July Blog

The visual difference in the plots is less dramatic now the weeds have moved from flowering stage into seed set. The un-weeded control plots are showing very high levels of weed burden: this has almost certainly resulted in strong competition for light, water and nutrients. It will be interesting to see how this affects the crop yield. These high weed burdens are far greater than we are used to experiencing on this farm because normal farm practice is to harrow comb weed once in the early spring.

Heavy weed burden in a un-weeded control plot

Wheat in a weeded plot

The wheat is starting to ripen and it is easy to see where the crops have become stressed. The areas where weeding equipment has been set up is weed free, but due to all the wheelings the crop is looking very unhappy. This demonstrates that completely weed free crops are not necessarily the most desirable outcome.

The heavily weeded field margin, (see the photograph to the left) where all the equipment was set up, is showing few weeds but a very thin and stressed crop.

The upcoming tasks for this project are to take out set areas of the plot and assess the different weed burdens and species present, as well as assessing wheat biomass. A plot combine will then be run through each of the plots to give plot yields.

An overview of the trial area showing the variability in weed populations.