

# PIRSA Crop and Pasture Summary

## Issue 2 July Report, Seeding and Crop Establishment – Update August 2019

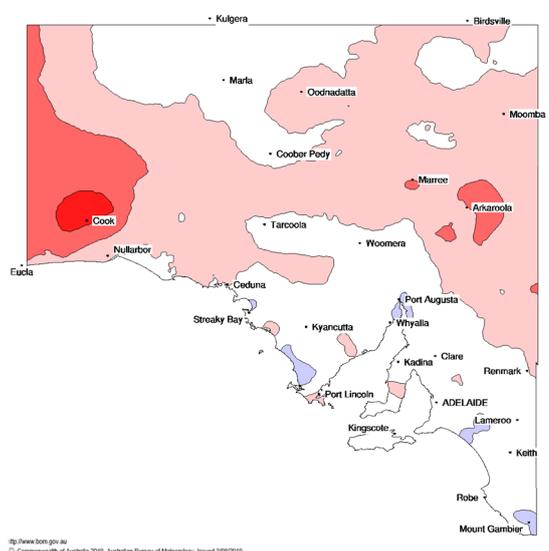
### Summary

After a record dry January to April, opening rains for most of southern South Australia started in May. May-June rainfall was average with some districts above average and pockets of below average rain. Crop seeding started dry during April and continued with the rains, finishing by early to mid-June in all districts. Farmers have sown more crop than last year, with the crop area returning to near average after two seasons of below average crop size. The crop mix has changed with more barley and slightly more wheat at the expense of canola and some pulses due to dry subsoils. The dry conditions continued across the pastoral zones except for parts of the North West near the northern border where a rain mid-May resulted in average rainfall.

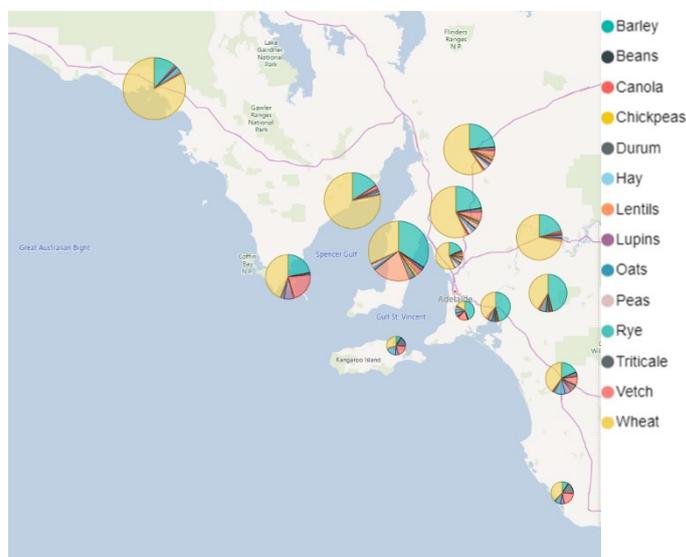
July rainfall was well below average in the west and across the pastoral zones, but near average in the east. By early August, crops on shallow soils in several districts exhibited signs of moisture stress. Good rains fell mid-August except in central and eastern Eyre Peninsula, the northern part of the Upper North and parts of the northern Murray Mallee including east of the ranges. Pasture feed availability for livestock is improving in many parts of the cereal zone. Crops established well in early winter and despite some early moisture stress after the dry July, are generally in good condition. Early crop production estimates for this year are at long-term averages, but this will be reviewed as the season progresses.

### South Australian Rainfall Deciles 1 May to 30 July 2019

Distribution based on gridded data



### 2019–20 South Australian Crop Mix by Region



### Sown crop area (ha) for the previous four seasons and the new crop.

Season	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20
Area sown (ha)	3,821,000	3,894,000	3,565,000	3,503,000	3,806,000

Next update release September 2019 Winter Crop Performance

Information accurate as at 15 August 2019.



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## The season so far...



**RAIN** – Following a record dry January to April, average and above rainfall for May and June across the south, but pastoral zone remains mostly dry. July rainfall was below average and closer to average in the Murray Mallee, but useful August rains in many districts is keeping the season on track.



**SUBSOIL MOISTURE** – Soils in most districts have dry subsoils, except parts of lower Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. May-June opening rains moistened the seedbed allowing crop establishment.



**CROP MIX** – Area sown to wheat, barley and other cereals increased at the expense of canola, lentils, chickpeas, lupins and peas due to dry subsoils.



**SEEDING** – Crop seeding finished across the State by early to mid-June into a moist seedbed. Fodder crops and pasture were sown as standing forage for stock, while in some districts, hay crops were sown to replenish hay used last season.



**LIVESTOCK CONDITION AND FEED** – Paddock feed level has improved in many districts. Livestock supplementary feeding continues in districts with low paddock feed. Many farmers have sown an increased area of pasture, feed crops and hay. Pastoral region feed is critically short. Stockfeed (grain and hay) is difficult to procure.

## Outlook for the year

**RAINFALL OUTLOOK** – Bureau of Meteorology's latest three-month season update is for near average rain for September and drier and warmer than normal conditions more likely in October-November.

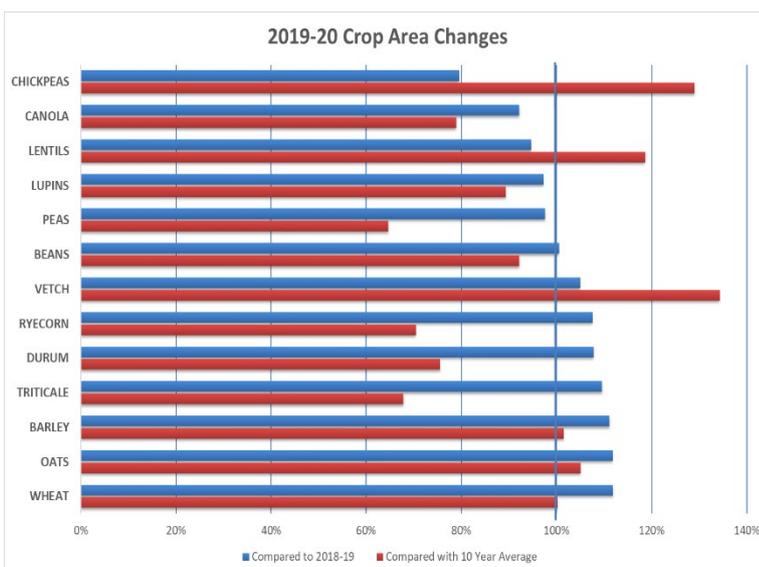
## Challenges and opportunities

**PESTS AND DISEASES** – Mice, snails and other pest problems are less than recent seasons. Snail activity, confined to the Yorke Peninsula, is being treated with baits; elsewhere the dry conditions of last season limited snail population build up.

**ADVERSE EVENTS** – Strong winds in June and in early August have resulted in soil erosion on tops of sand hills. Frosts in June slowed growth rates of pasture and crops in most districts.

**MARKET DRIVERS** – Improved production outlook for northern hemisphere wheat and corn crops expected to increase global stocks. USA winter wheat harvest is underway and spring harvest about to start with both expecting above average production. All grain prices are easing on last season but predicted to remain above average for the upcoming harvest. Tariffs remain in place for grain and pulses traded into India.

**REGIONAL ISSUES** – Crops have established well in most districts though sand hills in some districts remain vulnerable to wind erosion with low vegetative cover due to last year's drought. Pastoral zones are both critical for feed and surface water availability with most properties destocked or at least carrying significantly reduced stock numbers.



### Explanatory notes: 2019–20 Crop Area changes

Most cereals increased by around 10% on last season to be near the 10-year average area.

Lentil area is slightly less than last season, but strong growth over the past decade means that lentils remain around 20% above the 10-year average area.

Canola and chickpeas, and to a lesser extent field peas and lupin crop areas, declined compared to last season. Despite the decline year on year, chickpea area is well above the ten-year average.

May	July	Sep	Nov	Jan 2020	Mar 2020
PAST UPDATE	<b>THIS UPDATE</b>	NEXT UPDATE			
Seeding Intentions	<b>Seeding and crop establishment</b>	Winter crop performance	Spring crop performance	Harvest	Final summary and estimates