


# Diversity, but not without compromise



*“Many Group 4 varieties are now susceptible to yellow rust, however, the recommendations are justified due to their yield advantage.”*

PAUL GOSLING

Although the pace at which new varieties are coming to the table appears to be slowing, the selection on offer is also broadening. *CPM* reveals the diverse mix that forms the AHDB Recommended Lists for 2026/27.

By Janine Adamson

**A**s always, there's plenty of change when it comes to the latest iteration of AHDB's Recommended Lists. However, it's a tool that'll likely be scrutinised more closely this time, given the recent breakdown of

the YR15 resistance gene found in many popular wheat varieties.

But starting from a very top-line perspective, 28 new varieties have been added to the RL, with 33 removed. According to AHDB, as such, the lists are becoming more focused, although

still include numerous options with significant yield improvements.

For those chasing milling spec and associated premiums, yet another new provisional UKFM Group 1 variety has been added to the winter wheat RL – the third in as many years. Beyond this, there's also a new distilling soft Group 4 feed variety, and several new hard Group 4s.

Then, it's a little quieter on the winter barley front, with just three new varieties added to the list, although there are several new dual-use spring barley recommendations with potential. ►



### Limited launches

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- Finally, the winter oilseed rape list sees new recommendations in all categories.

AHDB's Paul Gosling points out it's been a relatively quiet year for new varieties and consequently, several lists are shorter. "The new RL includes some niche varieties; although these won't appeal to everyone, they'll fit some situations.

"The winter wheat recommendations were particularly tricky this year after the shake up to yellow rust resistance; we've recommended some new hard Group 4s that are susceptible to yellow rust. Many varieties in this group are now susceptible to the disease. However, the recommendations are justified, due to the yield advantage of the new additions over the current ones."

### WINTER AND SPRING WHEAT

A total of eight new varieties join the winter wheat RL, a highlight of which is arguably Arlington from DSV – listed as a provisional Group 1 by UKFM, with its status to be confirmed in the spring.

In small-scale testing during the past three years, Arlington has shown good grain and baking quality, as well as respectable protein levels. It's also the highest-yielding Group 1 variety in the East (100) and has the second highest fungicide-untreated yield (94). Other plusses include a

## Descriptive List for pulses

Eleven new pea and bean varieties are now available to growers

For those with pulses in the rotation, the Processors and Growers Research Organisation (PGRO) has also unveiled its 2026 Descriptive List, comprising seven new combining peas, two winter beans and two spring beans.

According to PGRO's Dr Chris Judge, despite drought conditions during the summer, new and existing material performed well, with sufficient trial data obtained to analyse the varieties put forward by breeders.

"We use data gathered from five years of trials to compare varietal performance against a number of criteria, including yield, maturity, and disease resistance. The control yield for peas, spring beans and winter beans were all very similar to the previous year, despite the impact of the weather," he says.

### COMBINING PEAS

Two yellow combining peas were added to the list – KWS Telegram, which is the newest highest-yielding yellow pea variety with a yield of 117%, and Cushla (Senova).

In the green pea category, a new variety tops the list for yield – KWS Arkam at 114%. It's joined by Bullet (NPZ), and LG Mamba.

Marrowfat varieties Yoshi (NPZ) and Nyx (Elsoms) also join the list.

### WINTER BEANS

New launch Patagonia (NPZ) stands as the earliest-maturing bean on the entire list with a rating of 8, while Hepworth (Senova) is the only variety



### Pulse resilience

Despite drought conditions during the summer, new and existing material performed well, says PGRO's Dr Chris Judge.

to have a rating of 6 for bean rust.

In 2025, many winter bean trials were short in stature with lowered branching due to stressors throughout the season, including spring drought, points out Chris.

### SPRING BEANS

Two low-vicine, low-convicine (LVC) lines have been added to the spring bean list for 2026, meaning they can be included at higher rates in some animal feeds. These are Callas (Saaten Union) – that has a yield of 103% and is early maturing for a spring bean (7) – and Maderas (NPZ).

score of 7 for both yellow rust and septoria, combined with orange wheat blossom midge resistance and the Pch1 eyespot resistance gene.

DSV UK wheat breeder Dr Matt Kerton says due to its very low vernalisation requirement, Arlington gives growers a wider drilling window. "It can be sown late into the season, providing flexibility for farmers who are unable to sow in the autumn,

or who have to switch to spring sowing to suit the conditions."

He adds that UK flour millers have praised Arlington for its strong gluten quality, high water absorption, and excellent bake performance.

"It delivers a good loaf volume and is agronomically very similar to Skyfall, which has long been the benchmark for Group 1 wheat."

Then, KWS Grebe is the lone addition



to UKFM Group 2. With yields just below the best Group 2s, Paul notes its chief attraction is likely to be its resistance to orange wheat blossom midge.

As for feed varieties, there are several new launches including Sparkler from Elsoms – a soft feed variety. With the top fungicide-treated yield for soft varieties (106), it's rated 'high' quality for distilling and also has strong yellow rust (7) and septoria resistance (7.2) scores.

Featured in July *CPM*, Elsoms suggests Sparkler offers a 'step up' in key traits such as disease resistance, a notably high alcohol yield, plus the wider attributes growers have come to expect from a modern variety, giving it potential to gain traction in the North.

However, among the five hard Group 4 varieties recommended this year could be some controversies, namely KWS Aintree, highlights Paul. "While at 100% of controls Aintree offers a 'huge' 4% yield increase over the existing KWS Scope and Champion, with a yellow rust rating of just 3, it's not going to be for everyone. Where grown, it'll require careful management to realise its yield potential," he says.

And although KWS Fowlmere has better yellow rust resistance (5) and as a result, a better fungicide-untreated yield than Aintree, it's 3% lower yielding in fungicide-treated trials. "Despite that, its key trait is its earliness – a -2 for ripening – making Fowlmere the earliest variety on the list so it should attract interest," adds Paul.

KWS' Matt Bull says Aintree's early maturity is a unique feature, helping growers to spread harvest workload and risk. "It's another option as an alternative pre-crop to oilseed rape which is seeing a resurgence in growing area.

"Fowlmere also brings high grain quality alongside OWBM resistance and looks set to be an excellent addition to the hard Group 4 market."

Two further additions to the hard Group 4s are LG Defiance, which has the highest fungicide-untreated yield on the new list (95), and LG Challenger.

The final addition to the hard Group 4s is RGT Guardsman. With a fungicide-treated yield of 103, Paul points out that it's the first of the BYDV-resistant varieties to be competitive on yield.

Commenting on the variety, RAGT's Andrew Creasy says BYDV resistance is a trait that many farmers are interested in, especially in mild autumns like this year. "Having a variety that protects



### Closing the gap

RAGT's Andrew Creasy says BYDV resistance is a trait many farmers are interested in, especially in mild autumns like this year.

## Bats above the competition



## KWS GOTHAM

Green Pea



- Excellent combination of yield and protein
- Impressive thousand seed weight (306g)
- Resistance to pea wilt

Data Source: COMBINING PEAS - PGRO Descriptive List 2025

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## Fewer options

Darcie is one of just three new winter barley additions.

against the virus without compromising yield potential is a huge step forward.”

Then for those with spring wheat in the rotation, the list has gained three new options – two Group 4s (Merkawa from Senova and WPB Clifden from Limagrain) and a Group 1 (Charland from Blackman Agriculture).

Of particular interest may be Charland – a white wheat that produces especially white flour. Paul believes it should have several specialist end-uses and unlike previous white-wheat varieties recommended, has been given a Group 1 classification by UKFM due to its very good milling and baking qualities.

It also has a high brown rust score of 7, although is susceptible to yellow rust (4).“Of the new spring

wheats, it’s the one most likely to stimulate the greatest interest,” he says.

## WINTER AND SPRING BARLEY

While the previous iteration of the RL saw an influx of winter barley additions, RL 2026/27 has gained just three varieties, the first being Darcie from Senova – a two-row feed variety that’s recommended for the East and West regions.

Slightly lower yielding for the UK at 104, it comes with resistance to Barley yellow mosaic virus strain 2 (BaYMV2), one of only three such varieties on the list. Paul says while the extent of BaYMV incidence is uncertain, varietal resistance is the only option where the disease is problematic.

According to Senova’s

George Goodwin, the genetic potential of Darcie is clear when you consider its agronomic merits. “With its strong disease and virus resistance, stiff straw and lower screenings, it’s a variety

that will appeal to growers,” he says.

One new six-row hybrid has been added – SY Barnabus – the highest-yielding of its type in both fungicide-treated

(108) and untreated (93) trials. Paul notes that although its grain quality is good, it’s slightly weaker strawed than some of the other six-row hybrids.

Completing the winter barley additions is LG Catapult – a new two-row feed variety with BYDV tolerance and a high fungicide-treated yield (104), helping to close the gap with non-BYDV-tolerant two-row feeds. It also has a good fungicide-untreated yield (90), however, is weaker in resistance to lodging.

Moving to spring barley, the list has gained four new varieties of which three are under evaluation for both brewing and malt distilling by the Malting Barley Committee (MBC).

Paul points out that Trailblazer from Syngenta offers high treated yields across all regions with good standing power and grain quality. Roulette from Agrii has a slightly lower fungicide-treated yield but has the highest fungicide-untreated yield on the new list at 92. Shona from Elsoms Ackermann Barley has been recommended for the East, where it shows a very high fungicide-treated yield (106). Read more about Shona on page 33.

The final spring barley addition is Nolan from Senova. Although proposed for recommendation in 2024, it wasn’t added due to problems during the GB and NI Variety Lists (VL) assessment stages. Issues now resolved and having exhibited good malting qualities, Nolan has been recommended for the UK. Its status in the MAGB testing system is being reviewed shortly by the MBC.

## OILSEED RAPE

Kicking off the new OSR additions is Bachus (Cluser Breeding) – a conventional, open-pollinated variety recommended for the UK. Bachus has the highest treated gross output in the North region for a conventional variety

on the winter OSR RL (99). It also has high resistance to lodging (8) and is very stiff stemmed at maturity (9).

As for hybrids, Crios (RAGT) joins for the North region with a specific recommendation due to its resistance to common strains of clubroot, although it may be susceptible to strains found in some

fields. While Dompteur (DSV) is recommended for the UK with a very high treated gross output in the East/

West (107) and North (108) regions.

Karat (NPZ) is another hybrid variety now recommended for the UK offering a very high treated gross output in the East/West (107) and North (105) regions. It joins KWS Domingos which is also a solid performer.

Commenting on Domingos, KWS’ Rory Hannam says it should stand out for its strong, vigorous growth habit particularly in the spring. “OSR has faced a tough few years, growers require resilient varieties that help de-risk the crop. With Domingos, we’ve

***“It delivers a good loaf volume and is agronomically very similar to Skyfall, which has long been the benchmark for Group 1 wheat.”***

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WINTER WHEAT

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focused on stacking traits to help growers get the most from their crops.”

New to Clearfield options is LG Calvin CL – a hybrid variety with a recommendation based on its tolerance to specific imidazolinone herbicides. Calvin CL is susceptible to verticillium (based on limited data), is relatively early maturing, has high resistance to lodging (7.9) and good stem stiffness at maturity (8).

Finally, a variety which has joined the Described List is Eriksen (NPZ) – a high erucic acid rape (HEAR) variety for the UK. Eriksen has high resistance to stem canker combined with moderate resistance to verticillium (based on limited data) and resistance to Turnip yellows



**Stepping up**

Senova's George Goodwin says Rannoch's 4% yield advantage over Cromwell and 10% over time-honoured Mascani take winter oat yields and performance to the next level.

# The husked oat that ticks all the boxes.



## WPB ISABEL

Spring Oat



- One of the highest yielding varieties on the AHDB 2025/26 Spring Oat List
- Best specific weight of any recommended husked spring oat on the 2025/26 RL
- High kernel content with good screenings

Data Source: AHDB Recommended List for Spring Oats 2025/26

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virus (TuYV). It has high resistance to lodging (based on limited data), with good stem stiffness at maturity.

**OATS**

Opening up the new oat varieties is Rannoch from Senova – a high-yielding winter husked variety with tall straw. Rannoch has high resistance to the common strains of crown rust (7) which contributes to a high untreated yield (92), but is susceptible to mildew (4). Additionally, it has a high kernel content (74.5%) but a low specific weight (51.7kg/hl).

George says Rannoch's 4% yield advantage over Cromwell and 10% advantage over time-honoured Mascani take winter oat yields and performance on to the next level. Furthermore, initial tests confirm that it offers similar quality to Mascani and the milling consistency that end users look for. "Rannoch is a big step forward," adds George.

"When you consider that its untreated yield is virtually on a par with the treated yield of the country's most popular oat variety, it highlights what this introduction represents and the breeding progress that has been made."

Now on offer for spring is high-yielding husked variety, Jacky (Nordsaat). With high resistance to mildew (8) this variety has given high yields in untreated UK trials (96), however, is susceptible to crown rust (4).

Then, Neptun (Nordsaat) is another new high-yielding husked variety. This has high resistance to mildew (8) and has given high yields in untreated UK trials (93), as well as offering a high specific weight (53.9kg/hl) and high kernel content (74%). ●