

## Ergot Survey 2005

In autumn 2005, a survey was undertaken as part of a campaign funded by SEERAD to determine the importance of ergot in Scotland. The results are based on twenty five replies from growers and grain trade representatives.

Questionnaire replies by county	%	Comments
Ross-shire	20	
Aberdeenshire	28	
Tayside	12	
Lothians & Borders	20	
Unknown	20	
Questionnaire replies by occupation	%	
Farmers	84	
Advisers	8	
Trade	8	
Crops most affected	%	Comments
Wheat	12	
Barley	68	
Don't know	20	
View of problem		
Major problem	52	
Same as 5 years ago	20	
Less of a problem	20	
Don't know	6	
Is the problem getting worse compared to 5 years ago	%	Comments
More	64	Have a lot of grass margins under rural stewardship scheme. Never had ergo before grass margins.
Less	4	
same	8	
Don't know	24	

<b>Are grass weeds a problem</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	32	Couch grass, annual meadow-grass, ryegrass, cocksfoot
No	36	
Don't know	32	
<b>Have you seen ergot in grass weeds</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	8	Ryegrass, annual meadow-grass
No	56	
Don't know	36	
<b>Have you seen ergot in margins</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	16	An increase in grass margins, beetle banks etc. has resulted in a greater incidence in ergot. As the value of the crop has dropped in recent years, farmers are generally spending less on agrochemicals to combat grass weeds.
No	48	Ergot found in cocksfoot, ryegrass
Don't know	36	
<b>Are margins cut?</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	12	
No	48	
Don't know	40	
<b>Have you seen ergot in grain</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	72	
No	12	
Don't know	16	
<b>How much was seen in grain</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Trace	62	
1-2%	31	
>2%	7	
<b>Have you had grain rejected for ergot</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	70	
No	30	

<b>% Ergot in rejected grain</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Trace	60	
1-2%	30	
>2%	10	
<b>Have you own infected seed?</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	12	
No	72	
Don't know	16	
<b>Have you used a seed treatment for ergot</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	8	
No	68	
Don't know	24	
<b>Have you applied a foliar spray</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	0	
No	100	
<b>Are any varieties affected more than others</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	48	Decanter, Maresi, Optic, Troon Camion, Pearl all affected.
No	36	
Don't know	16	
<b>Have you taken advice?</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Yes	24	Need advice on how to feed ergot contaminated grain
No	76	

The survey results suggest ergot is a greater problem in spring barley than in winter wheat. Decanter is affected more than other varieties, taking over from Maresi. It is not clear from the survey if this is due to varietal susceptibility or that this variety is grown most on mixed farms where grass hosts, particularly ryegrass are most common. The survey provides a useful basis for further research into the susceptibility of spring barley varieties to ergot.

A Technical note will be written in 2006 describing the biology, practical measures to minimise the risk and options on dealing with ergot in grain.

Simon Oxley 2 March 2006.