Glyphosate Usage Survey 2026

Introduction

This glyphosate usage survey and briefing paper has been compiled by United Oilseeds Marketing Ltd, a national farming cooperative with 4,500 members spanning the length and breadth of Great Britain.

Working collaboratively with other farming cooperatives to share the survey, a total of 767 farmers responded to share their views on both glyphosate usage within their farms and the potential implications should pre-harvest desiccation rules be changed.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of participating organisations and cooperatives, in particular:

Scotland

- Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS)
- Grainco Scotland
- Scottish Agronomy
- Highland Grain
- Aberdeen Grain
- Coastal Grains

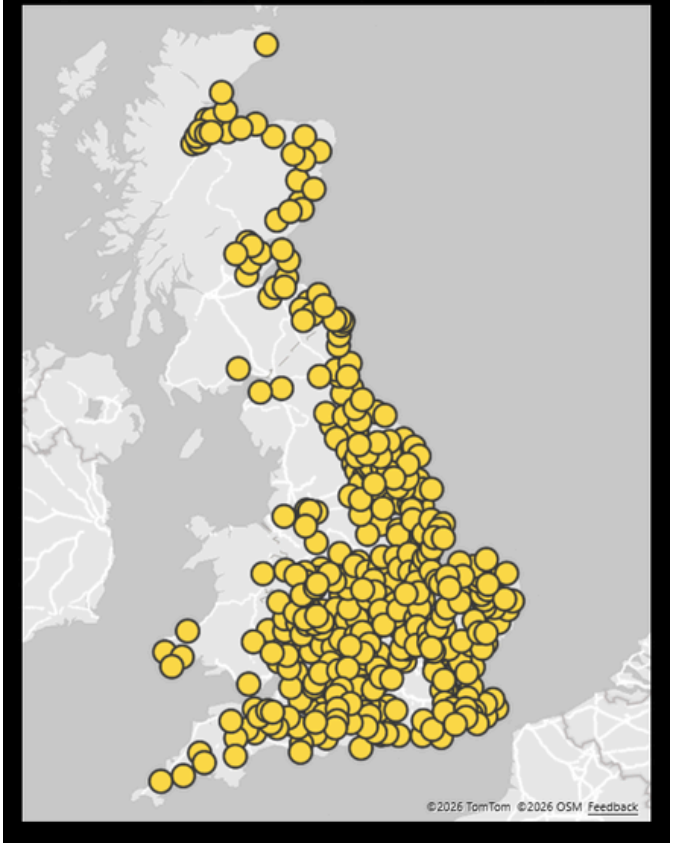
England

- Openfield Group Ltd
- Grainco England
- Crop Advisors
- Samco

> *"Restricting glyphosate without workable alternatives is a direct threat to UK food and feed security. It would decimate domestic oilseed rape production across large parts of the UK, force farmers back into higher-emission systems, and hand a competitive advantage to imports produced to lower standards from abroad. The result: a less competitive farming sector, constrained economic growth, and rising food prices—echoing the policy failures of the neonicotinoid ban."*

James Warner, Managing Director,
United Oilseeds Marketing Ltd

Fig. 1 - Geographical Spread of Responses



Glyphosate Usage Survey 2026

Briefing paper

United Oilseeds
THE LEADING BREAK CROP SPECIALIST

Background & Political Context

The GB approval of glyphosate expires in December 2026. Ahead of this date a decision will be made on the continued approval of glyphosate in GB. In 2023 the EU renewed the approval of glyphosate until December 2033 but does not permit pre-harvest desiccation uses i.e. for the purpose of controlling harvest timing or optimising combining.

As the SPS negotiations continue with the EU, there is a risk that dynamic alignment could require adoption of this EU restriction on pre-harvest desiccation uses of glyphosate. This matters because the UK's maritime climate particularly in Scotland, Northern England and Wales, means that harvest windows are short and highly variable which makes the availability of pre-harvest desiccation far more critical.

Executive Highlights (Survey Findings)

- 76% of GB growers currently use glyphosate for pre-harvest desiccation,
- In oilseed rape (OSR), 58% used it in 4 or 5 of the last 5 seasons, showing structural reliance,
- If removed:
  - 67% expect increased costs,
  - 66% expect higher risk of crop loss,
  - 57% expect reduced productivity,
  - 72% say some crops would become difficult or impossible to grow.

The loss of pre-harvest glyphosate for desiccation due to alignment with the EU restrictions would disproportionately damage northern and wetter regions, undermine food security, increase fuel consumption and hence carbon emissions, and increase grower costs leading to food price inflation.

Geographic Spread of Responses

Clear participation across all GB arable regions (Fig. 1), with highest reliance reported in Scotland & Northern England, aligning with climatic constraints. (Fig. 2).

Crop Dependence & Frequency of Use (See Fig. 3 & 4)

Survey Q3 - Which crops do you currently use glyphosate for pre-harvest desiccation? (Fig.3)

- OSR 76%
- Barley 40%
- Wheat 38%
- Pulses 34%
- Oats 21%
- Linseed 16%

Survey Q5 - Out of the last five years when have you used glyphosate as a preharvest desiccant on the following crops? (Fig. 4)

Over 58% of OSR growers used glyphosate in 4 or 5 of the last 5 seasons: this is not occasional - it is central to harvest planning.

Anticipated Impacts if Pre-Harvest Use is Removed (See fig. 5)

Survey Q6 - What would be the effect to your business if pre-harvest Glyphosate was no longer available?

- Higher costs (67%)
- Higher crop-loss risk (66%)
- Reduced productivity (57%)
- Restricted crop viability (72%)

Survey Q3 - Which crops do you currently use glyphosate for pre-harvest desiccation? – Regions grouped into North, Central and South. For breakdown refer to Fig. 2.

Northern regions show the highest dependency with 98% stating they currently use glyphosate for pre-harvest desiccation (on one or more of all crops listed). Central 91%, South 88%.

Alternatives (Q7 & Q8 Free Text Themes)

Survey Q7 - What alternatives (if any) would you consider if glyphosate for desiccation were banned?

Survey Q8 - Any other comments on the potential loss of glyphosate as a pre-harvest desiccant?
(All free text responses were entered into an AI tool for understanding key themes.)

Growers state overwhelmingly:

- There is no viable alternative for uneven, podded or hard-to-ripen crops
- Swathing is too weather-sensitive, costly and capacity-limited
- "Natural ripening" would cause extensive yield loss and quality downgrades
- Loss of glyphosate would lead many to abandon OSR, pulses and linseed, narrowing rotations, making IPM more difficult to practice.

Critically:

The EU decision must not be replicated in GB due to our wetter, more variable maritime climate and shorter harvest windows.

Environmental & Economic Effects (Free text responses Q7 and Q8)

Growers anticipate:

- Higher fuel costs and hence carbon emissions from increased crop drying requirements
- More cultivations, including a return to ploughing
- Reduced combine harvest efficiency due to green straw
- Lower competitiveness if UK aligns with EU rules while imports continue using glyphosate.

The EU Commission notes that glyphosate supports reduced soil disturbance and carbon emissions via low-tillage systems. [food.ec.europa.eu]. Loss of pre-harvest use pushes farmers away from these systems.

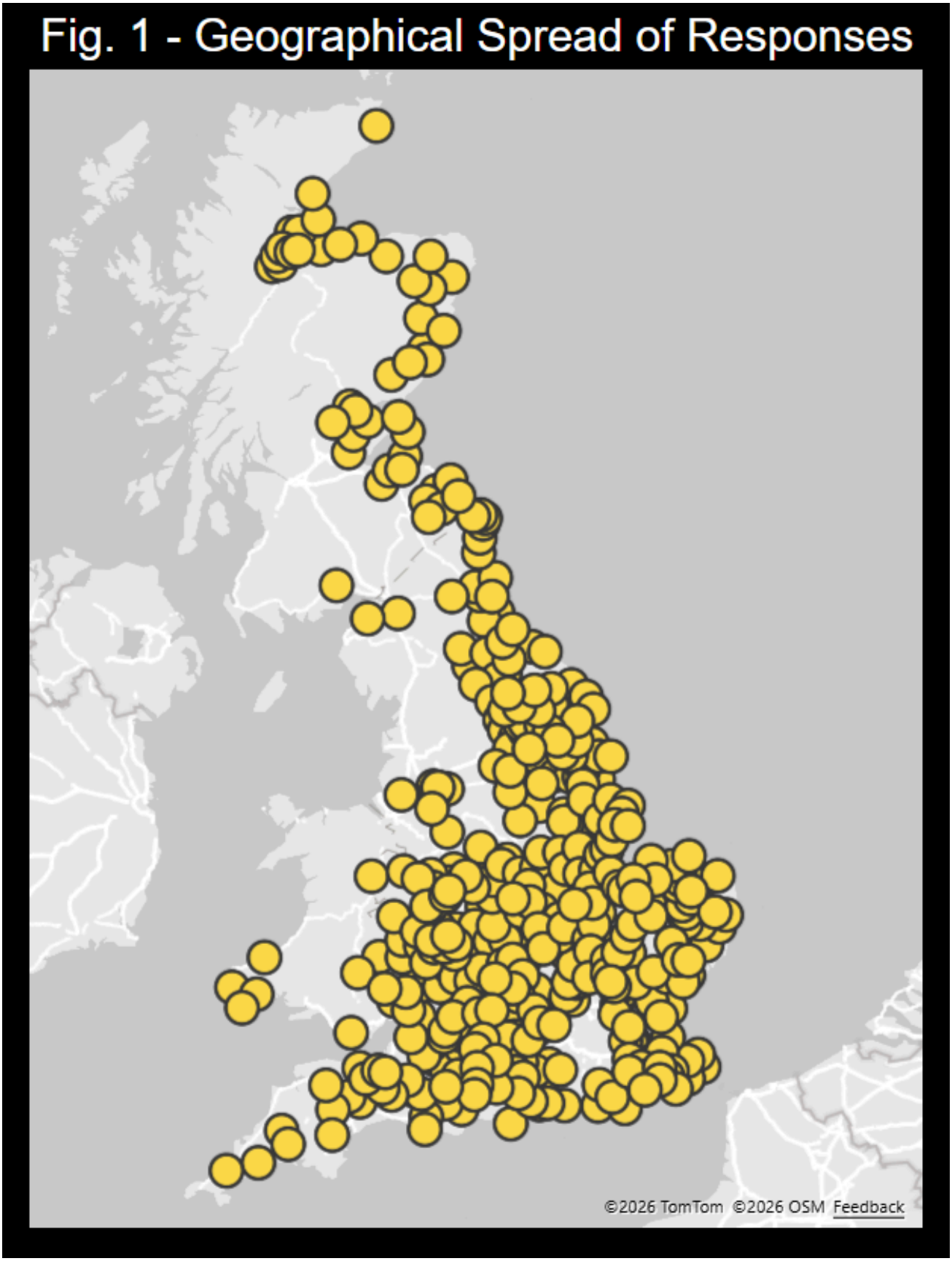
Policy Implications

We ask policymakers to retain pre-harvest desiccation uses of glyphosate.

If GB aligns with EU restrictions, the same conditions must apply to imports, or GB competitiveness will be severely impacted.

Parallels can be drawn from the 2013 neonicotinoid ban which showed how unilateral restrictions on essential farming practices can undermine GB production. Following the ban, the oilseed rape area constricted by two-thirds moving the UK from the world's 5th biggest OSR exporter to having to import 1 million tonnes in 2025. More than half of those imports were from countries still using neonicotinoids leading to significant disadvantages to UK farmers.

Fig. 1 - Geographical Spread of Responses



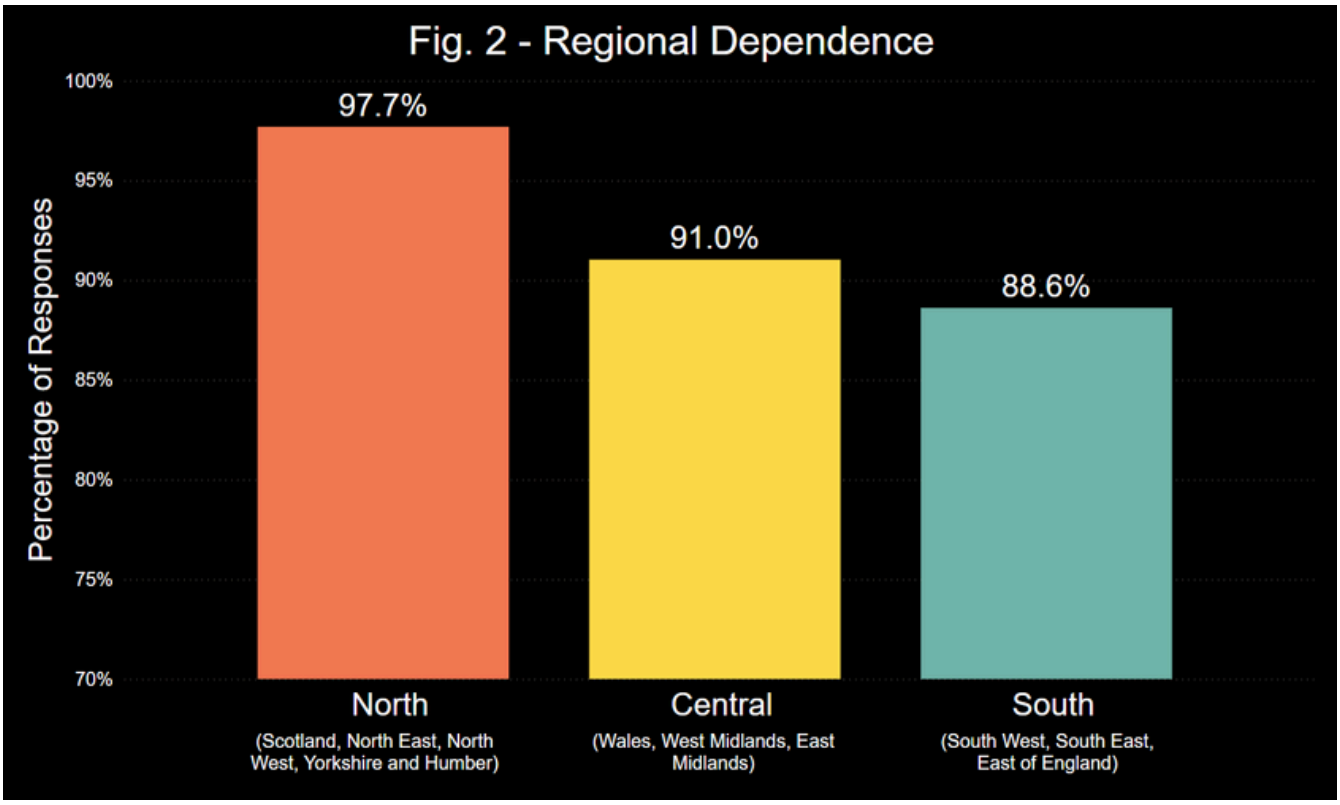


Fig. 2 - Regional Dependence
Percentage of Responses
100%
95%
90%
85%
80%
75%
70%
97.7%
91.0%
88.6%
North
(Scotland, North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber)
Central
(Wales, West Midlands, East Midlands)
South
(South West, South East, East of England)

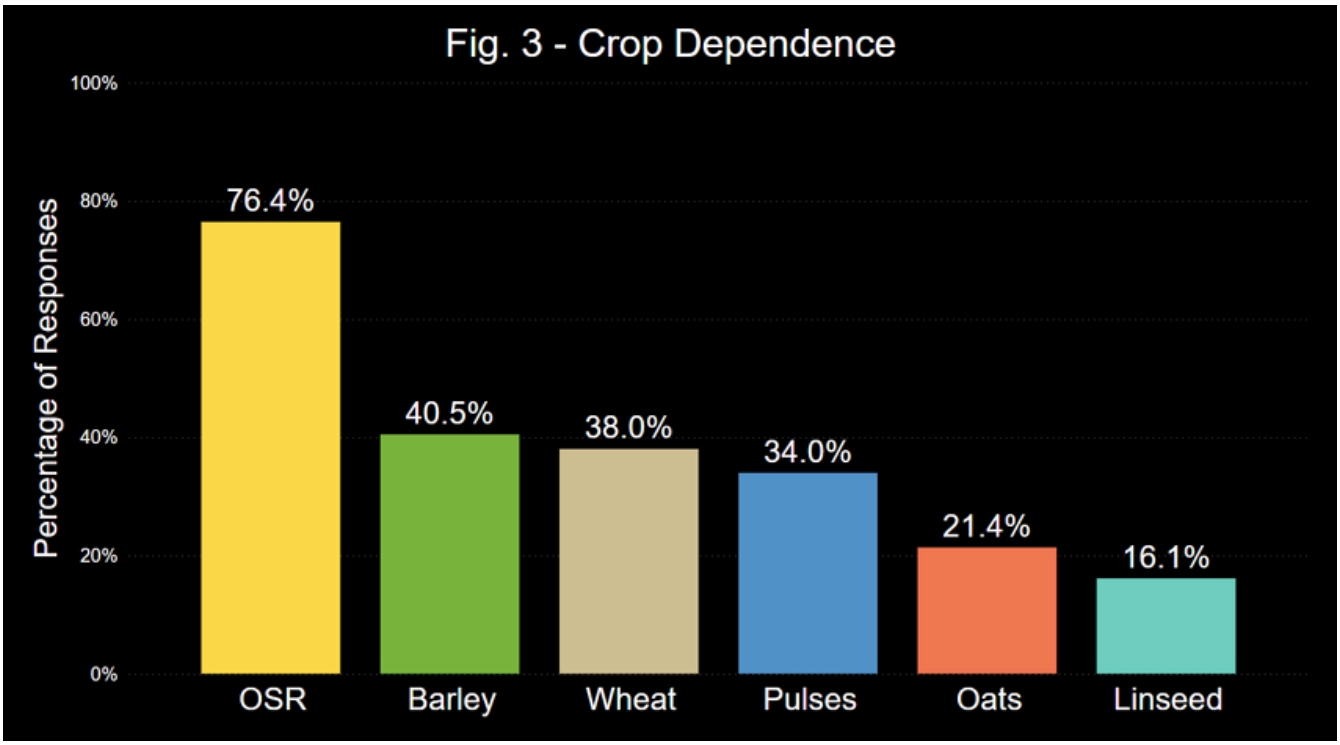


Fig. 3 - Crop Dependence
Percentage of Responses
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
76.4%
40.5%
38.0%
34.0%
21.4%
16.1%
OSR
Barley
Wheat
Pulses
Oats
Linseed

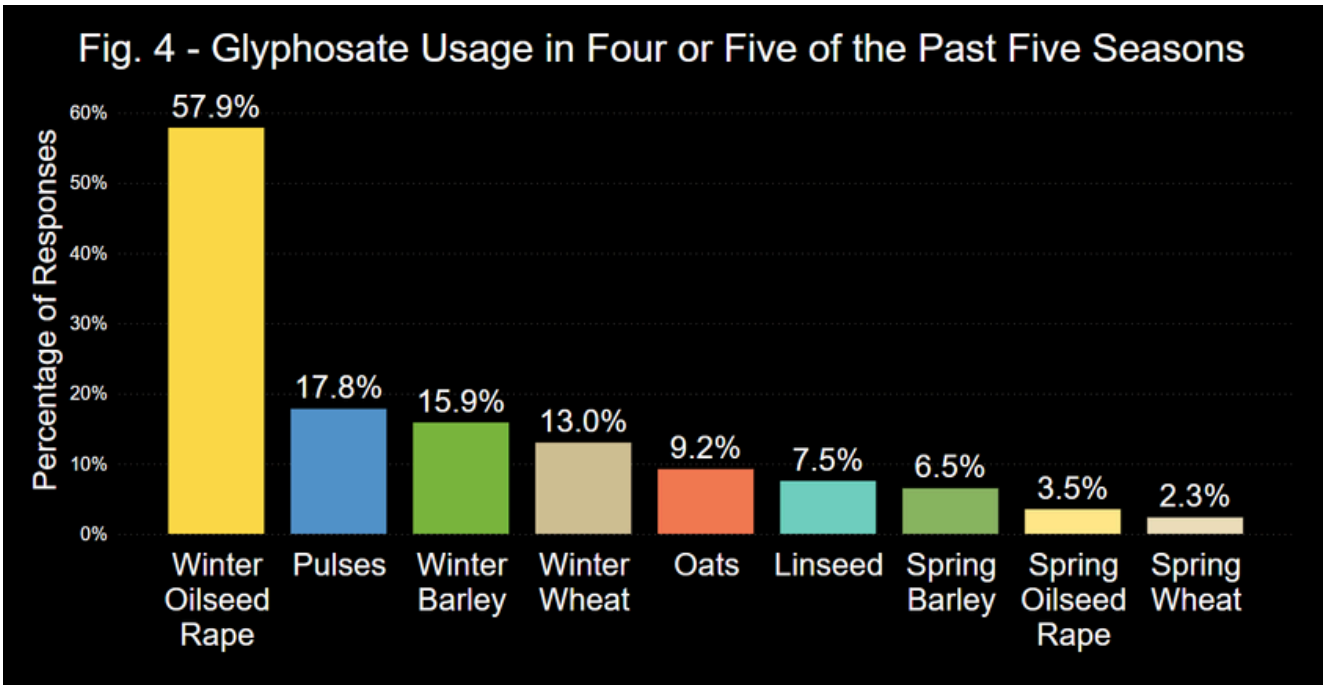


Fig. 4 - Glyphosate Usage in Four or Five of the Past Five Seasons
Percentage of Responses
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
57.9%
17.8%
15.9%
13.0%
9.2%
7.5%
6.5%
3.5%
2.3%
Winter Oilseed Rape
Pulses
Winter Barley
Winter Wheat
Oats
Linseed
Spring Barley
Spring Oilseed Rape
Spring Wheat

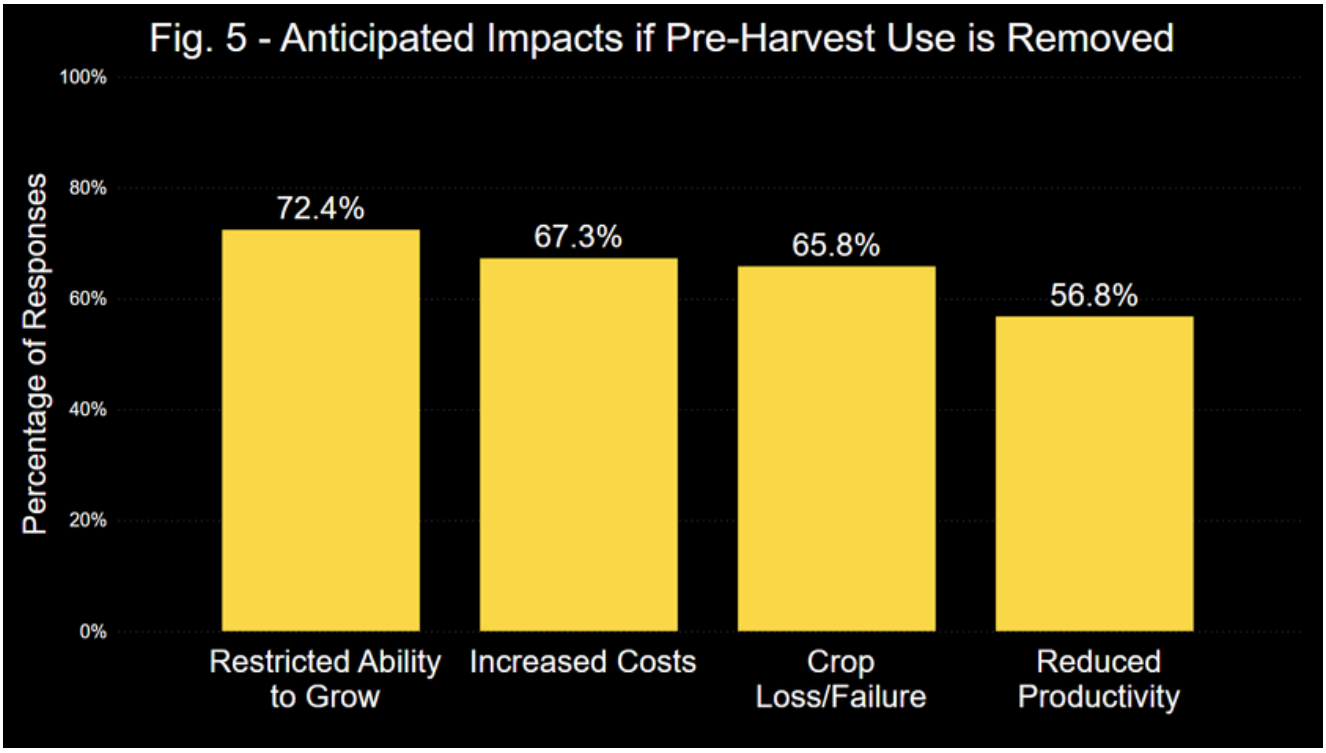


Fig. 5 - Anticipated Impacts if Pre-Harvest Use is Removed
Percentage of Responses
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
72.4%
67.3%
65.8%
56.8%
Restricted Ability to Grow
Increased Costs
Crop Loss/Failure
Reduced Productivity

Glyphosate Usage Survey 2026

Farmer quotes

United Oilseeds
THE LEADING BREAK CROP SPECIALIST

Anonymised quotes from Q7 & Q8 of the 2026 Glyphosate Survey:

"There are no alternatives. Without glyphosate our costs rise, our emissions rise, and some of us simply won't survive."

"If this goes, oilseed rape, pulses and linseed become unviable here, another nail in the coffin for UK agriculture."

"Ban it here while imports still use it and you destroy our competitiveness and our food security."

"You will force us back to ploughing and massive carbon emissions, exactly the opposite of what's intended."

"In Scotland and the North, we don't get spare harvest days; without this tool we lose crops."

Colin McGregor, Farmer Director, United Oilseeds:

"In a northern, maritime climate, pre-harvest glyphosate is often the difference between a viable harvest and a failed one. Remove it without alternatives and we risk higher costs, lost crops, and greater emissions, and ultimately, we would have to consider the viability of our farming enterprise."

Colin McGregor farms 3640 hectares in the Scottish Borders on his family farm and for extensive contract agreements.