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State Summary

WEATHER

- November rainfall varied from average to above average across most of the State. There were areas of very much above average rainfall on Eastern Eyre Peninsula, Upper North and Kangaroo Island.
- December rainfall varied from below average in most of Western Eyre Peninsula and parts of Northern Yorke Peninsula to very much above average in areas of Kangaroo Island, Fleurieu Peninsula and the Lower South East.
- In the pastoral region, November rainfall was very much above average in the northern part of the North West Pastoral Zone (Cooper Pedy, Oodnadatta and Marla areas) and in an area west of Woomera. Average to above average rainfall was received in the rest of the pastoral region.
- December rainfall was above average in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands and very much below average from Glendambo through Maree to Innamincka and average to below average in the rest of the Pastoral Zone.
- Mean maximum temperatures for November were below average in the northern part of Eastern Eyre Peninsula and southern North West Pastoral Zone and average in the rest of the State.
- Maximum temperatures for December were above average on Eyre Peninsula and the Nullarbor and very much above average in the rest of the State. An area in the North East Pastoral Zone recorded the highest temperatures on record.
- Minimum temperatures for November were average across most of the State. December minimum temperatures were above to very much above average across the State with areas on Western Eyre Peninsula, Murray Mallee and the North East Pastoral Zone recording the highest on record.

CROPS

- Total SA grain crop production is estimated at 5.3 mt from a crop area of 3.5 million hectares, compared to the five-year average of 8.3 mt grain from 3.84 million hectares of crop area. Drought and frost reduced grain yields and large areas of crop was cut for hay.
- Final crop production was higher than estimated during 2018, due to more favourable late spring conditions on Eyre Peninsula and Central and Southern Yorke Peninsula.
- Harvest progressed rapidly in early November, however above average rainfall and cool conditions in many areas caused significant delays in the last half of November and early December.
- Yields have been highly variable, depending on rainfall, soil type and frost damage with most districts having below to very much below average yields, but Southern Yorke Peninsula, Lower Eyre Peninsula and the Mid and Lower South East achieving average to above average yields.
- Some farmers on Eastern Eyre Peninsula, Upper North, Mid North and Southern Mallee did not harvest enough grain to provide seed for next season's crops.
- Crop damage from widespread frosts in late September and early October was worse than expected in the Upper North, Mid-North, Murray Mallee and Upper South East. Despite significant areas being cut for hay there were still areas of frost damage, particularly in wheat and pulse crops.
- Some farmers completed harvest in early to mid-November, but the majority did not finish until late December. In the Lower South East, harvest commenced in late December and will be completed in mid to late January.
- Strong winds and hail in late November damaged unharvested canola, barley and lentil crops in a number of districts.
- Wheat grain quality was generally good in most areas with moderate to high protein and low screenings.
• Barley yields were higher than expected in a number of districts, while wheat yields were often lower, due to drought and frost.

• Barley quality was generally good, with low screenings and high test-weights. A lower percentage than normal of malting varieties were classified as malt, mainly due to high grain protein levels. Some malt classifications were changed to increase the percentage of malt, but these were generally minor.

• Canola yields were highly variable being higher than expected in some districts and very poor in others, however grain quality was generally good with high grain oil content in most districts.

• Pulse crops generally performed poorly in most districts with low yields and small grain size. The exception being bean and pea crops on Lower Eyre Peninsula and the Lower South East.

• Grain cleaning was required to reduce snail numbers on the Yorke Peninsula with some loads downgraded due to remaining numbers.

• Summer weeds germinated following rainfall in late November and early December in most districts. Some farmers began spraying in mid-December but dry hot conditions in late December and early January stressed or dried-off most weeds.

PASTURES

• Pasture feed in most districts has been exhausted and ground cover levels are very low, increasing erosion risk.

• Pastures in the Lower South East are of good quality and are still actively growing with a significant amount of green growth still present.

• As soon as paddocks were harvested, livestock grazed the stubbles to maximize the feed value. Despite the lower volume of feed in most stubbles, the quality has been good.

• Self-sown crops and summer weeds germinated following summer rain, providing good grazing in stubble paddocks, which were not sprayed.

• Most excess hay has been sold.

• Most producers have kept additional hay and grain or sourced it from other areas to feed livestock.

• Straw suppliers with long term contracts have been required to source cereal straw from Lower North, Mid-North, Yorke Peninsula and even Lower Eyre Peninsula to meet contracts.

• Some summer fodder crops were sown following rain in November, but seed supplies were limited, reducing the area sown.

• Perennial pastures grew well following rain in November and December.

PASTORAL AREAS

• Conditions remain dry in most pastoral areas with very low amounts of quality forage available.

• Most producers, both cattle and sheep, have reduced livestock numbers, with some properties totally de-stocking and most having reduced numbers by 40% to 80%.

• Surface water has dried up in most regions in the Pastoral Zone and properties totally reliant on surface water have been forced to de-stock or cart water. Where possible, pastoralists have installed additional water infrastructure and undertaken maintenance.

• Kangaroos and emus remain in high numbers where feed and water is still available.
KEY LINKS TO OTHER INFORMATION


Bureau of Meteorology - Weather and rainfall observations: www.bom.gov.au


NOTES ON CALCULATION OF CROP ESTIMATES

Crop estimates for the current year assume average rainfall and temperature conditions for the remainder of the growing season.

Grain estimates are for total grain production and include grain delivered for immediate sale and warehousing plus grain retained on farm for seed, feed and future sale.

Hay estimates are for total hay production and include all pasture, cereal and other crops cut for hay, both dryland and irrigated.

The estimates are based on information provided by Rural Solutions SA District Reporters from a variety of sources and are updated throughout the season as conditions change and further information becomes available. They are intended to provide an indication of crop potential at the time the report is prepared.

The estimates are updated using ABS census data when available.
## Crop Estimates

**TABLE 1: CROP ESTIMATES BY DISTRICT**

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**TABLE 2: CROP ESTIMATES AGAINST FIVE YEAR AVERAGE**
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District Reports

Western Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- November rainfall was above average across most of the district. Rainfall during December was average in the Far West and below average in the remainder of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average to below average for November and average to above average for December.
- Mean minimum temperatures for November were average and very much above average in December, with part of the district being the highest on record.

CROPS

- Wet, cool weather in November and early December delayed harvest, with a few farmers completing harvest at the beginning of December but the majority not finishing until mid to late December.
- There were significant areas affected by frost during the season, with most of the worst affected paddocks cut early for hay. There was some yield loss in many paddocks that were not cut for hay, but this was generally small and within farmer expectations.
- Strong winds and hail in late November damaged some canola and barley crops, with isolated significant damage in some paddocks. Only a small portion of the overall crop was affected.
- Crop yields were better than early season estimates, and crops in most areas achieved around 70% of average yields. With current high grain prices, this should result in close to average returns in many districts.
- Crops on sandy soils which germinated early achieved well above average yields, while those on the red flats around Nunjikompita, Wirrulla and Poochera yielded average to slightly below average. Later sown crops and those on grey calcareous soils performed poorly, yielding below average.
- Wheat quality was generally very good with high protein and low screenings. Much of the crop achieved H1 or H2 classification.
- Barley yields were generally well above average and most grain was of high quality with good grain weights and low screenings. In many cases grain protein levels were too high for malt classification with grain delivered as Feed 1.
- Pea and canola yields were variable depending on soil type. Where crops did not suffer frost damage, peas yielded around 1.5 t/ha on lighter textured soils but only around 0.5 t/ha on the heavier soil types. Similarly, canola yields were good on lighter textured soils (1.5 to 2.5 t/ha) but very poor on heavier flats (0.2 to 0.5 t/ha).
- There were minimal issues with mice or snails at harvest, however there is some concern that high moisture conditions at harvest might result in increased snail populations in crops next year.
- Summer weeds germinated quickly following November rain and many farmers began spraying them as soon as they had finished harvest.

PASTURES

- Despite well above average rainfall in November and early December, stubble feed quality remains high. Lower than normal levels of paddock biomass will require producers to start supplementary feeding livestock earlier than normal.
- Most producers have either cut enough hay to provide feed over summer and autumn or bought it from neighbors and have retained additional grain on-farm as a feed reserve.
Lower Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- November rainfall was average in the southern tip and above average in the rest of the district. December rainfall was average across the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures for November were average and above average for December.
- Mean minimum temperatures were average for November and above average to very much above average for December.

CROPS

- Weather conditions have frustrated harvesting efforts, causing significant delays.
- Strong winds and hail in late November caused significant damage to isolated standing canola and barley crops, but the area affected was relatively small as a proportion of the overall crop.
- Harvest was around 80% complete in late December with canola, barley and pulses harvested. Farmers only began harvesting wheat in mid to late December and most were not finished until early January.
- Yields have generally been above average, with some exceptionally high yields reported. This resulted from well above average August rainfall and a widespread rainfall event delivering 10-15 mm in late September.
- There are many reports of canola yields over 2.0 t/ha, with some paddocks yielding as much as 3.0 t/ha. Oil content has also been high, in the range of 44 to 46%.
- Cereal yields have been above average in most districts and many farmers are reporting yields in excess of 4.5 t/ha with some as high as 6.0 t/ha.
- Early grain quality is excellent, with good test weights, low screenings and high protein. Most grain achieved ASW or APW grades at delivery depending on variety, with some loads achieving AH. The late rainfall and humid conditions resulted in weather damage and downgrading toward the end of harvest.
- A significant proportion of the barley met malt specifications even in districts not known for producing malting barley.
- Some farmers have reported that yield losses due to frost are higher than originally estimated in some paddocks.
- Yields from pulse crops were highly variable depending upon time of sowing and species. Lupin yields have generally been below average (in the order of 1.0 to 1.3 t/ha), lentils yielded around the long-term average and bean and pea yields have been well above average with many crops yielding 2.0 to 3.0 t/ha.
- Vetch yields are likely to be below average with crops suffering some late frost and native budworm damage, as well as dry conditions at flowering in October.

PASTURES

- Stubbles are providing high levels of quality feed and livestock are in excellent condition.
- Most livestock producers cut hay and will retain grain to replenish on farm supplementary feed supplies.
- Cereal stubbles and chaff heaps contain high levels of biomass with reports of landholders baling these with the option to keep on farm as stored feed reserves or to sell to livestock producers in other parts of the region.
Eastern Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- November rainfall was very much above average in the north-west and above average in the remainder of the district. Rainfall for December was average across most of the district.
- Mean minimum temperatures were very much above average for December.
- Mean maximum temperatures were below average in the north and average in the south for November and above average to very much above average for December.

CROPS

- Strong winds and hail in late November caused isolated significant damage to standing canola and barley crops but the area affected was relatively small as a proportion of the overall crop.
- Wet weather in late November and again in mid to late December delayed harvest. Some farmers completed harvest in early December, but the majority did not finish until late December.
- Crop yields were highly variable depending upon rainfall, soil type, sowing time and frost damage. Crops at Buckleboo, Kimba and the Cleve Hills generally yielded better than other districts, with some exceptional yields above 2.5 t/ha. Later sown districts near Kielpa, Rudall and Wharminda had generally low yields.
- On average, wheat and barley yields were below the long-term average, ranging from 1.0 and 2.0 t/ha.
- Grain quality was generally very good with high test weights, high proteins and low screenings. Most of the wheat was graded as ASW or better at delivery. A large proportion of malting barley varieties achieved malting grade, but protein levels were too high for malting in some loads.
- Canola yields were good given the season, and many paddocks yielded over 1.0 t/ha with oil contents above 44%.
- Pulse yields were highly variable. Lentils around Cleve yielded 0.4 to 0.5 t/ha and lupin and pea crops, not affected by frost, yielded 0.5 to 1.0 t/ha.
- Crops were poor in the Franklin Harbour district and many paddocks were not harvested.
- There were significant areas of frost damage in crops and the worst of these paddocks were cut early for hay. Yield losses from frost damage in reaped crops were similar to farmer expectations.
- Summer weeds germinated quickly following November rainfall and many farmers began spraying these as soon as harvest was completed.
- Mice and snail numbers were generally low, although there is some concern that snail numbers might increase if damp conditions continue over summer.
- Paddocks sown after November rains to provide cover germinated well, however strong winds throughout this period continued to damage emerging crops and erode vulnerable areas in the Darke Peak, Arno Bay and Franklin Harbour districts.

PASTURES

- In most districts, stubbles are providing high quality feed for livestock. The Darke Peak, Arno Bay and Franklin Harbour districts are the exception to this where poor spring biomass production has left very little surplus residues for grazing in many paddocks.
- Most producers bought or retained enough hay and grain for supplementary feeding of livestock over summer.
- Spring-sown forage crops that survived damaging winds after germination responded well to November rainfall. Emergence was patchy in many paddocks, but these crops are now starting to provide feed for livestock.
Upper North

WEATHER

- November rainfall was average in the north to very much above average in the south. Rainfall in December was average in most of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December. Minimum temperatures were very much above average for December.

CROPS

- Harvest was completed by the end of December, but numerous weather delays extended harvest by two to three weeks, particularly in the southern part of the district.
- Some farmers in the northern part of the district did not harvest enough grain for seed but either have sufficient seed on hand or have been able to find seed supplies from other areas.
- Crops on heavy clay soils yielded very poorly with many of these areas not harvested.
- Frost in the last week of September and early October damaged crops in low-lying areas in the south of the district, with peas, canola and some wheat being affected. Worst affected areas were cut for hay. Approximately 20% of crops in the southern part of the district were cut, due to frost and the dry conditions.
- Many failed crops in the northern part of the district were grazed by livestock.
- Harvest in the western part of the district was mostly completed by mid-November. Pulse yields, affected by drought and wind damage, were well below average. Cereal yields, however, were higher than expected, particularly on lighter soils and most crops produced good quality grain.
- In the eastern part of the district, barley yields were approximately 50 to 60% of average and of reasonable grain quality, although a lower percentage than normal of malting varieties made malt quality, being too high in protein.
- Wheat crops were more severely affected by frost and drought and many crops yielded less than expected with many less than 30% of average.
- Bean crops were very short and yielded well below average although grain quality was reasonable. Lupin crops performed poorly, and many crops were either not harvested or yielded well below average.
- Lentil and pea crops were affected by frost and the dry conditions so most yielded well below average.
- Canola crops yielded below average but better than expected in many areas. Rain in late November caused plants to re-grow after windrowing or desiccation so a second desiccation was required in some crops.

PASTURES

- Pastures have been depleted and most paddocks have poor surface cover despite some growth following rain in November and December.
- Self-sown crops and summer weeds germinated following summer rain, providing good grazing in stubble paddocks.
- By early January most of this growth had either been sprayed or dried off following the hot dry weather.
- Most farmers with livestock kept extra grain on farm to enable livestock to be maintained in reasonable condition over the summer and autumn period.
Mid North

WEATHER

- November rainfall was above average and December rainfall was average across the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.
- Minimum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.

CROPS

- Harvest was completed by mid to late December.
- Frost damage was worse than expected in wheat and barley, and combined with drought stress, yields were well below average. Some areas damaged by frost had not been frosted before this season.
- Worst affected areas were cut for hay, but significant areas of frosted crops were not cut, due to poor growth, unavailability of hay making equipment or unwillingness of farmers to cut more hay.
- Wheat grain quality was good with high protein and low screenings. Some grain test weights were slightly low.
- Despite slightly higher grain proteins in barley, a higher than expected proportion of malting varieties made malting grade. Some barley varieties performed well with high yields and good grain quality.
- Approximately 20 to 25% of the total crop area was cut for hay, with hay yields 40 to 50% of average.
- Pulse crops generally performed poorly with low yields and small grain size.
- Pea crops were frosted and produced small grain.
- Lentil crops yielded poorly.
- Canola yields varied depending on variety and time of sowing and were 0.2 to 1 t/ha.
- Faba bean and lupin crops yielded well below average with high grain losses at harvest.
- Summer weeds germinated in the northern part of the district but further south there was limited germination. Some farmers completely sprayed paddocks but most have grazed off and/ or only sprayed patches of weeds.
- Planning for 2019 has commenced with more Clearfield varieties and slightly more hay likely to be sown.

PASTURES

- Pasture feed in most paddocks is exhausted and ground cover levels are poor in many areas.
- Livestock were moved onto crop stubbles immediately after harvest, but most stubbles have limited feed value remaining.
- Most producers are supplementary-feeding stock in paddocks but will need to move to confinement areas by mid to late February.
Lower North

WEATHER

• November rainfall was average to above average and December rainfall was average.
• Mean maximum temperatures were average for September and very much above average for December.
• Minimum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.

CROPS

• Harvest was completed in mid-December in earlier districts, while later districts were still harvesting in early January.
• Approximately 30% of the crop area was cut for hay, due to frost damage, drought stress or estimated better returns from hay compared to grain.
• Wheat is expected to yield 45 to 50%, barley 50% and pulses 25 to 30% of average. Peas yielded the highest of the pulse crops.
• Wheat had high protein and low screenings. Barley grain protein was higher than normal.
• Lentil crops were thin and not able to be picked up during harvesting resulting in yields of 0.5 to 1 t/ha.
• Bean crops yielded well below average at 0.6 to 0.8 t/ha.
• High chickpea grain losses resulted from shattering during harvest.
• Canola yields were well below average due to the warm dry finish to the season and were of average oil content.
• Due to a high demand and low availability of straw, most paddocks that had reasonable amounts of biomass have been cut and baled.
• Suppliers with long-term straw contracts are sourcing straw from higher rainfall districts.
• Farmers have started planning for 2019 season and are indicating a small reduction in pulse area, some reduction in fertiliser inputs and concerns regarding herbicide residues.
• Some summer weeds germinated but most have dried off following high temperatures.

PASTURES

• Medic seed harvest commenced in early January with yields only expected to be 30% of average.
• Most hay has been sold.
• Most pasture paddocks have no useful feed remaining.
• Farmers with livestock have either cut additional hay or bought hay to ensure they have sufficient feed for the livestock.
• Crop stubbles are being grazed by livestock, but most have low feed value and producers have begun providing hay and grain to maintain stock in reasonable condition.
Yorke Peninsula

WEATHER

- November rainfall was average to above average. Rainfall for December was below average in the north and average in the remainder of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.
- Mean minimum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.

CROPS

- Harvest was completed in early January. Some farmers finished harvest in mid-November, however rain and cool to mild conditions in late November and early December provided delays for others.
- Isolated instances of small hail through Northern and Central Yorke Peninsula damaged canola crops causing 30-50% yield losses.
- Yields across the district were highly variable with yields of most crops on Northern Yorke Peninsula being slightly to well below average. An area of 15 km radius around Kadina suffered moisture stress the whole growing season. Canola was the exception, with yields well above average.
- Central Yorke Peninsula yields ranged from below average on the coast to average in central areas. Yields on Southern Yorke Peninsula were generally average to above average.
- Some H1 and H2 quality wheat was reaped where high rates of nitrogen fertiliser or chicken litter was applied. Some crops were of only ASW quality, as there were limited opportunities in the growing season to apply nitrogen fertiliser.
- Grain protein was variable, but screenings were very low in all cereals, except for barley grown on shallower soils.
- A high percentage of malt varieties were classified as malt. Some receival standards were changed, but overall, screenings were low and protein acceptable to make malt standards.
- Most barley has been of F1 quality, with approximately 10% in both F2 & F3 classifications.
- Grain cleaning was required to reduce snail numbers on the Yorke Peninsula with some loads downgraded due to remaining numbers.
- Isolated reports of etiella (insect) damage in lentils that missed a late insecticide application.
- Ascochyta blight was very low in chickpea grain samples due to the dry spring; however, it did pose a high risk earlier in the season during the vegetative/foliar crop stages.
- Chickpea seed size was larger than in previous years with the majority of seed being larger than 8 mm, owing to the mild November finish.

PASTURES

- There is very limited quality pasture feed, particularly on Northern Yorke Peninsula and the Adelaide Plains.
- Farmers have stored grain since harvest but supplies of hay are low, as a large amount was sold to eastern states buyers during spring while cereal crops were being cut for hay.
- Farmers have been reluctant to feed hay and grain to livestock, due to their high prices, however stubbles are being quickly grazed out and supplementary feeding will be necessary in the near future.
- There has been very little summer weed germination, limiting feed supplies.
- Livestock are generally in good to fair condition.
Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula & Kangaroo Island

WEATHER

- November rainfall was above average in most of the district and above average to very much above average for December.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December. Mean minimum temperatures were average during November and very much above average for December.

CROPS

Central Hills/Fleurieu

- Crop yields were highly variable. Cereals ranged from 0.25 t/ha in the drier regions to 5t/ha in wetter zones. Canola yields were low at 0.25 to 0.3 t/ha and pulses were also low at 1.0 t/ha.
- Approximately 25% of cereal crops were cut for hay.
- Grain quality was also highly variable. Where grain yields were average to above average, quality was high but in lower rainfall areas, quality was poor with high levels of screenings.
- Heavy rainfall in mid-December had limited effect on grain quality but strong winds caused minor crop damage.
- There has only been limited germination of summer weeds following November and December rains.

Kangaroo Island

- Canola crops yielded 20% above average and canola grain quality was good.
- Cereal yields will be average although strong winds in mid-December caused some damage to unharvested crops. Cereal grain quality was variable with some downgrading due to staining and sprouting caused by rain in mid-December.
- Strong winds flattened some crops, making harvest more difficult.
- Bean crops yielded 40-50% below average.
- November rain stimulated germination of some summer weeds with further growth and germination following rainfall in mid-December.

PASTURES

Central Hills/Fleurieu

- Dry pasture and stubble feed is of low quality and quantity. Some screenings are being used for feed.
- Quality hay is in short supply but there are reasonable reserves of low-quality hay. Feed grain is in short supply, although there are some screenings available for stock feed.
- Warm weather in late December and early January rapidly dried soils, following November rainfall events. There is limited growth of perennial pastures.
- Some producers considered sowing summer fodder crops, but seed was in short supply.
- Sheep and cattle condition is below average.

Kangaroo Island

- Dry pasture feed is of average quality and quantity, and declining, except for the western end of KI where feed quality and quantity remains high.
- Kikuyu pastures have responded well to summer rains.
- Hay supplies are average and grain supplies unknown as cereal harvest has only just commenced.
- Only a small area has been sown to summer crops.
- Sheep and cattle are in good condition with most producers weaning early and/or selling excess stock.
Lower Murray

WEATHER

- Rainfall for November was average to above average. December rainfall was above average in the southern part of the district and average in the remainder of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.
- Minimum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.

CROPS

- Harvest was completed before the end of December but there were some weather delays due to cool, damp conditions.
- Yields were variable across the region, ranging from very poor and not worth harvesting on very hard stony soils, to crops on sandier soils able to fill some grain using subsoil moisture.
- Some crops with poor yield potential were grazed to provide livestock feed.
- Pulse and canola crops yielded poorly because of frost and dry conditions.
- Crops cut for hay because of drought or frost damage were more profitable than those left for grain.
- Crops sown using no-till and as part of a sound rotation generally yielded much better than those sown late in conventional systems.
- Most hay is of extremely high quality due to the dry conditions and will be profitable for farmers this year.
- Windy conditions continued to cause problems in paddocks that have struggled to establish cover all season and there are significant areas of soil erosion visible in the landscape.
- Summer weed spraying has started but weed germination has been slow due to dry soils and hot weather in late December.

PASTURES

- Pastures have deteriorated quickly as they were of poor growth all season.
- Livestock are generally in reasonable condition and most have been mated.
- Some farmers have reduced their livestock breeding numbers in line with the amount of feed available.
- Surplus stock have been sold leaving only breeding stock.
- Pastures on irrigated river flats have grown well and some summer fodder crops have high levels of growth. High water prices have caused dairy farmers to consider either selling water and buying fodder or using the water to grow a summer fodder crop.
Northern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- November rainfall was average; December rainfall was above average in the east and average in the west of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December. Minimum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December with the southern part of the district recording the highest daily minimum temperatures on record.
- Strong winds occurred on numerous days, raising dust.

CROPS

- Most farmers completed harvest by mid-December.
- Yields in the Waikerie district were below average with some areas not harvested. Cereal yields averaged between 0.2-0.6 t/ha in this area (approximately 25% of the longer-term district average).
- Loxton and Alawoona cereal yields averaged between 0.6-1.0 t/ha (around 50% of district average).
- Some crops were damaged by frost, and crops on deep sands, shallow soils over stone and heavy clay flats all yielded poorly, due to water deficiencies.
- Grain quality was variable but most grain was of good quality with high grain protein and average screenings levels. Grain protein in most malting variety barley crops was too high to be classified as malting grade.
- Pulse crops, vetch and canola sown around Loxton and Alawoona generally yielded very poorly, below 0.3 t/ha.
- Although grain yields were below average, farmers in the eastern and southern parts of the district were able to sell some grain at high grain prices.
- Very little amounts of hay were cut across the district as there was insufficient bulk in most crops.
- Summer weeds germinated following November and December rain and most cropping paddocks were sprayed once. There are more farmers using sensor spot spraying equipment, which has greatly reduced the amount of herbicide being applied.

PASTURES

- Livestock are grazing stubble paddocks, although most of these have limited feed.
- There has been very little useful volunteer pasture growth resulting from November and December rainfall.
- Farmers are supplementary-feeding livestock with grain and any hay reserves, purchased hay or straw. There has been some implementation of confinement feeding, which might become more prevalent in coming months.
- There is a high erosion risk due to the lack of soil cover on sands, particularly where there is increased grazing pressure.
Southern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall for November varied from below average in the east to above average in the west. December rainfall was above average in the east and average in the west.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December. Minimum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December with the northern part of the district recording highest daily minimum temperatures on record.
- Strong winds occurred through the period.

CROPS

- Wet weather during November and December caused numerous delays to harvest and most farmers only finished at the end of December.
- Many farmers were surprised how well crops performed given the dry season. High grain prices compensated to some extent for low yields.
- Frost damage was significant across the district.
- Late-sown crops did not establish well and yielded poorly.
- High fodder prices or the need for fodder on their farm led many farmers to cut crops for hay where there was enough bulk.
- Some crops were grazed for sheep feed rather than left for harvest.
- Pulses and canola yields were very poor and some farmers did not harvest crops deemed uneconomical.
- Grain quality was of reasonable quality, with high barley and wheat grain protein.
- Soil cover in many paddocks is already poor and with continued windy conditions these paddocks will be susceptible to wind erosion.
- Strong winds have caused significant soil erosion particularly on pasture paddocks where plants failed to establish well and have since been over-grazed due to paddock feed shortages.
- Summer weeds germinated following above average November rainfall and farmers have been spraying early to conserve soil moisture for the 2019 season.

PASTURES

- Livestock are generally in good condition, although most are lighter than normal.
- A large percentage of lambs have been sold as poorer condition “stores”, with only a few producers keeping lambs to finish and possibly feedlot.
- Perennial pastures have benefited from November and December rains and put on new growth.
- Producers, particularly those with lambs, are supplementary-feeding sheep, using grain self-feeders in the paddocks.
- Hay and grain reserves are low, but farmers have been proactive in sourcing their requirements, conscious that stocks of hay and grain will be short later in the season.
- Stubbles are very thin and livestock will graze high quality feed quickly.
- Many farmers have reduced their number of breeding stock due to the poor seasonal conditions.
Upper South East

WEATHER

• November rainfall was average and December rainfall was average in the north-west and above average in the remainder of the district.
• Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December. Mean minimum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.

CROPS

• Harvest was 80% completed by early January with some of the larger cropping operators still harvesting. Harvest will be completed by the third week of January. Reaping has been delayed two to four weeks by unfavourable weather conditions.
• Canola yields have been variable and overall yielded below average. Approximately 30% of producers experienced shattering of canola due to wind in direct headed canola with up to 30% loss reported in some crops. Approximately 35% of canola crops were frosted, losses ranging from 10-100%.
• Bean yields have generally been below average, due to waterlogging and dry spring weather with some varieties yielding better than others. Despite lower yields some varieties were of better grain quality and achieved higher prices.
• Many beans were downgraded due to discolouration from weather damage.
• Lupins have yielded below average due to a lack of moisture and significant frost damage.
• Barley yields were average with yields reduced by frost and lack of spring rainfall. Between 20-30% of barley crops were frosted with an average of 30% losses in those paddocks. Whilst some barley still made malt grade, most was downgraded to feed grades.
• Wheat yields were below average; more crops were frosted than expected and grain quality was affected by weather damage and sprouting. Approximately 15% of wheat had yield losses of 30-40% due to frost.
• Later-harvested wheat crops were more severely affected by weather damage, and seed germination and vigour tests to assess viability will be essential where these crops have been kept for seed.
• Oat crops yielded below average due to a lack of moisture resulting in lightweight grain.
• Blight Stripe, an unusual bacterial infection, has been reported in oats.
• Overall early-sown crops out performed late-sown crops, despite frost damage.
• Summer weeds have germinated but most farmers have delayed spraying until stubbles have been grazed or another rainfall event occurs.

PASTURES

• Lupinosis has been of concern due to summer rainfall events and producers have opted not to graze lupin stubbles.
• The feed value of crop stubbles has been reduced due to the delayed harvest and rainfall events.
• Dryland lucerne has grown exceptionally well but most other pastures have dried off and their feed value is poor. Frost severely affected many sub-clover pastures.
• Supplementary feeding has commenced on properties that do not have crop stubble or lucerne pastures. Hay and grain reserves on farm are good.
• Sheep are in good condition, but some cattle have started to decline in condition.
Lower South East

WEATHER

• November rainfall was average to above average and December rainfall was above to very much above average.
• Mean maximum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December. Mean minimum temperatures were average for November and very much above average for December.

CROPS

• Harvest commenced in late December on canola and bean crops.
• Canola yields have been well above average and of exceptional grain quality.
• Bean crops harvested to date have yielded above average despite lodging of many crops due to strong wind events.
• Barley yield estimates are above average with good quality grain expected.
• Wheat is predicted to yield above average, but quality has been affected by weather with potential for shot grain, discoloration and black tipping damage.
• Light frost events occurred but were early enough to not result in any crop damage.
• There is potential for this year to be one of the best cropping years producers have experienced given the high grain prices and potential for exceptional grain yields.

PASTURES

• Hay yields were well above average.
• Most of the late cut hay is of poor quality due to rainfall events and bleaching; some hay was in windrows for six weeks before it was baled.
• Pastures are of good quality, still actively growing and with a significant amount of green component still present.
• Pasture quantity is adequate and no supplementary feeding of livestock is required.
• Livestock are in excellent condition.
• Overall the favourable season and commodity prices have made this one of the best years that livestock producers have experienced.
Pastoral Areas

- Rainfall for November was very much above average in the Cooper Pedy, Oodnadatta and Marla areas and average to above average in the rest of the pastoral region.
- December rainfall was above average in the APY Lands and very much below average from Glendambo through Marree to Innamincka and average to below average in the rest of the pastoral area.
- Conditions remain dry in most pastoral areas with very low amounts of quality forage available.
- Most producers, both cattle and sheep, have reduced livestock numbers. Some properties have totally de-stocked and most have reduced numbers by 40% to 80%.
- Surface water has dried up in most regions in the Pastoral zone and properties totally reliant on surface water have been forced to de-stock or cart water. Where possible, pastoralists have installed additional water infrastructure and undertaken maintenance.
- Kangaroos and emus remain in high numbers where feed and water resources remain.