Crop and Pasture Report
South Australia
2017-18 WINTER CROP PERFORMANCE
SEPTEMBER 2017
Crop and Pasture Report - South Australia
This is a bi-monthly report prepared by Rural Solutions SA, for the Agriculture, Food and Wine Division of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

Information current as of 6 September, 2017.


ALL ENQUIRIES
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State Summary

WEATHER

- July rainfall was below average in the northern part of Western Eyre Peninsula, Eastern Eyre Peninsula, Upper North, Northern Yorke Peninsula and Northern Murray Mallee and average to above average in all other areas.
- August rainfall was average to above average across most of the agricultural districts with areas of Southern Yorke Peninsula, Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula receiving very much above average rainfall.
- For the six months to 31 August most of Western Eyre Peninsula and parts of Central and Lower Eyre Peninsula received falls in the lowest 10% of rainfall on record. Areas on Western Eyre Peninsula and Northern Yorke Peninsula received the lowest 5% of rainfall on record over this period.
- Mean maximum temperatures were above average in the Lower South East and very much above average in other agricultural districts for July, and average across all districts for August.
- Mean minimum temperatures for July were average for Eastern Eyre Peninsula, Upper North and Mid North, Northern and Southern Mallee and the South East, and above average in other districts.
- Minimum temperatures for August were above average on Western and Lower Eyre Peninsula, average to below average for Eastern Eyre Peninsula, Mid North, Yorke Peninsula, Murray Mallee and the South East, with the Upper North being very much below average.
- Numerous widespread frosts were recorded with several severe frosts in the last week of August in a number of districts.

CROPS

- Crop production is estimated at 6.7 million tonnes from a crop area of 3.5 million hectares. Both the production and crop area are below long term averages. Production potential varies from well below average to average, with some areas now with above average production potential.
- Rain in early July enabled farmers to complete seeding, particularly on Lower Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula and the Fleurieu Peninsula. On Western Eyre Peninsula additional crop was sown but many farmers only sowed a portion of their intended area.
- On Eyre Peninsula the late opening rains has resulted in considerable reductions in the area sown to crop, with wheat area reduced by more than 25%, barley area reduced by more than 15% and canola by almost 30%.
- Low soil moisture in some districts resulted in staggered germination of both crops and weeds has complicated weed and fertiliser applications. However, uneven crop growth is now far less pronounced than earlier in the season.
- Most crops have now recovered from sandblasting on sandy soils of Western and Central Eyre Peninsula with the strong winds in July.
- Crop maturity of cereals varies from early tillering in some of the late-sown crops on Lower Eyre Peninsula and the Lower South East to grain filling in the western part of the Upper North. Most cereal crops are at booting to early head emergence growth stages.
- Most pulse crops on Eyre Peninsula germinated late and grew slowly under cold conditions so have below average yield potential. In the rest of the State pulses have grown well with low levels of disease and have average yield potential, despite later than ideal emergence in some areas.
- Canola crops are highly variable. Early-sown crops that established well have average to above average yield potential but those with staggered germination or mice damage are patchy with well
below average yield potential. Most canola crops are now in full flower with early ones beginning to pod.

- Some nitrogen fertiliser was applied following rain in early July. Additional nitrogen has been applied in many districts as August rainfall has increased yield potential.
- Septoria tritici blotch is widespread in wheat crops in the Lower North, Yorke Peninsula and Lower South East so many crops have been treated with fungicide to reduce crop damage.
- There are low levels of net form of net blotch in barley crops in the Mid and Lower North and Yorke Peninsula but generally disease levels are quite low. A form of spot form of net blotch has become resistant to some fungicides in the Mid North and Yorke Peninsula.
- Russian wheat aphids are widespread across most districts of the State. They appear to be in higher numbers on Eyre Peninsula, where they were absent last year. Crops sown with insecticide seed dressing had lower levels of aphids until the last few weeks of August.
- Mice are still present and causing damage in isolated patches in wheat and canola crops in a number of districts. Farmers are applying bait to reduce damage.
- Several frosts in late August in a number of districts with the extent and severity of any damage yet to be assessed.
- Some crops in the Central Hills/Fleurieu, Lower Eyre Peninsula and South East have been affected by waterlogging, reducing yield potential. Wet conditions in the South East reduced trafficability in some crops, delaying nitrogen fertiliser and herbicide applications.
- Snails are present in crops in a number of districts and some baiting is occurring to limit grain contamination and harvest blockages.

PASTURES

- Feed supplies in pasture paddocks are still very low in most districts, as grazing and cool conditions during July restricted pasture growth.
- In most districts, average to above average rainfall in August should ensure pasture growth increases during spring.
- On many parts of Eyre Peninsula there is concern about the potential lack of feed in spring pastures and crop stubbles given the low pasture growth levels at present. Livestock producers have continued providing supplement feed to stock in paddocks.
- Farmers on Lower Eyre Peninsula have bought large amounts of hay and grain from outside the district as reserves of hay and grain on farm have been depleted.
- Farmers have applied grass selective herbicides and begun spray-topping pastures in earlier districts to reduce seed set of annual grasses.
- Red legged earth mite and lucerne flea are continuing to cause minor damage to pastures, particularly in the higher rainfall districts.
- High levels of pasture renovation have been undertaken in the South East with earlier-sown pastures performing better than later-sown paddocks.
- Pasture growth is dense and feed supplies are abundant in the South East.

KEY LINKS TO OTHER INFORMATION


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 as available.
## Crop Estimates

### TABLE 1: CROP ESTIMATES BY DISTRICT

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### TABLE 1 (cont): CROP ESTIMATES BY DISTRICT

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

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<tr>
<td>(t)</td>
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<td>434.400</td>
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<td>293.300</td>
<td>372.900</td>
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<td>Hay (ha)</td>
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<td>(not in total)</td>
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<td>763.000</td>
<td>1094.800</td>
<td>1454.300</td>
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<td>Total (ha)</td>
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District Reports

Western Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- July rainfall was below average in the north and average in the remainder of the district. Rainfall in August was average across the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August. Mean minimum temperatures were above average for July and August, with several light frosts.

CROPS

- Cool temperatures slowed growth of crops in July but warmer sunny days and good soil moisture accelerated crop growth during August.
- Strong winds in July sandblasted emerging crops on sandy soils but most crops have recovered and have adequate surface cover to protect against wind erosion.
- Crop vigour and growth are much better in paddocks where summer weeds were controlled.
- Crops sown following July rains on better soils around Mt Cooper and Elliston look healthy and have good yield potential, given the late sowing. However, emergence and growth of crops on heavier-textured and grey calcareous soils has been much poorer. These crops are not expected to yield well.
- Most canola, pulse and early-sown cereal crops are flowering; later-sown crops are at stem elongation. Good growing conditions have reduced the variation in crop growth caused by staggered germination and emergence.
- Early-sown crops on lighter soils have reasonable yield potential but will require further rain in early September to avoid moisture stress during the critical flowering period.
- Due to the variability of crop growth within paddocks, pesticide and fertiliser applications have been complicated.
- Applications of broadleaf herbicides to crops, were much later than normal due to the large variations in crop and weed maturity.
- Russian wheat aphid is widespread across the district. Some untreated paddocks have been severely damaged (with some reports of more than 30% loss in yield potential) but chemical control appears to have been effective in minimising damage in most paddocks.
- There have been widespread reports of mice damaging isolated patches of crops coming into head. Some baiting has been undertaken in crops near Wirulla and Nunjikompta.
- This season’s shorter crops have the potential to suffer more snail contamination at harvest so many farmers are baiting paddocks to reduce numbers while snails are still active.
- Other pests and diseases are at low levels at present with small amounts of spot form of net blotch and leaf rust on susceptible varieties where preventive fungicide applications have not been applied.

PASTURES

- Livestock are still being supplementary fed as pasture paddocks contain very little growth.
- Vetch and oat crops sown for grazing have grown well, with producers looking to cut hay to replenish supplies. Hay yields are expected to be only around half the average.
- Farmers have sold excess livestock to reduce pressure on feed reserves and are selling lambs soon after weaning.
- Applications of grass-selective herbicides to pastures were much later than normal due to the large variations in crop and weed maturity.
Lower Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average across most of the district for July and average to above average in August.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August.
- Mean minimum temperatures were above average for July and average to above average for August.

CROPS

- Rain in early July allowed most farmers to sow the remainder of their crops.
- Dry conditions in May and June restricted early canola growth and these crops are not as vigorous as normal for this time of year.
- Damp conditions with sunny days resulted in rapid crop growth during July and August. Most cereal and pulse crops have grown well but are still not as advanced as normal and will require average to above average spring rainfall to meet their yield potential.
- Most soils now contain some stored moisture. Temporary waterlogging has been observed in isolated patches of paddocks around Stokes/Ungarra and south of Edillie.
- The uneven crop germination and growth within paddocks is now far less pronounced than earlier in the season.
- Crop maturity varies widely across the district, with early-sown cereal crops in head whilst some of the very late crops around Koppio are only at early tillering stage. Canola and early-sown pulse crops have started flowering.
- Good growing conditions in late July and August prompted farmers to apply fertiliser on crops showing symptoms of nitrogen deficiency to maximize yield potential.
- Russian wheat aphid in crops have been reported widely across the region but numbers have generally been low and there are no reports of significant damage.
- Mice have also been reported in isolated patches of crop. Farmers will closely monitor crops and bait before harvest if numbers continue to increase.
- Low levels of spot form of net blotch and leaf rust have been observed and have largely been controlled with fungicide applications. Disease levels in canola and pulse crops have been relatively low.
- Other insect pests, such as aphids and native budworm, are currently at low levels.

PASTURES

- Feed supplies in pasture paddocks are still very low, as grazing and cool conditions during July restricted pasture growth.
- There is concern about a potential lack of feed in spring pastures and stubbles given the low pasture growth to date.
- Livestock producers have continued supplementary feeding stock in paddocks whilst waiting for pastures to grow.
- Large amounts of hay and grain have been bought from outside the district as reserves of hay and grain on farm have been depleted.
Eastern Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

• July rainfall was average in the west of the district and below average in the east.
• August rainfall was above average with falls of 15-25 mm on August 3, supplemented with regular light rainfall events throughout the month.
• Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August. Mean minimum temperatures were average to above average for July and average for August with a number of light frosts recorded in inland areas.

CROPS

• Continued dry conditions in the Wharminda, Rudall and Kielpa districts reduced the amount of crop sown in these areas, whilst farmers in Darke Peak completed their planned seeding in July.
• Most of the earlier-sown crops (canola and cereals) are healthy and flowering. Crops in the Crossville, Franklin Harbour and Mitchellville areas, and on the lighter soils near Kimba/Buckleboo, have above average yield potential. Crop growth and yield potential is highly variable in other areas.
• Later-sown pulse crops have grown slowly in the cool, dry conditions and are just beginning to flower so are expected to produce below average yields.
• Cold, dry conditions into late July hindered crop and pasture germination growth in the Verran, Wharminda, Lock, Rudall and Kielpa districts, particularly on non-wetting sand. Some erosion on sandy rises has been reported in these districts.
• Crops at Darke Peak germinated following July rains and by the end of August had grown enough cover to protect the soil against wind erosion.
• Low soil moisture resulted in staggered germination of both crops and weeds so most farmers applied a late broadleaf herbicide to minimise herbicide crop damage.
• Pulse and medic residues have provided good amounts of mineralised nitrogen so few subsequent crops have required extra nitrogen.
• Mice have been observed throughout the region in crops coming into head with some reports of damage to emerging cereal heads and canola buds. Some crops around Kimba, Darke Peak and Cowell have been baited.
• Russian wheat aphids have been observed in most districts however crop damage has been minimal probably as a result of early control measures including insecticide seed treatment.
• Other insect pests such as native budworm and aphids have been present in low numbers.
• Spot form of net blotch and leaf rust in susceptible varieties have been observed in some areas in low levels and mostly treated with fungicide.

PASTURES

• Pastures contain very little feed and farmers continue to supplementary feed stock in paddocks.
• Most farmers have not sprayed out grasses in pastures, wanting to retain as much pasture growth in paddocks as possible. Pastures will be spray-topped as grass weeds come out in head.
• It is likely that there will be low amounts of feed available over summer and although some farmers have sold surplus stock, most are not planning to significantly reduce flock numbers at this stage.
• Paddocks sown to vetch and oats for hay have grown slowly and hay yields are expected to be around half the average with most retained on-farm.
• Some growers are considering planting summer feed such as spring-sown canola, forage sorghum and Sudan grass if there are good early summer rains.
Upper North

WEATHER

- Rainfall for July was very much below average in the north and below average in the remainder of the district. August rainfall was average across most of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August.
- Mean minimum temperatures were average for July and very much below average for August, with numerous frosts in inland areas and several widespread frosts in late August.

CROPS

- Despite continued below average rainfall in July, crops have generally grown well with average yield potential in most of the district.
- Wheat in the western part of the district is in head, with early-sown crops at grain fill stage, while crops in the eastern part of the district are at the booting stage.
- Barley crops in the western part of the district are at grain fill stage and in the east, early-sown barley crops are in head with later crops at booting stage.
- Crops on the heavier soil types in the western part of the district are beginning to show signs of moisture stress but most crops still have average yield potential. In the eastern part of the district most cereal crops have average to above average yield potential.
- Pulse crops have grown well and most crops are flowering and beginning to pod, with good yield potential.
- Frost in late August caused severe damage to pea crops around Port Pirie with some damage likely to lentil crops. Some wheat crops have possibly also been damaged and will be monitored over the next few weeks. Severely damaged areas will probably be cut for hay.
- Mice are still present and damaging some crops in the western part of the district. Widespread baiting is being undertaken in the area south of Port Pirie to reduce numbers.
- Disease levels are very low in most crops as a result of the dry conditions. There is little disease in cereals and only low levels of ascochyta in chickpeas and bacterial blight in some areas of pea crops.
- Weed levels have been relatively low as the good early rain enabled effective weed control before sowing.
- Russian wheat aphid is widespread but at relatively low levels. Crops treated with insecticidal seed treatment have very low levels and only a few untreated crops have required spraying to reduce damage. A high level of predators appears to be keeping numbers at low levels.
- Most farmers applied nitrogen fertiliser to cereal and canola crops following reasonable rains in July and early August.

PASTURES

- The growth of self-regenerating pastures was slowed by the frosts and dry conditions in June and July but began to recover in late August.
- Sown pastures have provided a high amount of quality feed.
- Farmers have begun spray-topping pastures to reduce seed set of annual grasses.
- Livestock are in good condition with most farmers having adequate hay and grain on hand to maintain livestock numbers.
Mid North

WEATHER

• July rainfall was below average in the north and west of the district and average in the south. Rainfall for August was average to above average.

• Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August.

• Mean minimum temperatures were average to above average for July and below average for August, with frequent frosts.

CROPS

• Soil moisture levels are adequate across most of the district.

• Rain in early July enabled farmers to complete seeding.

• Crop growth is highly variable with early-sown crops at booting stage and of average to above average yield potential. Later-sown and mice-damaged crops are thinner with below average yield potential.

• Later-sown cereal crops are at stem elongation stage.

• Additional nitrogen fertiliser is being applied as the rains in August have increased yield potential.

• Canola crops were generally sown slightly later than the optimum date but are now in full flower. Many crops were damaged by mice with low plant densities in patches. Plants have grown well and branched in these thinner areas but yield potential will be reduced.

• There are low levels of net form of net blotch in barley crops but generally disease levels are quite low. A form of spot form of net blotch has become resistant to some fungicides, affecting mainly Spartacus.

• Pulse crops have grown well with low levels of disease in most crops.

• There have been numerous reports of patches in lentil crops dying, with most being suspected as due to herbicide damage in highly alkaline areas.

• The area sown to barley has increased with farmers replacing higher risk crops, such as canola and legumes with barley.

• Mice numbers have reduced but are still present in paddocks and could cause damage to nodes and developing heads.

• Frosts in late August on early-sown crops but any damage is yet to be assessed.

PASTURES

• Pasture growth was slow throughout July and most of August but increased towards the end of August.

• There is sufficient pasture feed for livestock currently but further rainfall will be required to ensure adequate spring growth.

• Permanent pasture growth on unarable hills increased during late August.
Lower North

WEATHER

• Rainfall was average to above average for July and above average for August.
• Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August.
• Mean minimum temperatures were above average for July and average for August.

CROPS

• Rainfall during July and August has significantly increased yield potential with many crops now having average yield potential.
• Most wheat crops are at early head emergence stage, as the development of later-sown crops was accelerated by moisture stress during June.
• Barley crops are generally at the booting stage.
• Yield potential is average to above average in areas with good crop emergence.
• Yields are likely to be below average where there has been mice damage or poor emergence, particularly on clay soils.
• Pulse crops have grown well with generally low levels of disease and average yield potential. Chickpea crops and some field pea crops with low levels of aschocyta were treated with fungicides to reduce damage.
• There has been poor nodulation in some chickpea crops, most likely due to low soil pH inhibiting nodulation.
• Extra nitrogen fertiliser is being applied to wheat crops to maintain protein following more recent rains which increased yield potential.
• Septoria tritici blotch is widespread in wheat crops with many crops being treated with a fungicide to reduce crop damage. There are also low levels of net form of net blotch in barley crops.
• In the higher rainfall areas wheat crops were sprayed early to control eye spot and these crops have low levels of disease.
• Canola crops are at full flower stage and those that established well have average to above average yield potential. Some crops that were damaged by mice during establishment or emerged poorly during dry conditions, have below average yield potential.
• Mice numbers have reduced but there are still low levels present in paddocks which are causing some damage. Some farmers have applied a mixture of urea and mouse bait by air to control them.
• Russian wheat aphid is present but at levels below thresholds for spraying. Crops generally have higher numbers where insecticidal seed treatments were not applied at seeding but aphid numbers are still low due to rain washing them from the plant and predation.

PASTURES

• Pasture growth has been very slow and there is a shortage of pasture feed for livestock. Growth should increase as temperatures begin to increase.
• Most farmers still have high amounts of hay on-farm.
• Demand for hay has fallen rapidly, due to rain increasing the potential for pasture feed.
Yorke Peninsula

WEATHER

- Rainfall for July was below average in the north, very much below average on Central Yorke Peninsula and above to very much above further south. August rainfall was average to above average in Northern and Central Yorke Peninsula and very much above average on Southern Yorke Peninsula.
- An area around Kadina has recorded very much below average growing season rainfall.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July, average for August. Mean minimum temperatures have been average to above average for July and average to below average for August with a high number of frosts in late August.

CROPS

- Some farmers completed their sowing programme in July while others re-sowed some paddocks. A number of paddocks were not sown in the Curramulka area and left for pasture.
- On Northern and Southern Yorke Peninsula cereals are at full head emergence with some flowering, while in Central Yorke Peninsula there is variation in crop growth stages from mid-tillering to grain filling due to staggered germination.
- Lentils on Northern and Southern Yorke Peninsula are flowering with farmers applying fungicides prior to canopy closure. Some areas within crops have become waterlogged and either died or have reduced yield potential. Canola on Southern Yorke Peninsula is in full flower.
- The average to above average rainfall received in August has made up some of the yield potential lost from the dry start and crops will rely heavily on subsoil moisture from summer rains to finish.
- Yield potential is highly variable, ranging from above average in areas around Port Broughton and Edithburgh to 50% of average between Curramulka and Minlaton. Overall it is slightly below average.
- Weed control has been very difficult and was later than ideal because of dry conditions in June. Rain in July and August triggered another germination of weeds in most areas.
- Russian wheat aphids have caused damage in crops not treated with an insecticide seed treatment. Seed treatment provided excellent control despite the favourable weather for aphids in winter. They are present in grasses on roadsides and volunteer cereals in pastures.
- Septoria tritici is widespread in wheat crops, particularly in intensive wheat rotation, with leaf rust and powdery mildew also present. Some barley crops have leaf rust and spot form of net blotch which has developed resistance to some fungicides.
- Ascochyta, grey mould and sclerotinia have already been observed in lentils, while chickpea crops are about to have their second fungicide application to keep ascochyta under control.
- There has been widespread baiting of mice in Northern and Southern Yorke Peninsula and in Central Yorke Peninsula where mice have damaged flowering canola crops. Repeat baiting of cereals has been required in some areas. Farmers who baited heavily at sowing are unlikely to need to bait again.
- Snails have hatched in high numbers on Southern Yorke Peninsula but are too small to bait yet.

PASTURES

- The late break to the season has resulted in poor pasture germination and growth.
- Some farmers have purchased more sheep due to good livestock returns but this has led to overgrazing.
- Stock condition is average to good, due to supplementary feeding but most on-farm supplies of grain have now been depleted. Stock numbers will be reduced during spring to conserve feed supplies.
- Hay crops are delayed and hay yields are likely to be below average.
Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula & Kangaroo Island

WEATHER

• July rainfall was average to below average on Kangaroo Island and above to very much above average in Central Hills / Fleurieu Peninsula. Rainfall for August was average to above average on Kangaroo Island and above to very much above average in Central Hills / Fleurieu Peninsula.

• Mean maximum temperatures for July were very much above average and average for August. Mean minimum temperatures were average to above average for July and average for August.

CROPS

Central Hills/Fleurieu

• Growth stages of cereal crops varying from mid-tillering to booting. Yield potential of early-sown crops is close to average but below average for later-sown crops.

• No significant pest and disease problems have been reported.

• Some crops have been affected by waterlogging, reducing yield potential.

• Weed levels in dry-sown crops have been problematic because of variable crop growth.

• Some Russian wheat aphids have been reported and sprayed but are not wide spread.

• Lower rates of nitrogen fertiliser have been applied with most applications later than normal.

Kangaroo Island

• A small area (less than 5% of the total crop area) of cereals was sown in July, mostly for feed use on farm.

• Most farmers were able to sow all of their planned crop area, with only a few paddocks not sown and left as pasture feed (less than 5% of total crop area).

• Crop growth stages and yield potential is highly variable with early-sown crops at flag leaf to head emergence, while later-sown crops are just starting to tiller.

• Early-sown crops have average yield potential but later-sown crops are likely to yield below average.

• Below average winter rainfall has aided pesticide application as farmers have been able to access crop paddocks. There has been poor weed control with some post sowing pre-emergent herbicides due to a lack of rain to incorporate the herbicides.

• There has been some minor mice damage to crops but numbers fell in August.

• Isolated occurrences of Russian wheat aphid have been sprayed as required.

• Nitrogen fertiliser has been applied with higher levels than normal in some areas, due to high leaching losses last year.

PASTURES

• Pasture growth and feed levels are below average for this time of year due to the later break to the season and cold weather.

• Supplementary feeding is still continuing, which is very uncommon for this time of year.

• Livestock condition is variable depending on the amount of supplementary feeding and pasture feed available.

• Red legged earth mite and lucerne flea continue to cause minor damage to pastures.

• Lack of winter run off into dams is a concern as most grazers, particularly on Kangaroo Island, where they rely on dam water for livestock.
Lower Murray

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average during July, and above average in August across most of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August.
- Mean minimum temperatures were above average for July and average for August, with numerous frosts in mid to late August.

CROPS

- Crop growth and yield potential varies widely across the district.
- Crop yield potentials range from below average to above average therefore an overall average grain harvest is expected at this stage of the season.
- Soil moisture is variable but generally good at depth.
- Cereal crops are mostly at booting to early head emergence growth stage and pulse crops are flowering.
- Canola is flowering with some early crops beginning to pod.
- Numerous frosts were experienced in mid to late August across the district and pulse crops are showing symptoms of damage in some areas. The severity and extent is yet to be determined.
- Russian wheat aphids have been found and follow up crop treatment is taking place where needed.
- Cowpea aphids have also been controlled in vetch crops.
- There have been some reports of cabbage aphids in canola crops but numbers are below threshold levels for treatment at this stage and more monitoring will take place in the coming weeks.
- Mice damage appears to be localised. Some aerial baiting of crops has occurred.
- Nitrogen fertiliser has been applied to cereal and canola crops.
- Leaf diseases are at low levels in most crops with preventative fungicides being applied to susceptible crops across the district.

PASTURES

- Livestock are in very good condition and there is good pasture growth despite the cold conditions.
- Late grass-selective herbicide and early spray-topping applications are taking place in pasture paddocks.
Northern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average for July and average to above average for August.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August.
- Mean minimum temperatures were average for July and average to below average for August, with several severe frosts throughout the district.

CROPS

- Most crops that were sown early on good opening rains have grown well with above average yield potential.
- Later-sown crops, particularly on shallow stone or deep sands, have been slow to establish and suffered some moisture stress in June and July.
- The development of cereal crops ranges from stem elongation through to head emergence.
- There is some frost damage evident in low-lying areas of early-sown crops but the extent of this damage is still unclear.
- Some areas of the district, including the area around Loxton, have well above average yield potential.
- Farmers have applied additional nitrogen fertiliser to crops.
- There are still good levels of subsoil moisture in most areas of the district going into spring.
- Earlier in the season Russian wheat aphid was mainly found on crops that had not been treated with an insecticidal seed dressing.
- By mid to late August Russian wheat aphids had built up in most crops, with many farmers spraying crops to protect them from further damage.
- Pulse and canola crops have grown well with low disease levels and above average yield potential.
- Mice numbers have remained low with no reports of serious crop damage.

PASTURES

- Pasture feed supplies have generally been adequate, despite the slow growth due to the cold winter and later break to the season in some areas.
- There has been adequate pasture growth for livestock with little supplementary feeding of hay and grain required.
- Pasture growth should increase as temperatures rise through spring.
Southern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average to above average for July and average for August.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August.
- Mean minimum temperatures were average for July and August, with several frosts in late August.

CROPS

- Crops throughout the district have grown well with the majority having above average yield potential.
- Dry conditions in June delayed nitrogen applications to crops. Farmers have now applied nitrogen fertiliser following average to above average rainfall in July and August.
- Higher levels than normal of nitrogen fertiliser have been applied to some crops to allow for nitrogen tied-up in high amounts of stubble and high removal of nitrogen in last year’s crops.
- Pulse and canola crops are flowering and most cereal crops are at booting to head emergence growth stages.
- The frosts in late August are likely to have caused crop damage, particularly to early-sown crops however it is too early to determine the extent of damage.
- There are reports of mice damaging crops and some farmers have baited to reduce crop damage. Mice numbers and crop damage has been minimal where stubbles were grazed over summer.
- There are only low levels of disease in most crops with most farmers applying preventative fungicide applications before diseases become established.
- Snails are present in crops and some baiting is occurring to limit grain contamination and harvest machinery blockages.
- Russian wheat aphid is present across the district and some crops are being treated with insecticides but most are just being monitored as high levels of predators are keeping numbers low.

PASTURES

- Livestock are in excellent condition with good pasture feed still available in paddocks.
- Most farmers have ample feed for livestock at this stage. Cereal crops sown for feed are growing well.
- Some farmers will begin spray-topping pastures to reduce seed set of annual grasses in early September.
Upper South East

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average to above average during July and August.
- Mean maximum temperatures were above average to very much above average for July and average for August.
- Mean minimum temperatures were average for July and August.

CROPS

- Crop growth and development is excellent, due to high rainfall and cool conditions.
- Canola crops have commenced flowering and flag leaves are emerging in cereal crops.
- Bean crops have started flowering.
- Hay cutting is likely to commence in mid to late September if weather conditions are suitable.
- Waterlogging has caused isolated damage to crops.
- There are high levels of subsoil moisture throughout the district, as a result of heavy July and August rain, coupled with low evaporation rates.
- Fertiliser applications on crops have been compromised in some areas by the wet soil conditions. Aerial applications of fertiliser and fungicides (for chocolate spot in beans) have been widespread.
- In-crop grass weed control in legumes was given priority so some broadleaf control in cereals has not occurred, due to high soil moisture and reduced trafficability. Herbicide applications will resume once soils are dry enough.
- Mice numbers have dropped during cold weather in July and August.
- Russian wheat aphid has been detected throughout the district on cereal crops that were not seed treated with an insecticide. Numbers are not at a level to compromise yields or warrant treatment at this stage.
- Other cereal aphids have been detected and levels are being monitored.

PASTURES

- Pasture growth is dense throughout the district and feed supplies are plentiful despite slow winter growth.
- Livestock are in excellent condition and numbers have remained high in the district owing to high prices and abundant feed.
- High levels of pasture renovation have been undertaken with earlier-sown pastures performing better than later-sown paddocks.
- Red legged earth mite and Lucerne flea numbers have reduced but will be closely monitored as the weather warms, to minimise pasture damage.
Lower South East

WEATHER

• Rainfall was average to above average for July and August.
• April to date rainfall is very much above the long-term average.
• Mean maximum temperatures were above average for July and average for August.
• Mean minimum temperatures were average for July and average to below average for August, with numerous frosts.

CROPS

• Cereal crops have grown slowly during the cold, wet weather, with most at stem elongation stage of growth.
• Canola crops are between budding to just commencing flowering.
• Faba beans are just beginning to flower and their development has been very slow, particularly in places around Millicent. Many crops have shown signs of trace element deficiency which is common this time of the year in high soil moisture/waterlogged conditions.
• Septoria tritic blotch has been observed in wheat.
• Sowing was delayed in the south of the region due to problems sourcing seed and high soil moisture, and these crops have been slow to develop during the cold, wet conditions. The weed numbers in these late-sown crops are higher than earlier-sown crops.
• Sowing of spring barley and other crops such as chickpeas and safflower will commence in mid-September.
• Hay cutting will probably commence by the end of September.
• Sub-soils are saturated and waterlogging is widespread on the plains.
• In-crop fertiliser is being applied but wet soils are hindering spreading and the opportunity for applying nitrogen is narrowing.
• Russian wheat aphid is present and being monitored.
• Mice numbers have reduced and are no longer causing damage.
• Conical snails are present in cereal crops around Millicent with farmers monitoring and baiting to prevent harvest contamination.

PASTURES

• Pasture feed is abundant across the district.
• Pasture renovation has been widespread. Pasture establishment was excellent, but growth has been slowed by low soil temperatures and cold conditions, coupled with wet or waterlogged soils.
• Summer grazing fodder crops such as millet, fodder turnip and red clover, have been planted.
• Winter-grazed cereals have provided high amounts of feed while perennial pastures have been slow to grow.
• Winter lambing is complete and lambs and ewes are in good condition.
• Red legged earth mite populations persist but are not being treated at this stage owing to the abundance of feed.
• Lucerne flea populations continue to be monitored.