

Combine harvester



The cereal farm and farmer

Just over half of land in the UK is used to grow cereals.

Cereals are important crops in the UK, as they are used to make everyday food, such as bread and breakfast cereals, as well as to feed animals and make fuel.

Some farms are specialist and only grow cereals, rotated with other crops, while others keep cows, pigs and sheep.

Farmers grow strips of wild flowers to encourage bees or crops for birds to eat over the winter.

Farmers often use technology to help them grow their crops, such as automatic tractors, aerial mapping of fields and use of drones.

Planting and growing

Wheat, barley and oats are planted in the winter and spring.

Farmers use a range of farming methods, choosing varieties and rotating crops to reduce disease. They also look after the health of the soil.

Harvesting

The main cereal harvest takes place in late summer to early autumn. Combine harvesters separate the grain from the stalks. Some can harvest over 500 tonnes in a day!

After harvest, the grains are stored carefully to keep them safe.

The grain is stored on the farm or at a main storage site for a group of farms, until it is needed by the mill to make into flour or by animals as feed.

Uses

Oats are used for animal feed, breakfast cereals and biscuits.

Porridge oats



Oaty granola bar

Barley is used for animal feed, beer and whisky production and can be used in a range of dishes.

After wheat is milled into flour, 69% goes to bakeries (to make bread), 10% for biscuits, 4% for bags of flour and 3% for cakes. 85% of wheat milled in the UK is home-grown.

Wholemeal bread



Biscuits

Wheat ears and grain



Wheat flour



Cereals include grains, such as wheat, barley and oats. Wheat is the most commonly grown cereal crop in the UK, with 11–16 million tonnes grown each year. Around 6.6–8.1 million tonnes of barley and 0.8–1.1 million tonnes of oats are harvested each year.

Farming food for you

Cereals

