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Cereal and Oilseed Rape Harvest 2018 First Estimates



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Introduction

Total cereal production, the area grown and yields in Scotland are estimated to have decreased in 2018 compared to the previous year. Poor weather conditions experienced at key times during the year may have contributed to the fall.

Around 420,000 hectares of cereals are estimated to have been grown, three per cent lower than 2017. Estimates for yield look likely to drop by six per cent, which may lead to a nine per cent drop in production, to 2.6 million tonnes.

Oilseed rape is expected to follow a similar pattern to cereal crops with drops in production, area and yield in 2018.

How our first estimates are derived

The first estimate of the Scottish harvest is based mainly on information gathered by a panel of industry experts. This is combined with provisional census results for the areas grown, to produce estimated production totals.

Why do we produce first estimates?

First estimates are used to monitor cereal production and are required by EU regulations.

Are the first estimates accurate?

Differences in the first and final yield estimates are due to the amount of information available when calculating first estimates. We will not know the true final values until we publish the Cereal Production Survey results in December.

First estimates suggest a fall in the total 2018 harvest



2018 was a difficult year with unfavourable weather conditions experienced in winter 2017, as well as spring and early summer of 2018. However, crops that were sown later in spring have been seen to be doing better than those sown earlier.

This is a similar story to what was suggested at the start of the year. The December Agricultural Survey indicated that winter planting was down due to wet weather and the previous harvest staying in the ground for longer, which had a knock-on effect to 2018.

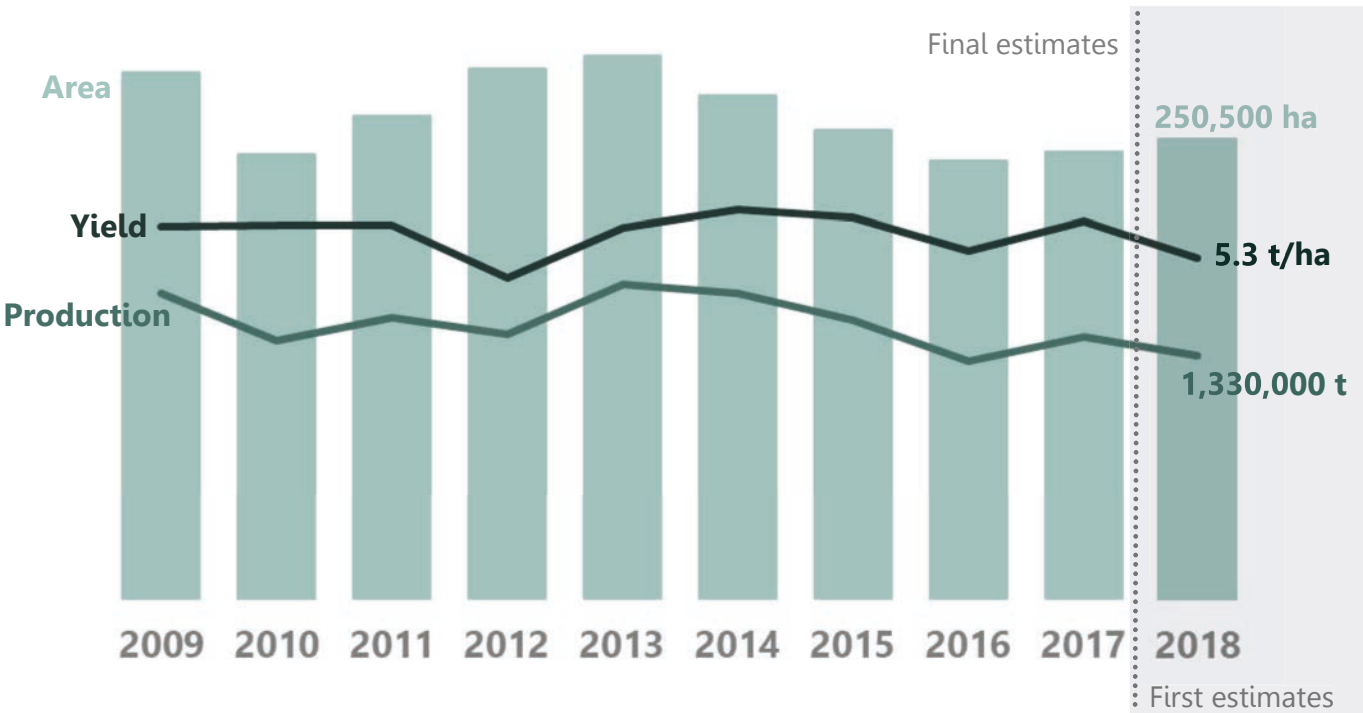
Commonly used terms

Hectares: the official measurement of agricultural land. One hectare is 10,000 m² 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.

Spring barley yield and production expected to fall



Spring barley accounts for

49% Total crop production

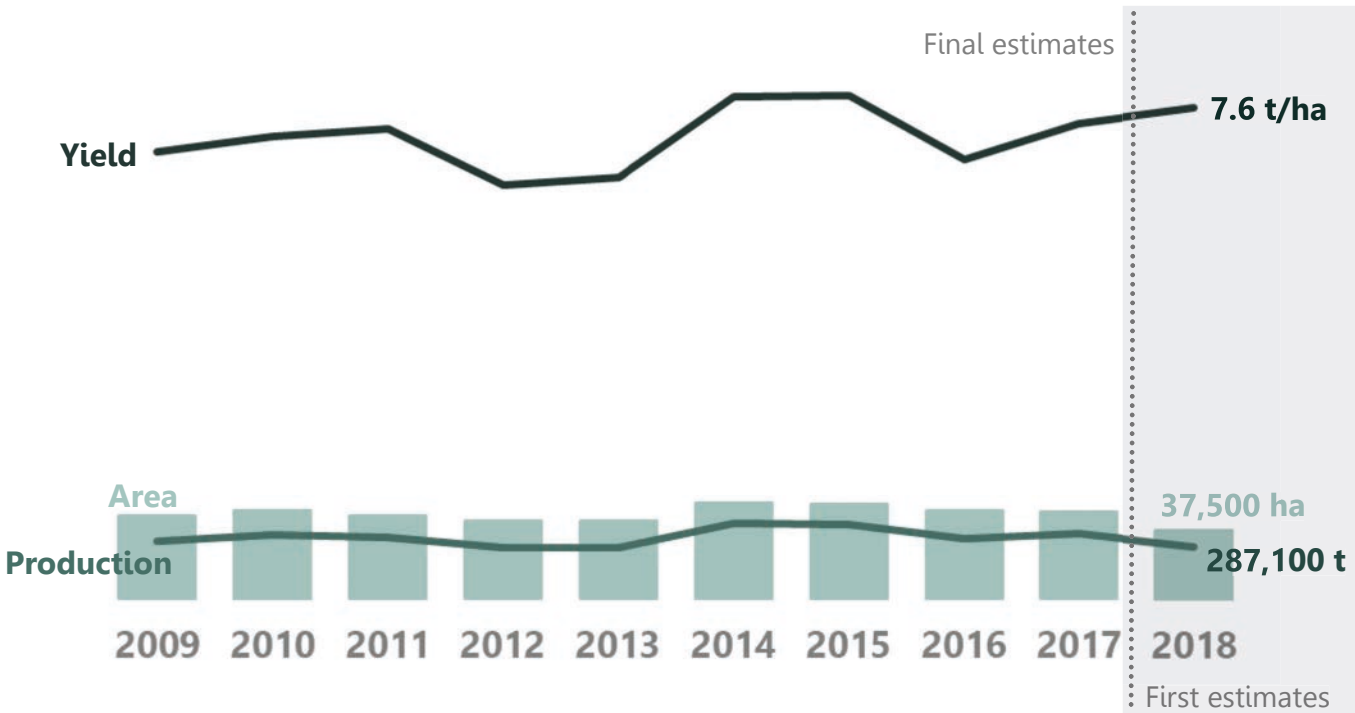
55% Total crop area

Barley is the main cereal crop grown in Scotland. In 2017, Scottish spring barley made up a third of the UK spring barley total.

Spring barley is sown around March, whereas winter barley is sown in the autumn. Around 82 per cent of Scottish barley production is made up of spring barley.

Estimates for the 2018 harvest suggest spring barley yield and total production will fall compared to 2017. Yield is likely to be lower by 10 per cent compared to the previous year and overall production will fall by seven per cent. Advice from industry experts suggests this decline is due to poor performance of spring barley sown earlier in the year, while crops that were planted after the heavy snow storm, dubbed 'The Beast from the East', did better.

Winter barley yield to increase but production may fall



Winter barley accounts for

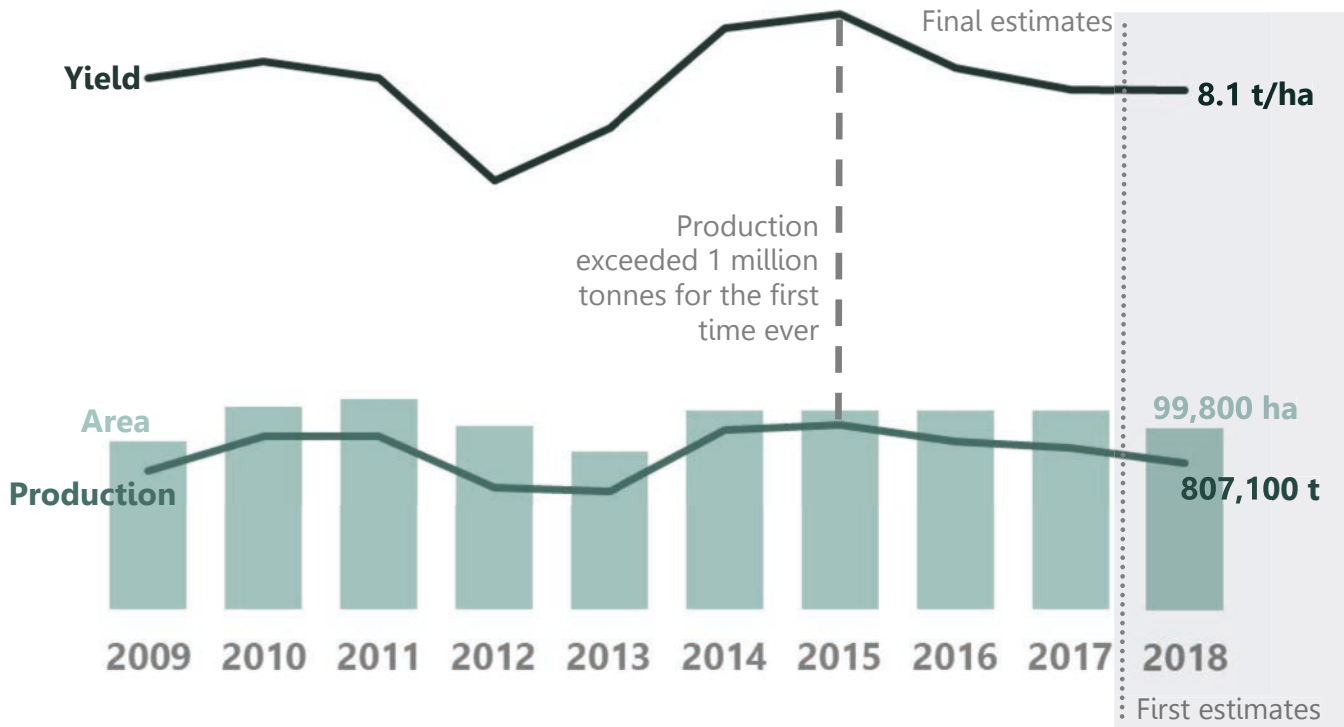
- 11%** Total crop production
- 8%** Total crop area

Scottish barley has a strong association as a key ingredient for the Scottish whisky industry; however, half of Scottish barley is actually used as animal feed.

Winter barley yields are expected to rise slightly. Expert advice indicated that the quality of winter barley has been good this year which has helped yields.

Although winter barley yield is expected to increase by around three per cent, production is estimated to fall by around 18 per cent. This is because there is an expected 21 per cent fall in the area due to poor weather conditions.

Wheat yield expected to remain constant but area likely to drop



Wheat accounts for

30% Total crop production

22% Total crop area

Scottish wheat is mainly soft wheats that are used mostly for distilling.

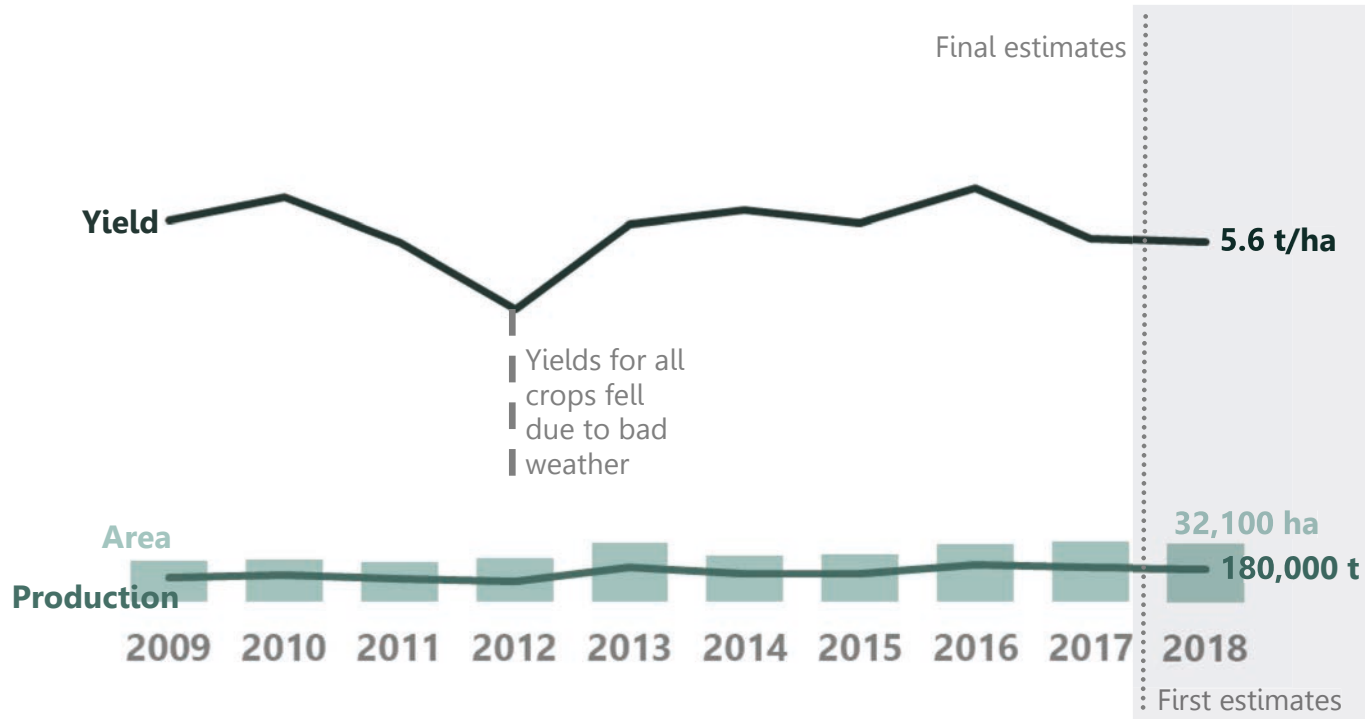
Scotland imports hard wheats for milling (generally used for bread-making) because our climate does not suit hard wheat varieties.

Wheat yields are estimated to have stayed the same over the last year. It is anticipated that yields will remain steady at around 8.1 tonnes per hectare.

Expert advice indicated that some wheat had been cut earlier this year which may have had an impact on yield levels in 2018.

While the area of wheat grown has been constant over the last four years, it is expected that this year there will be a decrease of around nine per cent. This may lead to production also decreasing by around nine per cent compared to the previous year.

Oat production and yield expected to hold



Oats account for
7% Total crop production
7% Total crop area

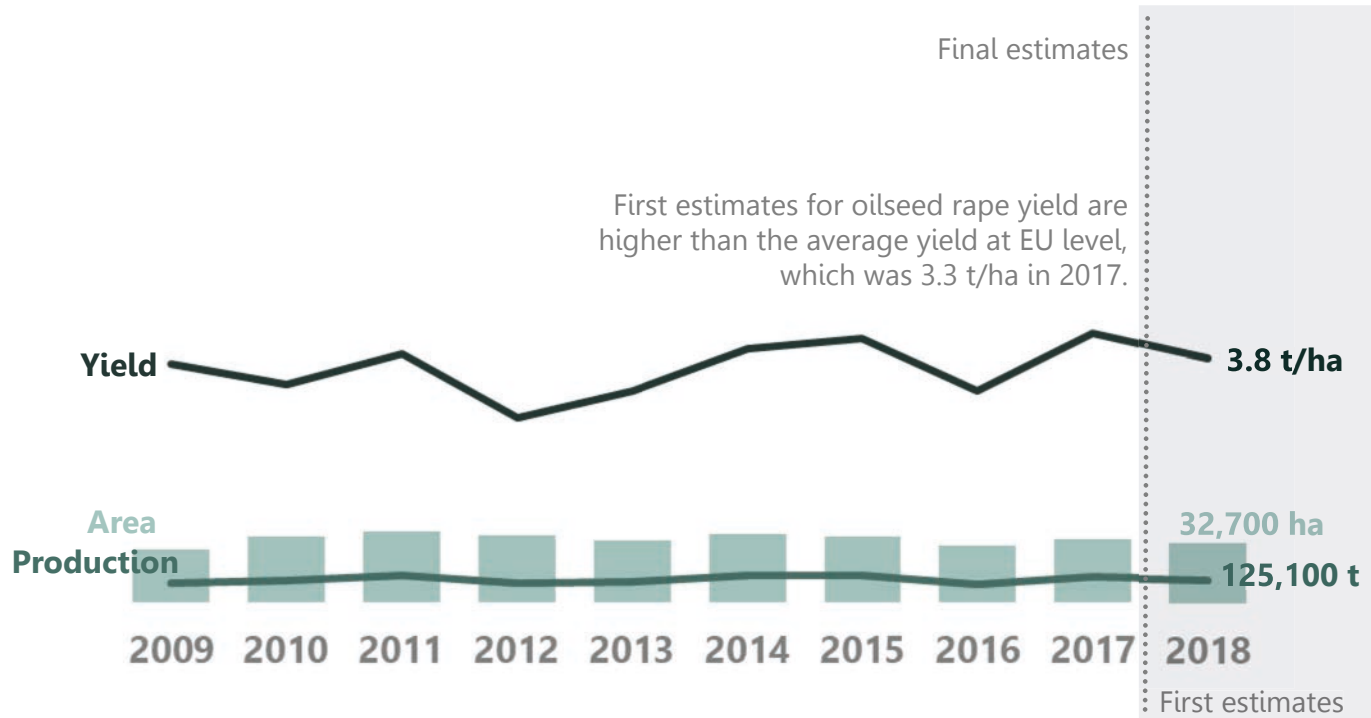
The majority of oats grown in Scotland are sown in the spring and are used for milling and further processing for breakfast cereals, oatcakes, porridge oats and oatmeal.

Oats are also used in specialist feed for horses.

Area, yield and production for oats in 2018 are all estimated to have experienced a slight decrease.

The estimated area of oats sown in 2018 is 32,100 hectares, the second highest since 1989. Oat production is estimated to have decreased by three per cent this year, due to a one per cent decrease in yield.

Predicted falls in oilseed rape yield, production and area



Oilseed Rape accounts for

- 5%** 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.

The majority of oilseed rape is the winter variety and mainly used for biofuels. A small amount is processed in Scotland for cooking oil.

Estimates of oilseed rape yield have indicated there will be a decrease in 2018. It is predicted that they will fall by around nine per cent. 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.

This decrease in yield, along with an estimated four per cent decrease in area, led to a 13 per cent decrease in estimated production.

Cereal and Oilseed Rape Harvest 2018 First Estimates

Data Source

First estimates of the Scottish 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 provisional data for areas sown.

Final estimates of cereal areas will be published in the June Agricultural Census on 9th October.

Final estimates of the 2018 cereal harvest will be available in December. These are based on data gathered from a sample of farms across Scotland.

Data Sources and More Information

Data Tables and Methodology

The data used to create the charts in this publication and the methodology document are available online at www.gov.scot/stats/bulletins/01316

If you have any questions or comments about this publication, please email agric.stats@gov.scot or phone 0300 244 9718.

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This publication is available at www.gov.scot

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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-78781-275-8 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, October 2018

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
(10/18)

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