

INTRODUCTION

The tables below show the 2024/25 AHDB Early Balance Sheet estimates of wheat and barley. These estimates provide the first look of wheat and barley supply and demand for the season.

Despite larger stocks and forecast firmer imports, the second smallest wheat crop since at least 1999/00 has led to a tighter looking wheat balance. For barley, despite a larger crop this season, fewer imports and greater demand for animal feed sees a tighter balance on the year.

WHEAT

In 2024/25, **total wheat availability is estimated at 16.638 Mt. This is down 1.731 Mt on the year**, driven by a 21% decline in UK wheat production. While this is well above the level seen in 2020/21, it is the second lowest since 2013/14. **UK wheat production* is estimated to be down 2.929 Mt on the year, at 11.051 Mt.** This is driven by a yearly fall in planted area and yields, with poor conditions through much of the growing season. While imports were strong last season, with a smaller crop, and reports of lower protein, **full season imports are forecast up 163 Kt year on year, at 2.600 Mt. Opening stocks are estimated at 2.987 Mt, 1.034 Mt more than year earlier levels** and the highest since at least 1999/00.

This season, total domestic consumption of wheat is estimated at 14.005 Mt, down 934 Kt on 2023/24 levels. This is due to declines expected for both human and industrial (H&I), and animal feed consumption.

H&I wheat consumption in 2024/25 is estimated to decline by 3% on the year to 7.248 Mt. This is largely due to reduced usage expected in bioethanol and starch production with lower ethanol prices disincentivising production, as well as a likely shift to increased maize usage in the industry given its competitive price. Total cereals demand for bioethanol usage is forecast lower this season than last, with reduced wheat usage outweighing a rise in maize usage. As ever, bioethanol usage remains a key watch point and will be monitored throughout the season. Current forecasts also assume the resolution to the renewable energy directive (RED II) requirements following the UK's exit from the EU. The wheat S&D could evolve significantly through the season if we see any changes to the RED II status of domestically produced grain. **Wheat usage by the brewing, malting and distilling sector is forecast up slightly this season.** This is due to a strong start to the season and forecast stable starch production which is included in this figure.

Wheat usage by flour millers is expected to be down slightly in 2024/25. Following a slow start to the season, reports from industry suggest demand for flour will remain steady over the rest of the marketing year. Therefore, despite the marginally **lower extraction rates expected this season, total wheat demand is forecast down on 2023/24 levels.** Anecdotal reports also suggest this season's crop is variable, and that overall, protein levels are low. This combined with the much smaller crop will mean a greater dependence on imports. As such, the proportion of imported wheat estimated to be used this season is higher than last and is just slightly less than in 2020/21.

Wheat usage in animal feed this season is expected to fall by 668 Kt on the year to 6.463 Mt. Total animal feed production is expected to see some growth in 2024/25, and cereal inclusion is expected to be up slightly on the year. However, the proportion of wheat used in rations is expected to be lower. This is due to wheat pricing less competitively against maize and barley. The amount of wheat fed on farm this season is also forecast to be slightly lower year on year, due to the tighter availability, and higher selling price of wheat over other cereals.

In 2024/25, the balance of supply and demand is estimated at 2.634 Mt, down 797 Kt from levels recorded last year. This is down 18% on the previous five-year average, though is significantly larger than in 2020/21. The smaller balance is due to the reduction in supply outweighing the fall in demand. Taking into account an operating stock requirement of 1.550 Mt (up 50 Kt from 2023/24), this leaves a **surplus available for either export or free stock of 1.084 Mt, down 662 Kt on the year.**

BARLEY

Total availability of barley this season (2024/25) is estimated at 8.497 Mt, up 64 Kt from a year earlier, with a larger crop outweighing smaller stocks and forecast fewer imports. Despite poorer yields this season, an increased area sees **UK barley production* provisionally estimated at 7.199 Mt, up 236 Kt on 2023/24 levels. Opening stocks are estimated down 51 Kt year-on-year at 1.218 Mt.** This is above the previous five-year average.

Domestic consumption of barley this season is estimated at 6.576 Mt, up 244 Kt on the year. This is due to a considerable climb in usage in animal feed outweighing a slight fall in demand from the brewing, malting, and distilling (BMD) sector.

In 2024/25, H&I barley usage is estimated at 1.834 Mt, down 83 Kt on the year and slightly below the previous five-year average. The steady start to the season is expected to continue, with both brewing and distilling experiencing sluggish demand. Industry reports suggest that poorer demand is down to the ongoing high cost of living, fewer younger people choosing to consume alcohol, and maintenance being carried out on sites across the industry.

This season, usage of barley in animal feed is forecast to increase by 325 Kt on year earlier levels, to 4.514 Mt. As mentioned previously, wheat is expected to partially drop out of rations due to its relative price, while maize and barley usage is expected to remain firm. The amount of barley fed on farm is also expected to be historically high this season, with a high level of domestic grain available and a poor price for farming selling when compared to other cereals.

In the 2024/25 season, the barley balance is forecast at 1.921 Mt, down 180 Kt from last season, and below the previous five-year average. The operating stock requirement remains unchanged on the year at 800 Kt, which leaves a surplus available for export or free stock of 1.121 Mt, down 76 Kt from year earlier levels.

NOTES

This document provides commentary on the annual AHDB Early Balance Sheets for UK wheat and barley, for the 2024/25 marketing season. These balance sheets are designed to provide the industry with information on the UK supply and demand position ahead of the first official UK Cereals Supply and Demand Estimates, due to be published 28 November 2024. Comparisons are with both official survey figures and the 2023/24 end-season supply and demand estimates. As always, caution should be taken when examining these figures at such an early stage of the season.

*Provisional UK cereal and oilseed production estimates for 2024, due to reduced data availability from UK regions. Official provisional estimates are for England and Scotland only. Following Defra's methodology from when a UK provisional figure was last released in 2021, the AHDB have assumed no change for Wales and Northern Ireland area and production figures from 2023. These have been combined with the provisional England and Scotland production figures to produce UK wheat and barley production estimates for the AHDB Early Balance Sheets. Production for previous seasons is based on the results from the [Defra Cereals and Oilseed Rape Production survey](#).

AHDB EARLY CEREAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND BALANCE SHEETS 2024/25

July to June crop years

Thousand tonnes

	Wheat					Barley				
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Change on 2023/24	% Change on 2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Change on 2023/24	% Change on 2023/24
Opening Stocks	1,788	1,953	2,987	1,034	53%	964	1,268	1,218	-51	-4%
Production	15,540	13,980	11,051	-2,929	-21%	7,385	6,963	7,199	236	3%
Imports	1,360	2,437	2,600	163	7%	88	201	80	-121	-60%
Availability	18,688	18,369	16,638	-1,731	-9%	8,437	8,433	8,497	64	1%
Human and Industrial Consumption	7,326	7,499	7,248	-251	-3%	1,983	1,917	1,834	-83	-4%
<i>of which home grown</i>	6,407	6,320	5,839	-481	-8%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Animal Feed Consumption	6,906	7,131	6,463	-668	-9%	3,941	4,188	4,514	325	8%
Seed	267	238	238	-	-	183	192	192	-	-
Other	78	70	55	-15	-21%	37	35	36	1	3%
Domestic Consumption	14,577	14,938	14,005	-934	-6%	6,144	6,333	6,576	244	4%
Balance	4,111	3,431	2,634	-797	-23%	2,293	2,101	1,921	-180	-9%
Exports ²	1,586	258		*	*	1,123	780		*	*
Intervention Stocks ²	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commercial End-Season Stocks ²	1,953	2,987		*	*	1,268	1,218		*	*
<i>of which Estimated Operating Stocks Requirement</i> ³	1,500	1,500	1,550	50	3%	800	800	800	0	0%
<i>of which Free Stocks</i> ⁴	453	1,487		*	*	468	418		*	*
Surplus available for either export or free stock	2,038	1,745	1,084	-662	-38%	1,592	1,197	1,121	-76	-6%
Residual	573	186				-98	103			

Source: AHDB, Defra

These balance sheets have been produced by AHDB. The balance sheets should be viewed in conjunction with the official UK Cereals Supply and Demand Balance Sheets . The first official 2024/25 balance sheets are due to be released on 28 November 2024.

These are revised during the year. Figures rounded to the nearest 1000 tonnes. Due to rounding, totals may not agree with the sum of the individual items.

1. Forecast using best information available as at 24 October 2024
2. Split of exports, intervention and total commercial end-season stocks only published for historical seasons
3. This is a calculated estimate of the minimum tonnage that users of grain require to get through to a point at which new crop can be utilised
Estimated Operating Stocks Requirement calculated as shown [here](#)
4. Free Stocks are those available after exports and operating stocks have been fulfilled; these will be estimated later in the season when stocks survey data is available

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