HGCA/AHDB Winter Planting Survey Results 2011

England & Wales (Plantings as at 1 Dec 2011)

The **total area** planted to cereals and oilseed rape by 1 December 2011 in England and Wales is estimated 5% higher than in December 2010 at 2.984M ha.

The expansion in area comes following generally favourable autumn weather conditions in 2011, which allowed plantings to progress. Relatively strong forward crop prices at planting could also have been a factor. Anecdotally, this comes at the expense of some spring cropping area and winter sown pulses.

The England and Wales **wheat** area planted by 1 December 2011 is estimated 3% higher than the previous December at 1.862M ha. Most regions have seen growth with the exception of Yorkshire and the South West, which saw declines of 1% and 2% respectively.

A larger increase in the wheat area is prevented by increases in the winter barley and oilseed rape areas – probably due to the economic competitiveness of these crops on farm.

The England and Wales **barley** area planted by 1 December 2011 is estimated 9% higher than the previous December at 0.345M ha. The North West and West Midlands are the only regions to show declines of 8% and 4% respectively.

An increase in the barley area could be caused by: Strong malting premiums; mixed farms looking to produce more home-grown feed and bedding; improved relative profitability of winter barley and; farmers wanting to spread harvest workloads.

The England and Wales **oat** area planted by 1 December 2011 is estimated 13% higher than the previous December at 79K ha. The English oat area has suffered a period of decline in recent years with the 2011 area being the lowest since 2005. This has resulted in strong prices, relative to other grains, in 2011/12. This is likely to be the main driver of the estimated area increase for harvest 2012.

The England and Wales **oilseed rape** area planted by 1 December 2011 is estimated 6% higher than the previous December at 0.698M ha. The North East, North West and Welsh areas are seen unchanged with other regions showing an increase, except the South East, which sees a 4% decline.

Against other winter sown crops, oilseed rape has become increasingly competitive over the last two seasons, fueled partly by a tight European supply.

Methodology

Following a consultation exercise which ran in summer 2010 to find alternative data sources for DEFRA December land based data, the AHDB/HGCA Planting Survey was identified as a suitable alternative for gathering the same key arable crop data. The first 2011 AHDB/HGCA winter planting survey has now been undertaken to mitigate the loss of the DEFRA December survey.

The survey was sent out to a representative sample of 5,042 farms and had a response rate of 64.5%.

The survey used percentage differences in the sample surveyed (the difference between this and last year's plantings) to estimate the area they planted. This percentage change is applied to last year’s actual December survey results to give an estimate of overall planted area. For each crop there is thus an England and Wales and a regional percentage change in area identified.

The methodology used to calculate this winter survey is slightly different from previous AHDB/HGCA spring/summer planting surveys in order to maintain equivalence with previous Defra December surveys.

Full analysis of these England and Wales planting results will be published in next week’s Prospects including coverage of Scottish planting data from the Scottish Government. AHDB will be carrying out a full planting and variety survey this spring with results released in July.

7 March 2011

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England & Wales (Plantings as at 1 Dec 2011)

'000 hectares

	Wheat			Barley			Oats		
	December 2010 estimate *	December 2011 estimate **	*% change from 2010*	December 2010 estimate *	December 2011 estimate **	*% change from 2010*	December 2010 estimate *	December 2011 estimate **	*% change from 2010*
North East	77	83	*8*	28	30	*7*	6	4	*-33*
North West	26	29	*12*	13	12	*-8*	2	3	*50*
Yorks	255	253	*-1*	69	75	*9*	6	6	*0*
East Mids	357	366	*3*	40	43	*8*	7	10	*43*
West Mids	157	160	*2*	25	24	*-4*	14	15	*7*
Eastern	516	549	*6*	72	79	*10*	7	9	*29*
South East	232	237	*2*	23	29	*26*	13	17	*31*
South West	171	167	*-2*	39	45	*15*	12	13	*8*
England	**1,791**	**1,844**	*3*	**309**	**337**	***9***	**67**	**77**	***15***
Wales	**19**	**18**	*0*	**8**	**8**	***0***	**3**	**2**	***-33***
England and Wales	**1,810**	**1,862**	*3*	**317**	**345**	***9***	**70**	**79**	***13***

	Oilseed Rape			Total Cereals and Oilseed Rape planted by 1 December		
	December 2010 estimate *	December 2011 estimate **	*% change from 2010*	December 2010 estimate *	December 2011 estimate **	*% change from 2010*
North East	30	30	*0*	141	147	*4*
North West	12	12	*0*	53	56	*6*
Yorks	91	98	*7*	421	432	*3*
East Mids	161	171	*6*	565	590	*4*
West Mids	54	58	*7*	250	257	*3*
Eastern	161	179	*10*	756	816	*8*
South East	87	84	*-4*	355	367	*3*
South West	58	63	*8*	280	288	*3*
England	**654**	**695**	***6***	**2821**	**2953**	*5*
Wales	**3**	**3**	***0***	**33**	**31**	*-5*
England and Wales	**657**	**698**	***6***	**2,854**	**2,984**	*5*

**Defra data as at 1st Dec 2010.*

***AHDB estimate*

Source: Defra, AHDB