

Cream of the crops

Variety choice

After a barn buster? Or maybe agronomics so rock-solid they make titanium look soft? What about a variety that hits the spot for a tasty premium? Whatever growers are looking to drill for this coming season, CPM's got it covered.

By Melanie Jenkins

Generally, once a cereal variety has been chosen and planted, it'll see the season out, for good or ill. Which is why choosing the right variety for the situation and end market is one of the fundamental starting points for any grower. But every year a new batch of initiates enter the stable, with many growers either eager to try them out for size, or to keep a close eye on their in-field performance.

"As well as the exciting new varieties which have been added to AHDB's Recommended List, there are still the staple established ones to consider," says Clare Leaman of NIAB.

"There are also varieties kicking around that aren't on the RL and if growers are offered contracts for these, they are always worth investigating. So don't write-off those varieties which either

haven't made it onto the list or have fallen from it. Do your digging and weigh up if they could be worthwhile."

For the past few years growers may not have been able to see newer varieties in action, with COVID having put a stop to most open days. "Hopefully this summer will be normal," says Clare. "I'd encourage everyone to get out and look at field demos and trials to familiarise themselves with the new releases from the past couple of years now the opportunity is there."

But ahead of any potential open days, how are these new varieties shaping up at the starting block compared with the known safe bets? And what benefits could they bring to the farm?

Winter wheat

The RL had a lot of new winter wheats added to it this year and some are more useful than others, says Clare. "The draw for growers will be towards the hard feed wheats. Of these, DSV's Champion has come through with a really high treated yield, a good untreated yield and strong disease resistance, with an 8 for yellow rust and an 8 for septoria. It's a really good all round feed variety.

"The only thing that growers need to be aware of is its specific weight. For most growing hard feeds, it's not low enough to cause any problems, but if you know that you have fields which usually produce poorer specific weights, it could be worth growing it away from those areas. So keep this in mind when planning," she advises.

Then there's KWS Dawsum, says Clare.

"It's 2% lower in yield than Champion but this is equal to the best we had on the list before. It's an all-rounder, with a strong untreated yield and has good disease ratings. And though it doesn't have orange wheat blossom midge (OWBM) resistance, it does have a very high specific weight."

Based on the current data available on Dawsum, it looks to be a flexible variety, both in terms of its position and in terms of drilling date, she adds. "Both Dawsum and Champion look to be really interesting on farm. They're no brainers really, as they could appeal to pretty much anyone and would complement each other."

A further new addition that may be worth considering is LG Typhoon. "With a treated yield of 102% of control and a

“ The draw for growers will be towards the hard feed wheats. ”



Clare Leaman suggests growers make the most of open days this summer.

good untreated yield, as well as respectable septoria resistance, this makes a nice new addition to the list.”

Of those already well-established RL varieties, Clare believes that Gleam and Graham are still of interest. “But I do think they’ll lose ground to Champion and Dawsum quickly.”

Moving onto the Group 4 soft feed wheats, RGT Bairstow is the heavy batter, according to Clare. “Sitting on the RL with a similar yield to LG Skyscraper and RGT Saki, it’s the choice high yielding soft feed wheat. Bairstow has good agronomic characteristics and a disease profile which is a slight improvement on both Skyscraper and Saki, but both of these are still very good varieties.”

In the quality wheat section KWS Palladium and Mayflower have been added to the list. “It’s early days for these Group 2 varieties and neither is showing an advantage over KWS Extase, so it’s less obvious at this stage how they fit, but that’s not to say that they won’t fit on farm,” she explains.

“Both varieties give growers options with good disease and high untreated yields, so they will be of interest, particularly for those growing Extase for milling. Extase found huge popularity and with good reason. I don’t see that changing.”

“The new Group 3s are harder to place,” she says. “RGT Rashid is probably the strongest but it’s not the highest yielding. The disease resistance in the new KWS offerings is low and the other established varieties in this Group may be

up in the air because of the experiences of many with septoria resistance breakdowns last year in Group 3 varieties with Cougar parentage.

“I actually like LG Astronomer. It’s still a good candidate even with its Cougar lineage taken into account, and it has OWBM resistance. It’s still a good option among the Group 3s,” says Clare.

Looking at the Group 1s, things haven’t changed much, according to Clare. “Hopefully, the issues last year reminded everyone that growing more than one variety can be a really useful tool.”

She also suggests that it could be worth going beyond just considering diversity of parentage and septoria resistance. “Be mindful of all your varieties and how they fit together to minimise risks as much as possible. Go beyond looking at an individual variety and instead, look at the whole group.”

Spring wheat

Spring wheat is quite an interesting crop at the moment, according to Clare. “For a long time the spring wheat area has been dominated by a couple of varieties, such as Mulika. But now there are two new high yielding Group 1s and one high yielding Group 4.

“The options have opened up and it could be easy for growers not to realise there’s more choice out there.”

The first new Group 1 of interest is KWS Ladum. “It has a huge 8% yield advantage over Mulika, which changes the game in Group 1. It’s only 2% behind the yield of



Dawsum looks to be a flexible variety, both in terms of its position and in terms of drilling date.

the second most widely grown variety, Group 2 variety KWS Cochise, so it’s a really good step forward.

“Though disease is not a particular issue for spring wheat, Ladum does have a solid package of traits, but it doesn’t have OWBM resistance, which is something to be aware of,” she advises.

The second new Group 1 variety is Nissaba. Nissaba is best autumn sown and has OWBM resistance, says Clare. “It’s actually aimed at autumn drilling after sugar beet or potatoes. Though it’s a slightly later maturing variety, this won’t cause too much of an issue because of its sowing window. It has a good specific ▶

Winter wheat varieties

Variety	KWS Extase	KWS Palladium	Mayflower	KWS Rashid	LG Astronomer	RGT Bairstow	LG Skyscraper	RGT Saki	Champion	KWS Dawsum	Gleam	LG Typhoon	Graham
Group	2	2	2	3	3	Soft 4	Soft 4	Soft 4	Hard 4	Hard 4	Hard 4	Hard 4	Hard 4
Treated yield (%)	100.7	99.6	97.4	100.1	99.7	103.1	102.9	102.7	105.9	104.1	102.9	101.8	101.7
Untreated yield (%)	92.7	89.6	89.6	79.2	85.6	84.6	81.8	84.6	90	92	79.8	88.1	101.7
Protein content (%)	11.9	11.8	11.9	11.1	11.7	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.4	11.2	11.2	11.1	11.3
Specific weight (kg/hl)	78.5	76.9	78.5	76.2	77.4	75.9	76.5	75.6	74.8	79.4	76.3	76.3	76.9
Resistance to lodging without PGR	7	7.2	6.3	7.6	7.3	5.9	6.3	6.2	6.1	6.9	6.8	7	6.6
Height without PGR (cm)	90	83.7	89.4	85.9	88	91.1	92.4	88.2	88.2	83.6	86.8	87.8	88.4
Ripening (days +/- Skyfall)	-1	-1	0	+3	+1	+2	0	+3	0	+1	0	+2	-1
Mildew	7.2	8.2	7.8	4.1	3.7	6	6.7	5.4	6.5	8	6.3	6.6	6.6
Yellow rust	8.1	8.7	8.7	7.7	8.3	7.1	7.1	8.1	7.6	8.7	5	8.7	7.4
Brown rust	6.6	5.4	5.7	5.6	7.8	6.3	5.4	6.6	5.3	7.2	5.9	6.1	4.6
Septoria	7.8	7.4	8.4	6.9	6.8	6.4	4.9	5.9	7.7	6.3	5.8	7.2	6.7
OWBM	-	-	-	R	R	R	R	R	R	-	R	R	-

Source: AHDB Recommended List, winter wheat 2022/23 ([] = limited data)



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Winter barley varieties

Variety	KWS Tardis	Lightning	LG Dazzle	KWS Feeris
End use group	Two-row feed	Two-row feed	Two-row feed	Six-row feed
Treated yield (%)	104.9	103.6	102.5	103
Untreated yield (%)	84.5	87.8	87.1	83.9
Specific weight (kg/hl)	70.2	68.6	68.9	69.5
Screenings (% through 2.5mm)	1.4	1.9	1.8	0.7
Resistance to lodging without PGR	7.6	5.9	6.5	[8]
Height without PGR (cm)	95.3	[92]	[92]	[1-02]
Ripening (days +/- KWS Orwell)	0	0	0	0
Mildew	4.6	6.6	5.6	4.4
Brown rust	5.7	7.5	8	5.4
Rhynchosporium	6.7	6.2	7.3	5.7
Net blotch	[5]	[5]	[4]	[6]
BaYMV	R	R	R	R

Source: AHDB Recommended List, winter barley 2022/23 ([] = limited data)

Spring barley varieties

Variety	Skyway	LG Diablo	Laureate	RGT Planet
End use group	Malting			
Treated yield (%)	104.6	102.2	102.1	98.6
Untreated yield (%)	93.9	92.5	93.5	89.6
Specific weight (kg/hl)	68.7	67.1	66.6	68.0
Screenings (% through 2.5mm)	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.2
Nitrogen content (%)	1.57	1.52	1.54	1.56
Resistance to lodging without PGR	6.5	6.9	6.4	7.1
Height without PGR (cm)	74	70.9	69.1	72.1
Ripening (days +/- RGT Planet)	0	+2	+1	0
Mildew	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.4
Brown rust	4.2	4.9	5.1	4.8
Rhynchosporium	[6]	4.5	5.1	4.6

Source: AHDB Recommended List, spring barley 2022/23 ([] = limited data)

Spring wheat varieties

Variety	KWS Ladum	Nissaba	Mulika	KWS Cochise	KWS Fixum
Group	1	1	1	2	4
Treated yield spring sown (%)	101.9	94.8	93.5	103.5	108
Protein content (%)	13.2	13.5	13.6	13.2	12.7
Specific weight (kg/hl)	78.0	76.4	77.0	78.5	77.8
Mildew	[8]	[5]	6.6	8.2	[8]
Yellow rust	6.4	4.9	6.5	4.4	7
Brown rust	[7]	[9]	[9]	[9]	[8]
Septoria	[7]	[6]	[6]	[6]	[6]
OWBM	-	R	R	R	-

Source: AHDB Recommended List, spring wheat 2022/23 ([] = limited data)



The newer spring barley varieties take longer to catch on than with other crops, as they wait for acceptance from brewers and maltsters.

► weight and looks agronomically strong,” says Clare. “It’s a sound bet.”
 Diving in among the other Group 4s is KWS Fixum. “This variety has moved the yield of spring wheats on — it’s a good improvement at 108% of control. For those who are growing winter Group 4s and don’t have a lot of storage options, it’s a good one to have as a spring choice from a storage perspective,” she explains. “Though it has no OWBM resistance, it does have a good disease profile.
 “Growers may not always

consider spring wheat, but it could be time to have another look and see where the newer varieties could solve problems for them.”

Winter barley

Among the winter barleys there’s less of a buzz than amid the spring barleys, says Clare. “A few new varieties were added to the latest RL, but I think they will struggle to make a dent in the list, if I’m honest.”

This is partly because of KWS Tardis. “Added to the RL a year previously, it’s still relatively new and is a sound option for ►

Oat varieties						
Variety	Mascani	Merlin	WPB Isabel	Canyon	Conway	Lion
Type	Winter	Spring	Spring	Spring	Spring	Spring
Treated yield spring sown (%)	96.5	105.1	104.8	102.6	99.3	99
Kernel content (%)	76.4	72.6	74.4	72.7	73.0	76.2
Specific weight (kg/hl)	53.3	51.1	53.6	51.3	50.0	52.1
Screenings (% through 2.0mm)	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.4	1.9	1.9
Resistance to lodging without PGR	6.4	[7]	7.3	6.7	7.3	[7]
Straw length without PGC (cm)	122	[105]	107.9	108.7	103.6	[104]
Mildew	5.5	8	4.9	7.8	5.4	2.6
Crown rust	5.2	[3]	5.1	3.9	4.2	[5]

Source: AHDB Recommended List, winter oats and spring oats 2022/23 ([] = limited data)



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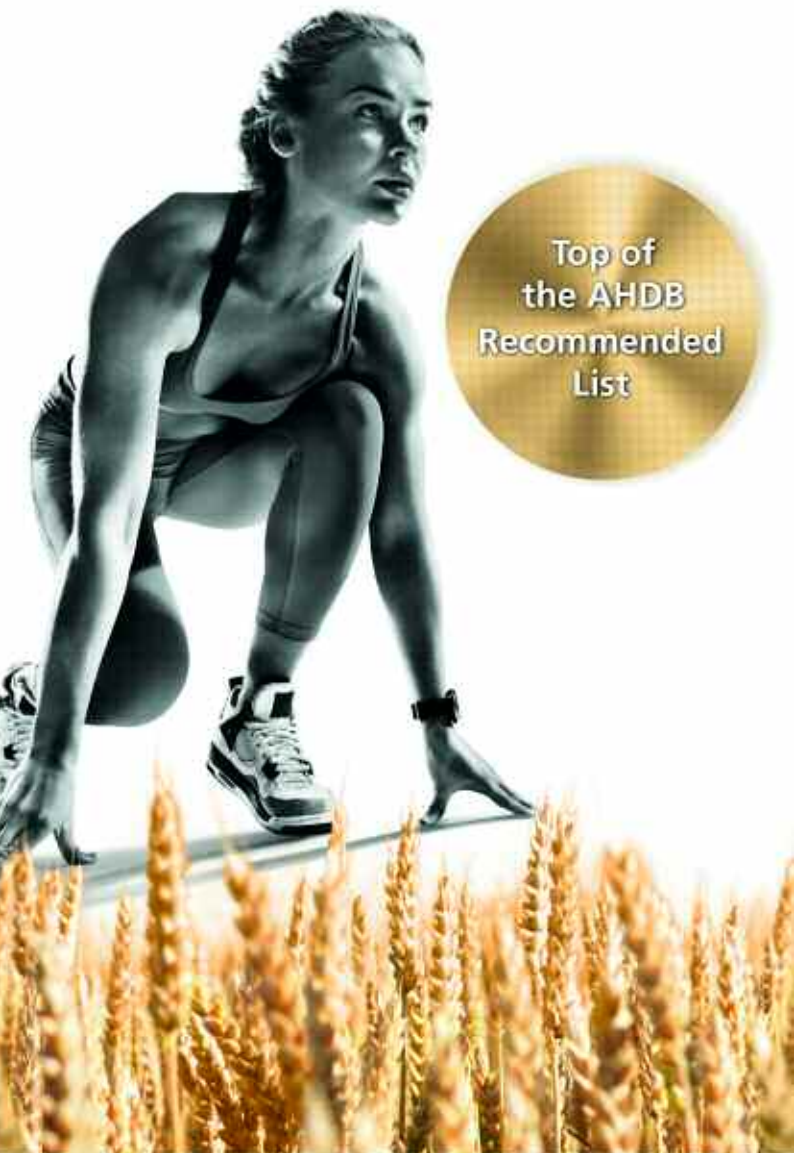
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growers,” she explains. “Though the two new two-row varieties — Lightning and Dazzle — are good in their own right, with yields of 104% and 103% respectively — Tardis is the stronger bet.

“I think a lot will choose Tardis again as they will have only grown it for one year, and if what’s in the ground has a good result, they will have had the experience of growing it,” adds Clare. “So I think the other varieties will be slower to find a home.”

In the conventional six-row category, KWS Feeris is the interesting new addition as it has BYDV resistance, says Clare. “There are a few others in the market with this trait but none have come through standard testing, so to have comparable data makes it much easier to weigh up the benefits of BYDV resistance when comparing with more established varieties.”

Spring barley

The newer spring barley varieties take longer to catch on than with other crops, as they wait for quality testing to progress, explains Clare. “The majority of this category is made up of Laureate, RGT Planet and LG Diablo.

“But there are good new varieties coming through, they just don’t have approval from maltsters or brewers yet,” she says. “Skyway is one of these varieties and it has been provisionally approved for brewing. It’s high yielding and hopefully will get full approval for brewing in June.”

Clare suggests growers keep an eye on the spring barley list as varieties are coming through which show a significant improvement year-on-year in terms of yield. “Though malting approval can lag behind the release of the RL — like with Skyway — hopefully by spring next year it will be fully approved and it does add a 3-4% yield advantage over Laureate and Diablo.”

Oats

The situation in the winter milling oats category has remained much the same, with Mascani still in the main position, but a couple of new varieties are waiting in the wings, she says. “Hopefully, in the next year or two these will come through with milling potential.”

Where spring oats are concerned, there’s more developments. “WPB Isabel, Canyon and Conway are all already established interesting varieties,” says Clare. “But a few new additions have been added among the proven spring oats.

“Merlin is new to the list and it has a really good high yield and millers are showing interest in it,” she says.

“There’s also Lion, but this isn’t as high yielding, however, it has good milling quality. It’s early days in the milling assessments but the millers are interested, it would be really good to have more good quality milling oat varieties available to growers,” explains Clare.

“So though we have new interesting varieties to consider, we’re just waiting for more back from the millers. And as oats don’t have as much pre-testing done as there just isn’t the volume grown, it’s harder to know as early in the process. But so far, the millers are showing interest in both new varieties, which is promising.”

Rye

A lot of rye varieties are either from Saaten Union or KWS and there’s a high turnover of them, according to Clare. “So choice really depends on what seed you can get.”

New this year is KWS Tayo, SU Baresi, SU Bendix, SU Elrond and SU Pluralis. “In theory there’s plenty of choice and there are definitely some good new varieties available, so look at the data, see what’s available and be up-to-date with the available information.” ■