



R.M.JONES Newsletter

FARMCENTRES
www.rmjones.com

July 2026

Weaning: Preparing for the start of the year

The length of time taken for the ewe's ovary to mature means nutrition and **Body Condition Score (BCS)** can influence ovulation as much as 6 months before mating. Unless management plans are put in place now for weaning and beyond, this year's spring grazing may affect next year's lambing percentage and profitability.

Rather than thinking of **weaning** as the end of the production cycle we should think of it as the start. Typically, lambs are **weaned** 8 to 10 weeks **pre-tupping** to allow ewes to recover and gain **BCS** if required. It is recommended that lowland and hill ewes are **BCS 3.5** and **2.5** respectively when going to the tup. This helps to support optimal ovulation rates and ensure pregnancy success. It is estimated that ewes require at least 6-8 weeks of good quality grazing (**>10.5 ME MJ/kg DM**) to gain **1 BCS**.

However, if ewes are required to increase the condition score by more than **1 BCS** where grazing is limited or poor quality then further time will be required and early weaning should be considered.

In addition, supplementation can support ewes and help balance energy, protein and minerals during this key time.

Optilix High Energy is a low moisture, extra high energy, protein feed and mineral lick.

- Extra energy is ideal for supporting optimal body condition.
- The **high sugar** formulation provides more fermentable energy to further support performance and overall feed intake.
- **High protein (12%)**, including natural and urea sources supports grass and forage utilization.
- The addition of key minerals, vitamins and trace elements, including protected **selenium** and **zinc** supports ewe overall **health, performance** and **fertility**.



Make weaning count this year to boost next year's bottom line

Micron Faecal Egg Counting

Save time and money by not worming unnecessarily.

Use the right product at the right time and resist
resistance!

Call us for more details



Arable Update

UK LIFFE Wheat Nov 26 £180- £190/t
MATIF OSR Nov 26 £440 - £450/t
AN34.5% Fertiliser £480 - £550/t (guide only)

Current wheat GS GS80—90
Current OSR GS GS80—90

Comments

2025/26 crops are nearly a wrap for most people. Combines will be rolling into Winter Barley and Oilseed this month with most crops looking pretty decent. Speed of growth in Spring crops has been rapid with Magnesium deficiency showing up everywhere even where Magnesium has been applied

Cereals

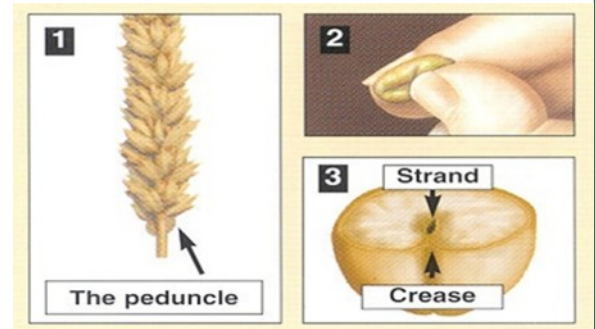
If you are aiming to desiccate your crops pre-harvest the following guide should be useful. As ever if in doubt speak to your agronomist for crop specific information.

Cereal crops are at 30% moisture content and ready for spraying when:

(Applies to Wheat & Barley): The peduncle loses green colour and goes brown.

(Applies to Wheat, Barley and Oats): A thumbnail pressed into grains taken from the centre of ears in various parts of the crop (a random sample of 20 should be sufficient) leaves an indentation which does not disappear.

(Applies to Wheat only): When 75% of the grains taken from the centre of ears in various parts of the crop (a random sample of 20 should be sufficient) have a dark brown pigment strand in the centre when cut in half.



Beet

Micro nutrition including Boron, Molybdenum and Magnesium are important in beet to ensure full beet formation and leaf integrity. This should be complete when the crop is around the shut drill period (end June/early July). A fungicide with Innocul8 later in July will keep the crop green longer and help protect the plant over the winter months.

Maize

Many farms will apply a late application (8 – 12 leaf stage – upto 120cm tall) of Efficient N to crops. This has a positive impact on cob size and starch yield as well as improving overall yield. It can be combined with a fungicide and micro nutrition (Magnesium, Zinc, Copper, Phosphate, Potassium) which will all help build crop resilience and drive yield.

Technical Corner – What your crop looks like at harvest (other than yellow...)

The chart below shows the data for a wheat crop at or near harvest. This is the target we try and achieve. To reach the 10t – 11t/ha yield we need:

- 460+ ears/m²
- 48 grains/ear
- Spec weight of 78kg/hectolitre

Grain fill from flowering takes approx. 45 days in UK conditions although drought or excessive heat will shorten this and can reduce yield. Keeping the flag leaf green for approx. 4 – 5 days longer can add over 0.5t/ha yield.

Note the nitrogen requirements of the crop – wheat will use approx. 23kgN/ha (18.4units/acre) for every tonne of yield - a 10t/ha crop will need approx. 230kgN/ha (178unitsN/acre) to perform.

Harvest ripe	9 August	Grain 'harvest ripe'
Ears (fertile shoots)	460/m ²	At least 400 shoots/m ² required to avoid yield loss
Nitrogen uptake	279 kg/ha	68% of final crop N is in grain (32% in chaff, straw and stubble)
Above-ground dry weight	18.4 t/ha	51% grain (10% chaff, the rest as straw and stubble)
Straw dry weight	7.3 t/ha	Includes stems and leaves; only 0.2 t/ha soluble sugars remains
Chaff dry weight	2.0 t/ha	Chaff is 420 mg/ear
Grain weight	50 mg at 15% moisture	Specific weight 78 kg/hl