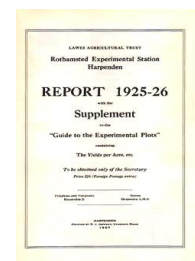


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## Report 1925-26 With the Supplement to the Guide to the Experimental Plots



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### Rothamsted Farm & Crop Results, Rothamsted, 1925, 1926

#### Rothamsted Research

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## THE FARM & CROP RESULTS

OCTOBER, 1924 TO SEPTEMBER, 1925.

The outstanding features of the season under review were the wetness of the autumn and winter, and the long and practically unbroken drought, from the beginning of June till mid July.

Following an exceptionally wet season, October turned out mild, dull and wet; the rainfall of 4.28 inches, being 1.19 inches in excess of the average. Wheat and winter oats were drilled under fairly good conditions on such land as was ready. Elsewhere, cultivations were greatly hindered by the weather, ploughing was frequently stopped, and potato harvest was slow and difficult. By the end of the month the land was so sodden that the Broadbalk drains ran after every shower. Similar conditions continued in November, when the rainfall was again above average. The weather was generally mild, but a few frosts helped to condition the land, and, taking advantage of this Broadbalk was drilled on the 6th. December was unusually warm, the mean temperature being 3.7° above normal, and the rainfall again exceeded the average, so that in the first quarter of the farm year the rainfall was 3.21 inches in excess. During the latter part of the month, cultivation became impossible, and water stood on the land after rain. January remained mild, and brought drier weather, and the winter cereals began to improve. Stubble ploughing was pushed forward, but the land came up very sticky, and needed frost badly. The improvement was only temporary, for February, with 3.94 inches of rain, doubled the normal rainfall.

Oats were drilled under rather wet conditions on 10th, and beans were sown in a better seed bed on 19th. Work then came to a standstill, and surface water stood on the land on 25th and 26th. In spite of the rain, corn and young seeds had come through the winter better than might have been expected, possibly owing to the fact that the weather had practically always been mild.

The change came in March. A dry month, with frosty nights and periods of biting winds, made a marvellous change in the sodden furrows. Spring corn was drilled under conditions which had seemed impossible a month before. Similar conditions persisted with April, which was late, and cold, but fairly dry, and enabled the sowing of spring corn and clover to be completed. The cold, sunless weather of the last two months, however, had given no stimulus to winter cereals or grass, which were still backward.

The biting weather of March and April continued for the first week in May, and was followed by the first hot weather of the year. By the 19th, the ground had become so dry that the young clover began to suffer, but the last week of the month was cooler and showery; the growth of all crops was rapid, and wheat made a wonderful recovery where it had wintered badly. June brought in a drought which lasted for about 7 weeks, only .12 inch of rain fell in the month and the ground was never wet. Winter corn did well, although oats showed a tendency to ripen prematurely. Barley was rather short in the straw, but otherwise unharmed. Hay was secured in excellent order without a check, but undersown crops and swedes were at a standstill. Much cleaning was done in the roots and fallows. The drought con-



tinued for the first half of July, but the last fortnight of the month brought no less than 4.08 inches of rain, an amount which exceeded the whole month's rainfall at any of the crop reporting stations of the Ministry of Agriculture. The rain came just in time to save most of the undersown crops. Mangolds had, by this time, received a definite check when grown without dung, and swedes were a failure. Winter oats cut immediately before the rain, sprouted in the shocks in four days, and the ripening of the other cereals was delayed. August was dull and showery, and straightforward harvesting was never possible, although the bulk of the corn was got in during the month. The last week of the month was particularly wet, and carting and stubble ploughing were stopped. The conditions of August were intensified in September, there being more rain and less sunshine.

A trying harvest was completed on the 12th. Owing to the nature of the weather, a good deal of damage to the corn occurred in the field. Oats suffered most, wheat was rather soft, and barley only in fair condition. Yields were satisfactory; early sown winter oats and wheat yielded 68 and 40 bushels per acre, respectively, the barley on Foster's field and spring oats on Stackyard, gave 48 and 40 bushels per acre. Late sown swedes made more leaf than bulbs, aftermaths grew rapidly, but conditions for making the second cut hay were bad. An extraordinary germination of weeds took place on the stubbles, but the increasing wetness at the end of the month, gave no immediate prospect for clearing operations. Owing to the long drought, the season had been a bad one for roots, but lifting was favoured by the dry, hard weather of October and November, and the crop was got up and stored in good condition, and with no damage to the land. Swedes on West Barnfield failed completely over some of the area, mangolds, grown without dung, yielded a poor crop, but, on Stackyard field, dunged mangolds gave 25 tons per acre, and turnips, 17 tons.

#### OCTOBER, 1925, TO SEPTEMBER, 1926.

A hard winter, late spring, and an unusual amount of lodged corn at harvest time were the outstanding points of the season. The farm year opened well, with a warm, dry fortnight, giving excellent conditions for stubble cleaning and handling the second cut hay. Winter oats and a soiling mixture were got in well. The weather then became rather unsettled, so that the wheat was drilled under wetter conditions, but work in the root fields was not seriously hindered.

By the beginning of November, wheat was being ploughed in on Gt. Harpenden field, in order to push on with the sowing on land too sticky to drill. Hard conditions soon set in, however, and the month was unusually frosty. Ground frosts were recorded on 18 occasions, and on the 14th, and 17th, there were 12 and 13 degrees of frost respectively. Broadbalk, the sowed area reduced to four acres this season on account of fallowing operations, was drilled in a favourable period on 25th, and then snow fell and stopped work on the land for the rest of the month. Like the previous month, December turned out colder, drier and brighter than usual. The first half was a continuation of the frosty



weather of November, and from the 2nd to the 6th inclusive, the grass minimum ranged from 22° to 17° F. During this period little could be done, and when rain came with the thaw in the middle of the month, work was confined to stubble ploughing. A brief period of frost set in again at Christmas, and the month finished warm, damp and muggy. January was a wet month with an exceedingly severe mid-period. The rainfall was 1.11in. in excess of the average, while the air minimum of 4° F. registered on the 17th was the lowest recorded at any of the crop weather stations of the Ministry of Agriculture during the month. When the air temperature was 4° F., the grass minimum under the snow was only 20° F. Ploughing continued till the snow came on the 13th, when no further work was possible till the 29th. The outstanding feature of February was its mildness, the mean temperature of 44°F. being no less than 5.5°F. above the normal. The month was unusually dull, only 41 hours of sunshine being recorded. The rainfall was also rather above the average. The first three weeks were too wet for seed bed preparation, wheat was yellowing, and grass and clover made no growth.

In the drier period of the last week, spring oats were got in under fairly good conditions. Winter oats which had made no headway for the past three months began to show definite signs of improvement by the end of the month.

March, like the same month of last year, was very favourable for spring work. The rainfall of .21in. was 1.77in. below the average, and the lowest recorded by any of the crop reporting stations. The period was also warmer and sunnier than usual, but the nights were very cold and 16 ground frosts were registered.

The drying winds and general conditions were highly favourable to spring cleaning, and much work was put into Stackyard field during the month. New Zealand field and West Barnfield were ploughed for the second time and drilled with barley on a rather rough tilth, the rest of the barley being held back in order that rain might soften the clods. The drought of March continued into April, and began to be felt, especially by germinating seeds. It was broken by  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. of rain on 8th of the month, but the weather remained dry for a further week. The last fortnight of April was wet, and work began to be hindered at the end of the month, for by this time the rainfall was 1in. in excess of normal. Great Hoos was drilled, Great Harpenden undersown, and potatoes were planted under excellent conditions during the month. Winter corn began to improve and answer to top dressings, the rather uneven plant of March barley filled up by later germinations and young clover made a very good plant. May was an unusually cold late month, and provided a fortnight of biting winds which caused the corn to yellow; a milder period followed, but without any summer weather. Barley was injured by the cold, but spring oats seemed more resistant. Root tilths were difficult owing to the heavy rains of late April. Cold showery weather persisted for the first half of June. Conditions were bad for hoeing and all crops needed sun. An attack of spring tails on Barnfield mangolds was favoured by the showery weather, and was only controlled by energetic sweeping with tarred sacks. An early start was made with the hay, but progress was slow. The second half of June was drier and warmer. All the wheat, except that on Little Hoos, showed



bad attacks of yellow rust. On the whole in spite of rather unpleasant weather, the crops had made favourable progress during the month. The first fortnight of July brought some real summer weather which was badly needed for hoeing and hay-making, but dull wet conditions set in for the second half of the month, and the heavy rains and gusts at this period were responsible for the widespread lodging of corn which was a feature of the season. Winter oats on Long Hoos and the barley on West Barn and New Zealand fields were badly laid. Wheat and spring oats made standing crops. Prospects were good for roots, but mangolds wanted sun. A feature of the past four months had been their extraordinary dullness, the period April—July inclusive showed a sunshine deficit of no less than 180 hours.

August did nothing to redress the balance of sunshine, but was remarkable for its dryness. Only 1.19in. of rain fell, which was the lowest figure registered at any of the crop reporting stations for the month. Had it not been for the lodged crops, harvest would have been secured in record time. As it was, some of the barley was not carted by the end of the month. September opened with  $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. rain in the first week and caught the dead ripe barley in shock, and some of the corn sprouted in the moist, warm period which ensued. The remainder of the month was hot and bright, and harvest was completed by the 15th. Potato digging and stubble cleaning commenced under very good conditions, and some second cut hay was made. Wheat was the best cereal crop of the year. Rye was satisfactory. Oats and barley, although they had the appearance of good crops in the field, threshed out badly. Potatoes started late and were checked by the dry spell in August, but they yielded well, 10-11 tons per acre, where they were completely manured. The crop was free from disease, but was only about one-half ware. Swedes did well, but mangolds, although fairly good, never seemed really to do justice to the generous treatment they received. Meadow hay responded well to spring cultivation and nitrogenous top-dressing, and gave a satisfactory crop.