



AN ELSOMS' ARABLE
PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Sparkler

WINTER WHEAT

Outshines the best



Unlocking the
power of plants



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AHDB
RECOMMENDED

1 VARIETY OVERVIEW

Greater profitability with lower risk

Sparkler, the latest wheat variety from Elsoms, is the highest yielding soft wheat on the UK AHDB Recommended List for 2026/27. It combines exceptional output with one of the strongest *Septoria tritici* resistance profiles available.

Sparkler has a prostrate growth habit, supporting strong tiller production and canopy development, helping to maximise yield potential. With broad end-market flexibility, Sparkler meets distilling, feed and UKS export specs, widening access to premium contracts.

Sparkler's resilience builds on the success of Bamford, one of the most widely grown and widely accepted varieties in the market. It offers growers another step forward in high-yielding soft wheat and promises brighter returns for the coming season.



“Sparkler’s high *Septoria* resistance supports cleaner crops, safeguarding yield and ensuring a reliable performance under high disease pressure across UK growing conditions.”

ZAK MCCLELLAND
Southern Seed Sales Manager
Agrovista

Pedigree

GrahamX^{LG} Skyscraper

Sparkler comes from the Elsoms wheat breeding programme, building on proven genetics to deliver a new level of performance.

Key Features

High-yielding

The highest yielding soft wheat on the UK AHDB Recommended List.

Resilient

Excellent disease resistance profile, with particularly high resistance to *Septoria tritici* and strong all-round foliar disease resistance scores.

Prostrate

Prostrate growth habit supporting high tiller production and retention.

Flexible

Meets quality requirements for distilling, UKS export and feed markets.

2 YIELD

Consistent, season after season

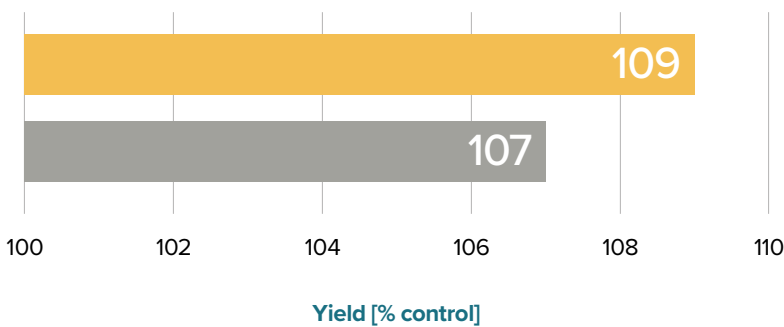
2024 and 2025 presented very different and very challenging conditions, yet Sparkler proved to be a consistent high-yielding performer.

2024 Met Office summary:

“2024 saw records broken in almost every season with winter 2023-24 in the top 10 warmest and wettest in the UK, continuing warm and wet weather in February and the warmest spring on record.”

Sparkler 2024 yield

SPARKLER CONTROL



106.3%
SPARKLER
UK YIELD

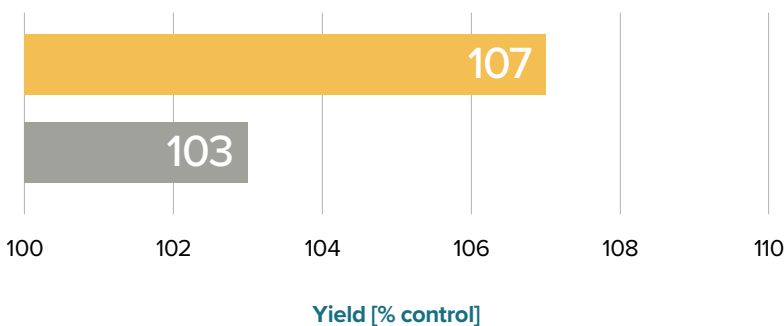


2025 Met Office summary:

“2025 was remarkable for its extreme and record-breaking weather events across the UK. Winter months were dominated by cold spells and powerful storms while spring and summer brought unprecedented warmth and sunshine”

Sparkler 2025 yield

SPARKLER CONTROL



2 YIELD

High potential

Sparkler has demonstrated an attractive combination of high treated and high untreated yield. Whether managed under a full RL fungicide programme or in untreated conditions, Sparkler delivers consistent performance.

Regional performance

Sparkler is in the top 5 for treated yield of all varieties on the RL across the East, West and North of the UK.

In the East

High yield and strong yellow rust resistance make Sparkler well suited to eastern growing conditions.

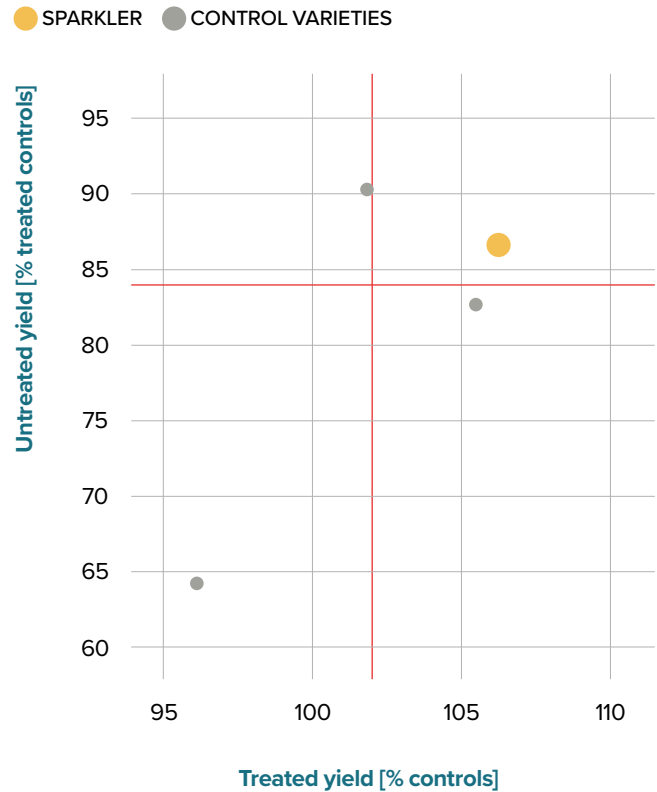
In the West

Sparkler has demonstrated high yield in the West of the UK, where its *Septoria tritici* rating and good straw make it an attractive choice.

In the North

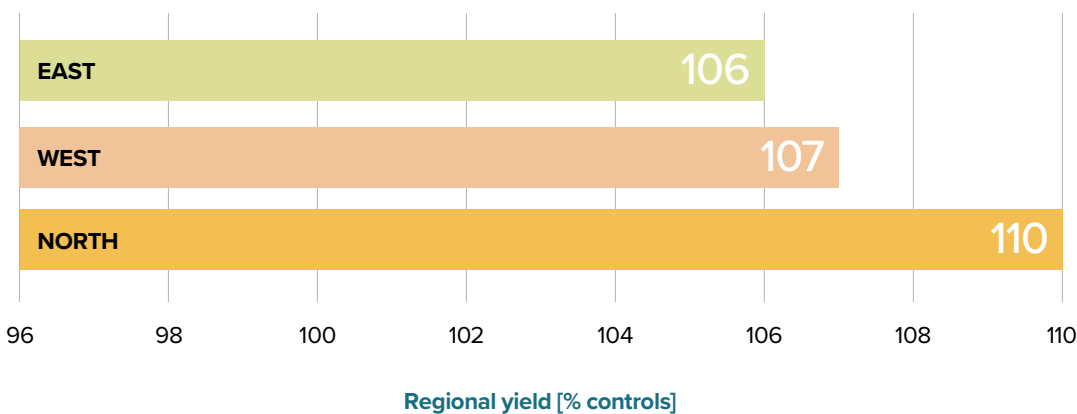
Sparkler is rated 'high' for distilling, with strong yield performance in northern regions where distilling demand is significant.

Sparkler treated/untreated yield



Red lines represent average values for treated yield and untreated yield.

Sparkler regional performance treated yield



3 DISEASE RESISTANCE

A strong combination

Septoria tritici remains the most damaging foliar disease of wheat in the UK. Sparkler has a *Septoria tritici* rating of 7.2; the highest of any soft wheat on the current RL. Combined with a yellow rust (*Puccinia striiformis*) rating of 7, Sparkler provides a strong all-round disease resistance profile.

This strong resistance to both diseases supports a more flexible approach to fungicide programmes, including choice, timing and sequencing alongside other varieties.

Fungicide options and flexibility

An effective fungicide strategy should be adapted on a field-by-field basis, taking into account varietal characteristics, disease pressure and seasonal weather conditions.

Where practical, fungicide programmes should be tailored to local conditions, with continued monitoring throughout the season to maintain crop health.

Due to the weather and numerous other factors, this level of tailoring is not always achievable, particularly across large areas within limited spray windows.

Thankfully, Sparkler will continue to perform regardless, with its inherently high resistance package.

Later seasonal management decisions

Later in the season, Sparkler should be monitored for brown rust (*Puccinia triticina*), which is most active between 15-22°C, and more commonly in the South and East of the UK where summer conditions can support rapid infection and spread.

An integrated approach to disease management is important. Cultural controls such as removing the green bridge through volunteer control and considering drilling date can help reduce risk.

Sparkler disease resistance scores

Untreated yield % OF TREATED CONTROLS	86.5	<i>Septoria tritici</i> 1-9	7.2
Yellow rust 1-9	7		



SOURCE: Elsoms fungicide trials 2025.

Sparkler fungicide input considerations

	Aim	Considerations
T0	Get on top of rust early.	Economic threshold for treating mildew – this may require application of a specific mildewcide.
T1 – GS30-31 Stem extension	Monitor rust development, robust <i>Septoria</i> protection.	Prioritise risk on a case by case basis.
T2 – GS 39-55 Flag leaf fully emerged, middle of panicle emergence	Top up on <i>Septoria</i> protection. Monitor and manage brown rust as appropriate	The flag leaf is a key contributor to wheat yield, protection here is critical to secure final yield.
T3 – GS59, GS63-65	Top up <i>Septoria</i> . Manage brown rust later in the season.	GS59 is an opportunity to top up foliar disease control on the top two leaves.

4 AGRONOMICS

Drilling rate

Sparkler can be drilled slightly earlier than Bamford and has performed best when planted between early September and late October.

Late sown performance

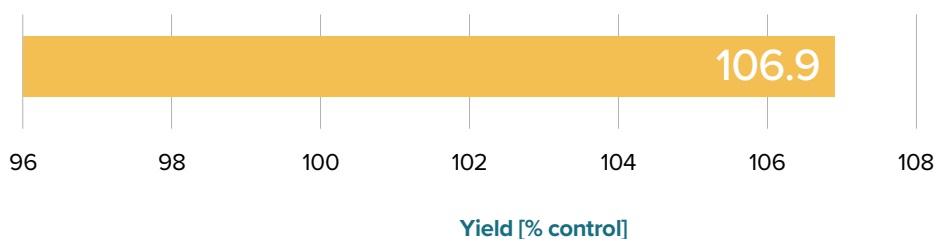
Sparkler has also impressed in later sown trials; drilled after the 1st November. This makes it an excellent choice after maize, or where delayed drilling is desirable or necessary due to inclement weather or on-farm workload.

A great second cereal

Sparkler excels as a second cereal.



Sparkler 2nd cereal yield



Growth habit

Sparkler has demonstrated a relatively prostrate growth habit over winter and doesn't race away too fast in the spring. This habit means good ground cover coming out of the winter and supports Sparkler's high tillering capacity.

Elsoms growth and development trials have demonstrated that Sparkler produces and retains a large number of tillers – an average of over four per plant in Elsoms Wheat growth and development trials between 2022 and 2025.

Sparkler is able to 'sit back' over winter, enabling it to put on tillers and, crucially, to retain those tillers. This high tillering capacity not only produces high final grain yield but coupled with Sparkler's moderately tall straw will also contribute to a good straw production at harvest.



4 AGRONOMICS

Fertiliser

Sparkler's strong tillering potential can be maximised through timely nutrition. Early nitrogen supports both tiller production and retention.

Sparkler will respond well to a front-loaded nitrogen programme with 30-50% of the total dose applied at the first application. When splitting your programme apply 40% in the first dose - slightly above the traditional 1/3 ratio at this timing. Balancing total N across a number of splits also helps mitigate the risk of prolonged wet or dry weather.

PGR

Sparkler is a stiff strawed variety with good resistance to lodging. Many factors can impact lodging risk, including weather conditions, field location and drill date.

The use of PGRs is commonplace in a standard wheat crop as they can help to reduce stem height and promote tiller retention; all factors in decreasing the risk of lodging.

We always recommend a programmed approach to PGRs, with a split dose across two or three applications. Sparkler may see an additional benefit from the earlier PGR application to support its increased tiller production.

An on-farm partner for Bamford

Soft wheat varieties offer a strong fit within the rotation, supported by high yield potential and robust agronomics. Rather than selecting between varieties, Sparkler and Bamford are well suited to being grown alongside each other on farm.

Grown together, Sparkler and Bamford help to spread workload across drilling, nutrition, fungicide and PGR applications, as well as harvest timing, improving overall management efficiency.



“Despite the harsh conditions we have seen this season, Sparkler has tillered well producing a consistent crop with plenty of yield potential in the ears. Untreated areas of the field have shown the potential of genetics with a significantly lower disease burden when compared around the farm”

CHRIS HINCH
Cereals 2025 competition winner
Hinch Enterprises

Sparkler and Bamford key differences

	SPARKLER	BAMFORD
Drill timing	Early September	Mid September
Growth habit	Prostrate	Erect
Speed of development	Moderate	Fast
Fungicide priority	Later focus Brown rust	Earlier focus <i>Septoria tritici</i>
Maturity	+1	0

5 END-MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Sparkler provides strong end-market flexibility across a range of outlets. Competitive in the feed sector, it also offers the potential to achieve a soft wheat premium, strengthening its position against hard feed varieties.

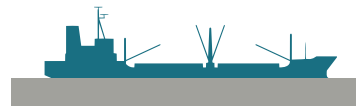


Competitive feed option

Rated 'high' by the Scotch Whisky Research Institute (SWRI), Sparkler is well suited to the distilling market, with additional opportunity for UKS Export depending on location.



Approved for distilling



Has UKS for export

Sparkler grain quality measure	EXPORT [UKS]	DISTILLING	SPARKLER	
Minimum specific weight kg/ha	75	72	76.7	
Protein content %	10.5-11.5	11.6 _{max}	10.8 [●] 11.65 [■]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grown to standard feed spec. ■ Grown to milling spec. with additional inputs
Maximum admix %	2	2	Variable	
Minimum Hagberg Falling Number	220	180	225.9	
Chopin Alveograph W	70-120	n/a	98.95	
Chopin Alveograph P/L	0.55 _{max}	n/a	0.48	
Minimum moisture content %	14	15	Variable	

Variable: Data varies from sample to sample.

6 ELSOMS

Unlocking the power of plants

Elsoms agricultural division provides UK farmers with a comprehensive range of high-performing arable crops, developed through our own and our partners' breeding programmes.

Our portfolio spans competitive varieties of cereals, oilseeds, and pulses, giving farmers the choice and resilience they need to adapt to changing markets, regulations, and environmental pressures.

By combining advanced plant science with generations of expertise, we deliver solutions that not only help farms grow efficiently but help everyone grow more from less.

Innovation with purpose

Innovation is at the heart of everything we do, and it always comes with the same intent; positive advancements that help unlock the power of plants.

Our approach blends cutting-edge science with practical application ensuring that new ideas work in the real world for the people who grow and depend on our seeds.

Leading seed technology

With over 30 years of specialist experience, we're the UK's leading seed treatment experts.

Our core focus is maximising quality and consistency, and our enhancements give crops the best start, ensuring even germination, stronger early growth, and higher marketable yields.



Powered by partnerships

We work as partners, with researchers, breeders, growers, suppliers and distributors.

Our purpose is not just supplying seeds or services, it's also building collaborative relationships that solve real challenges and deliver better outcomes for everyone we work with.

Our strong partnerships give us access to a wide variety of breeding material from across the world allowing us to continually improve and develop higher-performing and more sustainable varieties.

7 OUR ARABLE TEAM

Driven by passion

Our dedicated team of breeders, scientists, agronomists and crop teams bring a genuine enthusiasm for what they do to every part of our business.

Their depth of sector knowledge is extraordinary, and they're constantly looking for ways to evolve, finding new and better ways for our customers to grow more from less.

Speak to our experts

If you have any questions about Sparkler winter wheat or if you want to discuss our wider portfolio, contact our arable team today.



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Agronomy Best Practice

Use plant protection products safely.

Always read the label and product information before use.

Consult a BASIS Qualified Advisor for advice and guidance on crop protection products.

Consult a FACTS Qualified Adviser for advice and guidance on nitrogen applications.

DATA SOURCE

All information and data is sourced from AHDB Recommended List Winter Wheat 2026/27 unless stated otherwise.