autumn and winter conditions led to decreases in the area used to grow winter-planted crops and affected yields. A wide variability is expected across Scotland, with some areas benefiting from milder winter conditions.

Spring barley yield and production expected to rise



Spring barley accounts for

55% Total crop production

56% Total crop area

Barley is the main cereal crop grown in Scotland. Spring barley is sown around March, whereas winter barley is sown in the autumn.

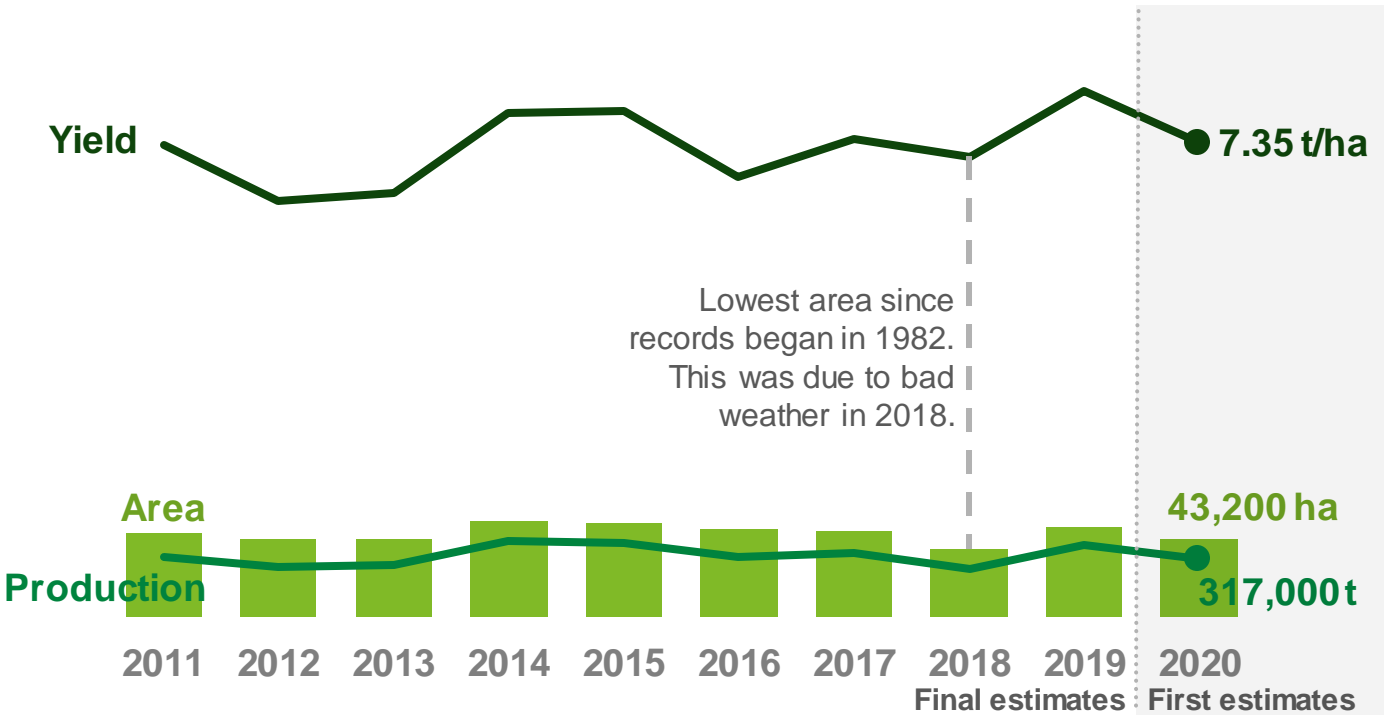
In 2020, an estimated 85 per cent of barley production was made up of spring barley.

Spring barley area increased in 2020 as winter barley suffered unfavourable weather conditions and the area grown decreased.

2019 was a record year for spring barley, and further increases for yield and production are predicted for 2020.

While bushel weights remain low, improving weather conditions in summer have resulted in good yields this year. Spring barley yield is predicted to rise by 7 per cent and production is predicted to rise by 15 per cent.

Winter barley yield and production expected to decrease



Winter barley accounts for

- 10%** Total crop production
- 9%** Total crop area

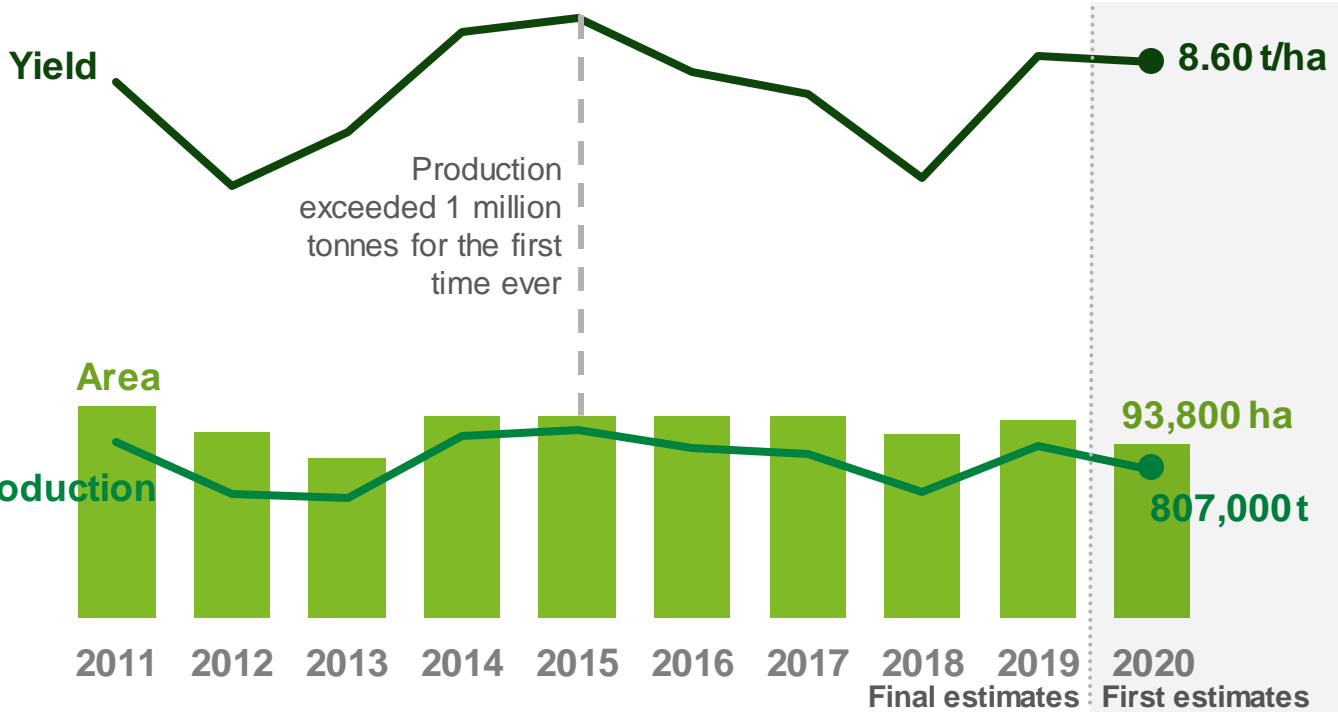
Barley is as a key ingredient for the Scottish whisky industry, with 53 per cent of the 2019 crop sold to merchants for malting.

A further 36 per cent of barley was used as animal feed.

Winter barley area has decreased in 2020 due to wet weather conditions experienced over the autumn and winter months, making it harder to plant and grow barley. This is predicted to result in a 10 per cent decrease in yield and a 21 per cent decrease in production.

Industry experts have stated that while yields may be lower this year, weights have been good and better than those obtained for spring barley.

Wheat production expected to decrease



Wheat accounts for

25% Total crop production

20% Total crop area

Scottish wheat is mainly soft wheats that are used for distilling. In 2019, around 33 per cent of wheat was sold to merchants for malting.

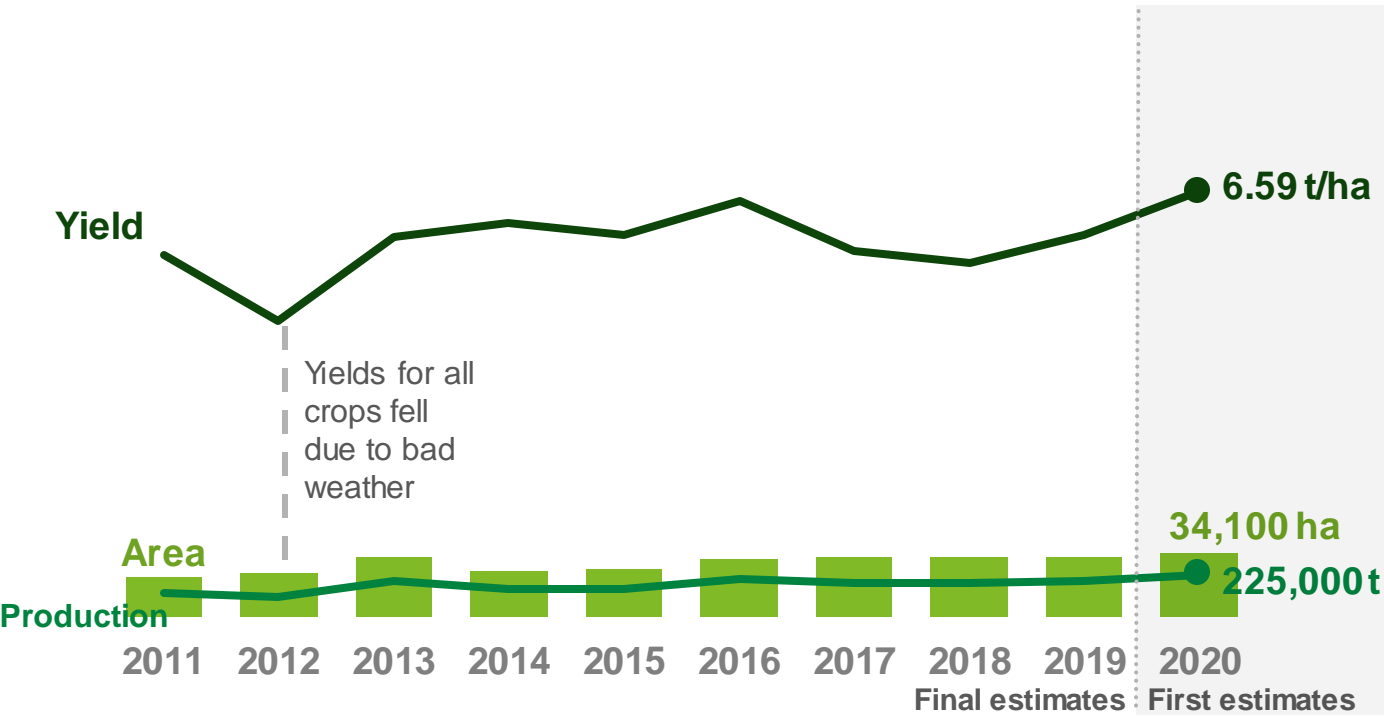
Scotland imports hard wheats for milling (generally used for bread-making) because our climate does not suit hard wheat varieties.

Despite a predicted 13 per cent decrease in wheat area as a result of unfavourable weather at planting, above average yields are predicted for 2020.

However, yield and production are expected to decrease from the high values of 2019. An estimated 1 per cent decrease in yield could lead to a 14 per cent decrease in wheat production.

Expert advice indicated that while the average yield is up, wide variations have been experienced. Due to the timing of these early estimates, it may be that final estimates published in December will change.

Oat production and yield expected to increase



Oats accounts for

7% Total crop production

7% Total crop area

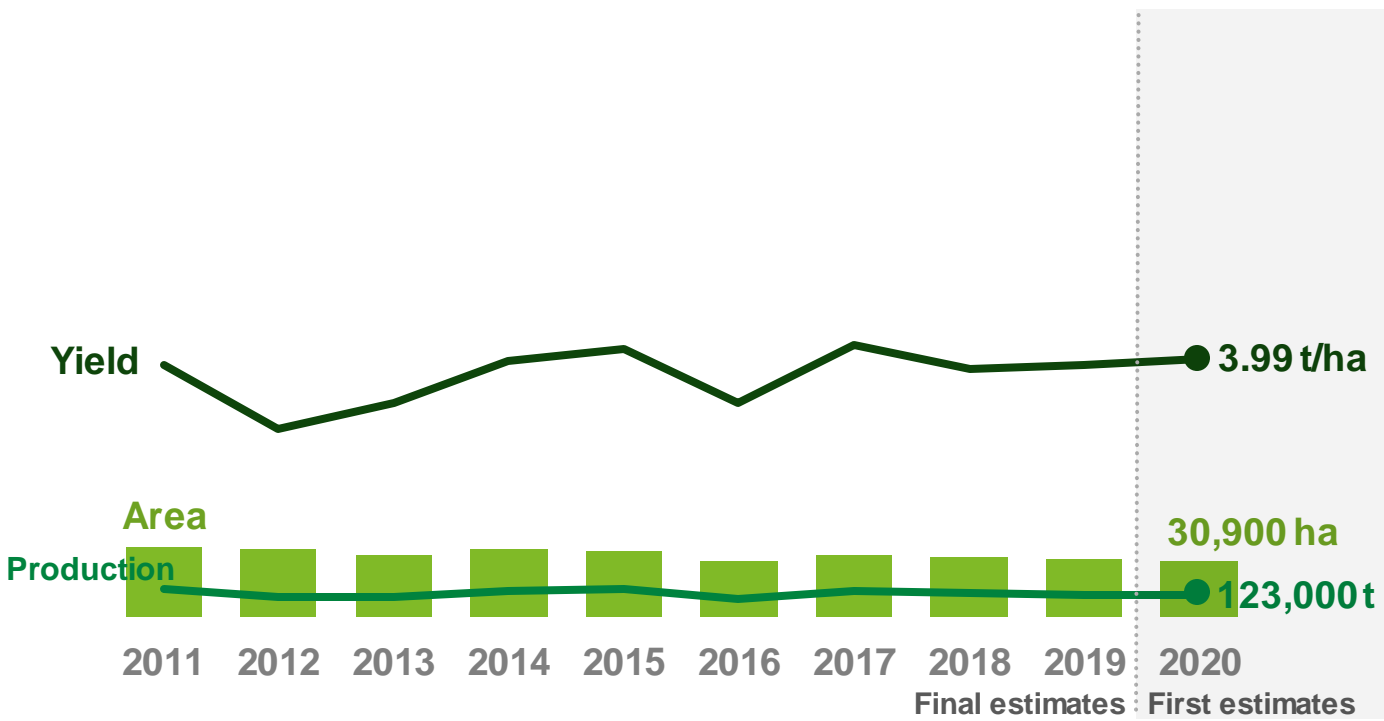
The majority of oats grown in Scotland are sown in the spring and are used for milling – in 2018, almost 60 per cent of oats were used for milling.

Oats are also used in specialist animal feed and in further processing for oatcakes and porridge oats.

The area of oats grown has increased 7 per cent in 2020. A predicted 11 per cent increase in yield could result in a 19 per cent increase in oats production for 2020.

Industry experts have stated that good weights have been obtained so far this year, and high yields have been experienced in some areas. However, this could change as the harvest progresses.

Little change predicted for oilseed rape yield and production



Oilseed Rape accounts for

4% Total crop production

7% Total crop area

Oilseed rape is not a cereal but is part of the cabbage family. Because it is grown and harvested in a similar way to other cereals it is included in our harvest estimates.

Almost all of oilseed rape is the winter variety and it is mainly used for biofuels.

Little change is predicted for oilseed rape this year compared to 2019. While the area grown has decreased around 3 per cent, a predicted increase of around 2 per cent in yield may result in a small decrease just under 1 per cent in production.

Oilseed rape estimates are not as reliable as those of other crops due to the small amount grown and limited data available at this early stage. Industry experts have indicated that yields are varying across Scotland with high yields obtained in some areas and lower yields experienced in others compared to the previous year.

Cereal and Oilseed Rape Harvest 2020 First Estimates

Data Sources and More Information

Data Source

First estimates of the Cereal and Oilseed Rape Harvest are made at the annual Crop Report Meeting. A panel of experts from the Scottish cereal industry provide their estimates of the harvest yields and these are applied to final figures for areas sown. Area data is derived from the 2020 June Agricultural Census.

It is important to note that the collection of yield estimates prior to the completion of the harvest may lead to a level of inaccuracy with these first estimates.

Final estimates of the 2020 cereal harvest will be available in December. In April 2020, it was announced in the [RESAS Revised schedule of agricultural surveys](#) and outputs that the Cereal Production Survey would be temporarily stopped. The final 2020 estimate will be based on a similar method to the first estimate, using industry intelligence and information about historic trends.

Data Tables and Methodology

The data used to create the charts in this publication and the methodology document are available online at <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781800041424>

If you have any questions or comments about this publication, please email Jay Gillam at jay.gillam@gov.scot.

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Annex A

Area, Yield and Production – 2011 to 2020

Year	TOTAL CEREALS ⁽¹⁾			SPRING BARLEY			WINTER BARLEY		
	Area (Hectare)	Yield (t/ha)	Production (Tonnes)	Area (Hectare)	Yield (t/ha)	Production (Tonnes)	Area (Hectare)	Yield (t/ha)	Production (Tonnes)
2011	446,181	6.60	2,948,871	262,948	5.83	1,532,979	45,477	7.34	333,623
2012	456,902	5.48	2,507,016	289,222	5.00	1,446,950	42,816	6.46	276,511
2013	458,219	6.19	2,836,836	296,444	5.78	1,713,548	42,694	6.57	280,511
2014	462,123	6.97	3,221,284	274,377	6.07	1,664,905	52,507	7.82	410,765
2015	443,564	6.99	3,100,624	255,878	5.94	1,520,756	51,808	7.84	406,169
2016	428,348	6.43	2,752,412	238,899	5.43	1,296,481	48,031	6.84	328,766
2017	433,460	6.60	2,859,045	243,838	5.88	1,432,815	47,509	7.41	352,108
2018	419,897	5.98	2,512,412	250,476	5.54	1,387,503	37,542	7.14	268,124
2019	430,292	7.13	3,068,559	242,090	6.38	1,543,825	48,802	8.17	398,748
2020	430,343	7.26	3,124,253	259,316	6.85	1,775,714	43,153	7.35	316,993

Year	WHEAT			OATS			OILSEED RAPE		
	Area (Hectare)	Yield (t/ha)	Production (Tonnes)	Area (Hectare)	Yield (t/ha)	Production (Tonnes)	Area (Hectare)	Yield (t/ha)	Production (Tonnes)
2011	115,412	8.29	956,985	21,715	5.61	121,826	38,388	3.90	149,627
2012	100,637	6.69	673,288	23,672	4.57	108,249	36,611	2.91	106,420
2013	86,840	7.52	652,933	31,728	5.89	187,021	33,653	3.32	111,652
2014	109,023	9.07	989,347	25,050	6.10	152,924	37,073	3.98	147,570
2015	109,562	9.30	1,019,182	25,615	5.92	151,569	35,797	4.15	148,491
2016	109,594	8.45	925,992	31,210	6.44	200,936	30,731	3.31	101,862
2017	109,489	8.12	889,308	32,625	5.66	184,813	34,187	4.21	144,038
2018	99,778	6.82	680,955	32,101	5.48	175,829	32,736	3.86	126,330
2019	107,480	8.72	936,865	31,920	5.92	189,121	31,808	3.90	124,148
2020	93,752	8.60	806,622	34,123	6.59	224,925	30,885	3.99	123,315

(1) Includes Triticale up to and including 2016.



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