Crop and Pasture Report South Australia

Crop Seeding Intentions 2020–21

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Crop and Pasture Report South Australia

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State Summary

Weather

- Across the agricultural area, March rainfall varied from above average in the Far West Coast to very much below average in parts of the Lower North and Kangaroo Island.
- April rainfall was average to very much above average across the majority of the agricultural area.
- In the Pastoral Zone, March rainfall was generally average to above average with only small pockets of below average rainfall. An area in the far north east received very much above average rainfall for March.
- April rainfall was generally average to very much above average across the Pastoral Zone. A large area, including Coober Pedy, Oodnadatta and Moomba received very much above average rainfall with an area north of Lake Eyre receiving the highest April rainfall on record.
- Mean maximum temperatures in March were average across the agricultural area and above average in parts of the northern Pastoral Zones.
- Maximum temperatures for April were very much below average on the Fleurieu and coastal areas of the South East, average in the south-west of Eyre Peninsula and below average in most of the remaining agricultural areas.
- Maximum temperatures for April in the Pastoral Zone were generally average in the Far North and Far West and below average in the remainder of the area.

Crops

- Soil moisture increased rapidly in all parts of the agricultural area during April, with most areas having good soil moisture to 30 cm or more.
- In most agricultural districts, some farmers began dry sowing in early to mid-April with pasture feed, followed by some long season wheat, beans and canola.
- There was significantly less dry sowing this season than in previous years, due to better stored soil moisture levels.
- Many early sown pastures and crops were sown into semi-dry soil and partially germinated before the rains later in April. Most plants emerged very quickly following late April rains.
- Following the rain in the third week of April, farmers sowed canola, oaten hay, beans and some wheat.
- In some parts of the Mid North, high rainfall in the last week of April made conditions too wet for operations and seeding was halted for several days or more.
- The widespread, timely rains have given farmers confidence in the season.
- The area sown to canola and pulses is likely to remain as planned or even increase, particularly in the lower rainfall districts.
- There has been a strong germination of weeds in all districts, which has enabled farmers to achieve good weed control with knockdown herbicides before sowing.
- The area of lentils is likely to increase, due to prices increases over the last few months.
- The area sown to domestic and export hay has increased in a number of districts but been reduced in others.
- There have been some changes to the planned crop variety in paddocks, particularly where high wind damage at harvest or herbicide residues had been a concern. The above average April rainfall will have been sufficient in many districts to breakdown herbicide residues.
There have been reports of high numbers of cutworm and pasture webworm in several districts, with farmers spraying to control numbers before seeding.

Snails have been active in a number of districts during April, and farmers have baited to reduce numbers before they commence laying eggs.

There have been pockets of higher than normal mice numbers in a number of districts and farmers have baited some paddocks before sowing.

Reports of shortages of fertiliser and other inputs across the State early in seeding due to the impact of Covid-19 and the increased cropping programs in NSW following good opening rains.

As seeding progressed though, most farmers sourced sufficient fertiliser for their intended cropping program, although there were delays in delivery and product choice was limited.

Some herbicides and insecticides are in short supply and difficult to source if they were not pre-ordered.

Pastures

- Pastures sown dry or semi-dry in early to mid-April have germinated and are actively growing. In some districts, there was sufficient growth for grazing by mid-May.
- Regenerating pastures have germinated, with rapid early growth and high legume content in most districts. Growth has slowed with cooler weather.
- Across the agricultural districts, most livestock are in good condition. Producers in most districts are continuing to supplementary feedstock but this is reducing as pastures become available.
- Producers in most districts are reporting average to above average lambing percentages.
- Many livestock producers are planning to increase livestock numbers, following several years of poor pasture production.

Pastoral Zone

- In many areas, annuals that germinated following rainfall in February died-off before follow-up rain was received.
- Vastly different pasture germination and growth across the Pastoral Zone reflects the highly variable rainfall events during March and April.
- Areas which received good February rains and good follow up rains in April have good growth of annuals and regrowth of perennials, while other areas have only experienced new pasture growth in flood out areas.
- The area that has now received several sizeable rainfall events and has sufficient pasture growth for the next 12 months or more has increased since early March.
- Further follow-up rain will be required in many areas to provide sufficient pasture growth to enable producers to fully re-stock.
- In some areas, high rainfall intensity resulted in significant run-off with many dams being either partially or totally filled.
- Livestock numbers have been significantly reduced and although some pastoralists have begun restocking, most will wait for further rain.
- The high cost and limited availability of replacement ewes will make restocking difficult and most will do a combination of buying and breeding replacement ewes.
- Kangaroo and goat numbers have been reduced by the prolonged drought but are still at levels which could quickly consume new pasture growth.
Key links to other information

Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources - Soil and Land Condition monitoring

Bureau of Meteorology - Weather and rainfall observations

Notes on the 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 dry-land 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.
District Reports

Western Eyre Peninsula

Weather
- March rainfall was above average in the Far West and average in the remainder of the district.
- April rainfall was average west of Ceduna and above average in the rest of the district.
- Despite several hot days above 30°C, mean maximum temperatures were average to below average for March and average for April.

Crops
- Some vetch and oats were dry sown for feed around April 10, with small areas of cereals dry sown around Ceduna.
- Good opening rains in the third week of April enabled most farmers to begin sowing their winter crop program at the end of April.
- Adequate soil moisture and mild conditions have been ideal for seeding and plant germination provided farmers with the opportunity for good early weed control from knockdown and pre-emergent herbicide applications.
- Soil nitrogen levels are slightly higher than 2019, due to higher mineralisation.
- Average to above average rainfall in March and April and the forecast for above average autumn and winter rainfall has given farmers confidence in the season and most intend to sow all their planned cropping program.
- Early indications of crop areas will be similar to the long-term average with a small decrease in the area sown to peas, due to high frost damage in recent seasons. There is expected to be an increase in the area sown to wheat given good opening rainfall and forecast seasonal conditions, with a reduction in the area sown to barley.
- Low snail numbers in recent seasons has reduced the requirement for stubble burning or mechanical control with farmers looking to strategically bait some paddocks at seeding.
- Isolated pockets of increased mice activity have been reported in some districts with farmers looking to bait earlier sown canola paddocks.
- High levels of insect pests including cut worm and pasture webworm have been reported in volunteer crops and pastures with many farmers needing to spray to control these ahead of seeding.

Pastures
- There was a rapid germination of summer weeds and volunteer crops and pastures following February and March rainfall, resulting in improved surface cover levels across the district. This provided good livestock feed and allowed many producers to finish lambs before spraying weeds in preparation for seeding.
- High levels of caltrop, heliotrope and capeweed have been reported in some paddocks, requiring producers to apply herbicides. This has slowed the growth of medics.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.
- Many farmers are still supplementary feeding livestock to give pastures a chance to grow adequate bulk. Most growers have sufficient hay and grain on hand to continue to supplementary feed to the end of June if required.
- Hay supply in the region is still generally good and the area sown to hay is expected to be similar to normal.
Lower Eyre Peninsula

Weather
- Rainfall for March was average to below average.
- April rainfall was above average to very much above average.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and April.

Crops
- Farmers continued to apply gypsum and lime to paddocks during March.
- Some feed paddocks of vetch and oats, as well as canola, beans and long season wheat varieties, were sown dry in mid-April.
- Most growers began seeding their winter cropping program in the week of April 25 and were well over halfway through by the end April.
- Ideal conditions for seeding and plant germination have provided an opportunity for good early weed control using knockdown and pre-emergent herbicides.
- Most soils have good surface soil moisture for seeding and some stored soil moisture.
- Recent widespread rainfall and good seasonal forecasts have increased farmer confidence with most intending to sow their entire cropping program.
- Crop areas are not expected to differ significantly from long term averages.
- There have been small changes to intended crop varieties in paddocks where wind damage at harvest has resulted in the potential for volunteer cereals to become an issue for disease and grain quality in cereal crops.
- There have been isolated reports of cutworm and pasture webworm in paddocks with some farmers needing to spray to minimise damage to emerging crops.
- Snail and mice numbers are generally low, and farmers will only strategically bait a few earlier sown vulnerable crops.

Pastures
- Pastures have germinated well and are growing rapidly.
- Some producers are still supplementary feeding livestock, either in stubbles or in containment areas, to allow pastures to grow adequate bulk before grazing.
- Livestock are generally in good condition and most producers have adequate hay and grain on farm to continue to feed stock until the end of June if required.
- While many producers intend to cut a paddock or two for hay to replenish on-farm stockpiles, the area of hay is expected to be similar to normal.
Eastern Eyre Peninsula

Weather
- March rainfall was generally average, with the area around Kimba and Waddikee experiencing above average rainfall.
- Rainfall for April was generally above average, with the area from Kimba to Rudall experiencing average rainfall.
- Despite several hot days above 30°C, mean maximum temperatures were average to below average for March and average for April.

Crops
- Rainfall in February and March resulted in a germination of summer weeds and volunteer crops with most farmers spraying at least once to achieve adequate control.
- Some feed paddocks were sown with vetch and oats following rainfall in late March as well as some early paddocks of lupins.
- Most farmers waited until good opening rains were received in late April before beginning to sow the majority of their winter cropping program.
- Farmers with non-wetting sands will leave these paddocks until the end of their sowing program to ensure a damp seedbed and good weed control to achieve the best possible crop establishment.
- Ideal conditions for seeding and plant germination have provided an opportunity for good early weed control using knockdown and pre-emergent herbicides.
- Areas around Cowell and Arno Bay received up to 40 mm of rainfall in the last week of April which should enable growers to sow and establish crops on paddocks which have had poor cover in recent dry seasons.
- Rainfall in late April has resulted in good surface soil moisture for seeding.
- Soil profiles in districts which received February and March rains have good subsoil moisture.
- Farmer confidence has increased with most intending to sow their entire cropping program.
- There are indications of a slight reduction in the area sown to canola and peas, due to their higher input cost and risk, with a corresponding increase in the area sown to cereals.
- Early pest levels have been low with no reports of significant numbers of insect pests, mice or snails.

Pastures
- Pastures have germinated well and are growing rapidly.
- Many livestock producers have increased the area sown to barley that can be either grazed, cut for hay to replenish on farm supplies, or harvested for grain depending on how the season progresses.
- Many producers are still supplementary feeding livestock to allow pastures to grow adequate bulk before grazing.
- Livestock are generally in good condition and most producers have adequate hay and grain on farm to continue to feed stock until the end of June if required.
- Despite good opening rainfall there has been little runoff into dams in the Cleve Hills, with many producers continuing to cart water for livestock.
Upper North

Weather
- Rainfall for March was average to below average.
- April rainfall was above average in the northern part of the district and very much above average in the rest of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and April.

Crops
- Stored soil moisture levels have increased across the district with moderate to high levels in areas of the district.
- Some farmers commenced dry sowing in mid-April with sown pasture, canola and oaten hay. Farmers with large cropping programs continued sowing but most waited for rain in the third week of April before starting to sow the majority of their crop area.
- Following rain, many farmers began seeding with most of the canola and oaten hay and longer season wheat varieties and beans.
- The wet conditions in late April delayed seeding for most producers, particularly on the heavier soil types, but seeding was set to recommence again in early May.
- With the widespread rain across the district, most farmers will sow their planned crop area so the total crop area will be higher than last year.
- There have been shortages of fertiliser and some chemicals, but farmers who pre-ordered been able to get sufficient supplies to meet their requirements or have used alternative products for seeding. Some herbicides have not been available due to the increased demand from NSW following good rains in many cropping areas.
- Many lower rainfall farmers are growing less canola and pulse crops because of their higher risk and higher input costs, replacing these crops with vetch for grazing.
- Most farmers have increased the area sown to cereals, particularly wheat due to the ideal start, but a slightly reduced area of barley from last season, returning to the longer-term average.
- Farmer confidence for cropping the lower rainfall areas of the district has increased due to the moderate to high levels of stored soil moisture and early opening rains.
- The area of lentils and beans is likely to remain similar to last year, while export oaten hay area will remain high.
- The area sown to durum has continued to decline, due to poor performance and reduced export market opportunities in recent years.
- Insect pests are at relatively low levels, but emerging crops will need to be monitored for mites and Lucerne flea to avoid damage.

Pastures
- Pastures sown dry in mid-April have germinated but growth has slowed as temperatures have fallen in late April. The area sown to vetch has increased, replacing other break crops.
- There has been a rapid germination of regenerating annual pastures.
- Lucerne pastures have continued to grow with rainfall during April, providing high amounts of excellent quality feed.
- Most producers are supplementary feeding livestock in stubble paddocks and allowing pastures to get established before grazing.
- Most livestock are in good condition and ewes have started lambing with reports of average to above average lambing percentages.
Mid North

Weather
- Rainfall for March was below average in the south and average in the rest of the district.
- April rainfall was above average to very much above average across the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and April.

Crops
- At the end of April there were good levels of soil moisture down to 50 cm across the district.
- Farmers commenced sowing pasture feed into dry or moist soil in mid-April. Some farmers with large cropping programs also commenced sowing canola and long season wheat varieties in mid-April.
- Pasture and crops sown into damp soil in mid-April emerged quickly following rain at the end of April.
- Some farmers were able to sow beans, oaten hay and some wheat before the end of April.
- Late in April, seeding was delayed several days with the wet conditions on heavy soils.
- There has been an increase in the area sown to lentils and a corresponding reduction in the area of barley, due to the current higher lentil price.
- The area of both domestic and export hay has increased.
- There will be a slight decrease in the area sown to durum wheat, due to higher risk compared to bread wheat.
- The area of pulse and canola crops is likely to remain relatively stable, given the timely start to the season.
- Mice numbers higher than normal in parts of the district. Some farmers have baited paddocks before sowing.
- Snails have been active and most farmers have baited to reduce numbers before egg laying commenced. Paddocks with known slug infestations will be baited immediately after seeding.
- Insect pests are at relatively low levels. Farmers will need to monitor crops to avoid damage.
- Marshmallow has been widespread, with plants well established and difficult to control.
- The above-average April rainfall and warm soils will have broken down herbicide residues from last season, enabling farmers to sow non Clearfield® varieties and other sensitive crops.
- Most farmers have been able to source sufficient fertiliser for their seeding requirements; however some herbicides and insecticides are in short supply and difficult to source if not pre-ordered, which remains a risk for post emergent treatments.

Pastures
- There has been an excellent germination of annual pastures across the district. Some pastures germinated after the rain in late March and early April and established well.
- Sown pastures have germinated and are growing rapidly with early sown cereals grazed from mid-May.
- Supplementary feeding is continuing but this is slowly being reduced as pastures become available for grazing.
- Livestock are in good condition with some producers concerned that ewes may be in above optimal condition for lambing, which could result in lambing difficulties for later lambing ewes.
- Most producers are reporting average lambing percentages and generally much better than last year.
Lower North

Weather

- March rainfall was below average to very much below average.
- Rainfall for April was above average to very much above average.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and April.

Crops

- Stored soil moisture has increased across the district with high levels of moisture to 40 cm in most areas.
- A few farmers began dry sowing in the western part of the district in mid-April.
- Following the early rain in the third week of April, most farmers waited for a germination of weeds before starting seeding activities. Further rain in the last week of April resulted in the heavy soils becoming very wet, delaying seeding.
- On the lighter soil around Mallala farmers sowed longer season wheat varieties.
- Sowing of canola and oat hay will commence in early May as soils dry out. Wheat, lentils, beans and barley will be sown later.
- There will be an increase in the area sown to canola and with good soil moisture levels farmers will now sow all their planned area of lentils and beans.
- The area sown to hay crops is likely to be reduced as many producers still have unsold stocks on hand from last year.
- The area sown to wheat and barley is likely to remain similar to last year.
- Most farmers have managed to source sufficient supplies of fertiliser and herbicides for their sowing programs. There has been a shortage of particular products and many farmers have needed to use alternative products, but this has not yet caused any delays to seeding.
- If shipping delays due to COVID-19 continue, this could start impacting on the supply of some products.
- At this stage both mice and snail numbers remain low.
- Lucerne flea and mite numbers are relatively low with most producers applying insecticides to sensitive crops such as legume pastures and canola.

Pastures

- There has been an excellent germination of pastures across the district.
- Some supplementary feeding of livestock is continuing but this is reducing as regenerating pastures become established.
- Early sown pastures have emerged, but growth has slowed.
- Livestock are generally in good condition.
Yorke Peninsula

Weather
- Rainfall for March was below average across the district.
- April rainfall was above to very much above average across the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and below average for April.

Crops
- The above average April rainfall has resulted in the germination of a large number of weeds, providing the opportunity to achieve good weed control before sowing and improved stored soil moisture levels.
  - Farmers with large cropping programs commenced sowing of oaten hay, canola, beans and some long season wheat in mid-April. Farmers with smaller cropping programs waited until early May to commence seeding.
- Very few crops were sown dry due to moist soil conditions throughout April and early sown canola crops have emerged with excellent establishment.
- The increase in the price of lentils has resulted in a 5-10% increase in the area sown to lentils with a corresponding reduction in the area of barley. The area sown to oaten hay has increased by approximately 5%.
- There has been increased mice activity with high levels of baiting occurring on Northern Yorke Peninsula. Farmers are baiting 2 to 3 nights before seeding and baiting again immediately after seeding in paddocks with moderate to high mice populations.
- Snails have been active since early April and the moist conditions have enabled farmers to bait adult snails before egg laying to reduce the build-up of numbers in spring.
- Lucerne flea have hatched in large numbers and most farmers have treated before sowing.
- Red legged earth mite and bryobia mite have been observed on medic and volunteer lentil plants, however very few farmers have sprayed to control these as insecticidal seed dressing will prevent significant damage to emerging crops.
  - There are shortages of a range of knockdown and pre-emergent herbicides, however most farmers have been able to source alternative products. There is already a limited supply of some post-emergent herbicide products, which could have an impact on timely and effective weed control.
  - There have been some delays in the availability of fertiliser products, but most farmers have now been able to source enough for seeding requirements and have ordered and taken delivery of post-sowing nitrogen.

Pastures
- Many livestock producers either sowed pastures dry in late March or following rain in early April and these pastures have germinated, with oats and barley now at the 3-4 leaf stage.
  - Most farmers are allowing pastures to get well established before grazing. Stock are currently grazing weeds and volunteers in other paddocks. Most are still being supplementary fed with grain and hay.
- Livestock are in average to above average condition.
- Most producers are reporting above average lambing percentages with a large number of multiple births.
- Livestock numbers have increased slightly with current stock managers increasing the area of pasture.
Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu & Kangaroo Island

Weather
- March rainfall was very much below average for most of Kangaroo Island and below average in the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu.
- April rainfall was average on the north western part of Kangaroo Island and above average to very much above average in the remainder of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and below average for April.

Crops
Central Hills/Fleurieu Peninsula
- Sufficient rainfall was received during April to allow crop and pasture establishment across the district and stored soil moisture is still low to moderate.
- There will be a slight increase in area sown to barley, due to the lower input costs and being a lower risk crop to grow than canola and lentils. There will be a significant increase in the area sown for hay production to replenish depleted on-farm reserves.
- There has been a limited area of dry sowing undertaken with most farmers starting sowing crops in the last week of April.
- There are limited supplies of some herbicides, especially knockdown products, which may delay some farmers from sowing crops for a week or more.
- Farmers are very confident about grain markets and the season, but financial resources are limited and may reduce the level of some inputs.

Kangaroo Island
- Sufficient rainfall has fallen in April for crop and pasture establishment in most locations
- Stored soil moisture was low but has improved with rainfall in late April.
- There will be an increase in the area sown to canola and cereals in the fire scar area, due to lower stock numbers.
- There was only limited dry sowing with most farmers waiting for rain in late April before commencing seeding. The majority of crops will be sown into moist soil.
- Shortages of fertiliser and herbicides have delayed seeding. This was exacerbated with freight delays to KI due to the fire.

Pastures
Central Hills/Fleurieu Peninsula
- Pasture and stubble feed levels are very low. Livestock are being supplementary fed with most stock in below average condition.
- The area sown to hay will increase, due to low stock numbers and the high cost of restocking.
- Ewes are being supplementary fed hay and grain to maintain condition until there is sufficient green pasture feed available.

Kangaroo Island
- There is limited feed with pastures only germinating in late April.
- Pasture germination in the fire scar area has been patchy with a reasonable amount of clover, low levels of grass and high amounts of cape weed. The impact of the fire on pasture production will not be fully known for several months.
- Livestock are being supplementary fed with hay and grain, and most are in good condition.
- Ewes have high levels of pink eye in the fire scar area, due to smoke and dust contamination.
Lower Murray

Weather
- March rainfall was below average in the west and average in the east of the district.
- Rainfall for April was above average across the district, with some rain early in the month and good falls in the last week of the month.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and April.

Crops
- Late April rains have helped to replenish very dry soil moisture profiles, leading to average soil moisture conditions for the northern areas of the district and good soil moisture for the southern areas.
- Some dry sowing of pasture, oaten hay and some pulses started in early April, however most seeding operations will begin in early May following the late April rains.
- Some dry sown crops have germinated with high contamination with weeds.
- Farmer confidence has improved with some considering increasing the area sown to pulse crops.
- The area sown for hay is likely to decrease slightly and be replaced by pulse crops.
- There are still bare areas visible in a few paddocks on some farms but the rainfall in April will help to rapidly establish cover on these areas in the next few weeks.
- There has been little impact of herbicide or fertiliser shortages as retailers are managing to maintain adequate supply.

Pastures
- Ground cover in pasture paddocks is low but starting to slowly improve as pastures germinate following rain in April.
- Livestock are in good condition with supplementary feeding of hay and grain continuing.
- Early lambing has commenced with no reports of any major problems.
- Perennial pastures have reshot following April rain with some early growth.
- Irrigated river flats have been sown with a mix of winter pasture species.
Northern Murray Mallee

Weather
- March rainfall was average across the district.
- Rainfall for April was very much above average.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and below average for April.
- There were numerous days of strong winds with some raised dust in March and April.

Crops
- Opening season rainfall throughout the entire region is the best many producers have experienced for at least 20 years.
- Autumn rainfall has led to excellent weed germination allowing farmers to achieve good grass weed control before sowing cereal cropping.
- Many farmers commenced seeding in mid to late April, with some pulses, canola and pasture feed paddocks sown.
- The well above average April rainfall has increased subsoil moisture, significantly reducing the risk of crop production issues this season.
- Farmers are generally planning to sow their full cropping programs and timely sowing should enable them to make the most of this promising start to the season.
- Farmers are sowing canola, and pulses, including chickpeas, lentils, peas and lupins after a significant reduction in the area of these crops over the last two very dry seasons.
- Most farmers are reducing their fertiliser inputs in 2020 to cut costs, relying on residual fertiliser nutrition from the previous failed and poor crops. If the season continues well, they may need to increase post sowing nitrogen applications to achieve the higher yield potential.

Pastures
- There is a high amount of early pasture feed, due to early season rainfall and greatly reduced stock numbers following three years of drought.
- There has been a good regeneration of annual medic in pasture paddocks and some early sown cereal and vetch pastures have grown rapidly.
- Livestock are generally in good condition.
- Many farmers are planning to rebuild breeding stock numbers back to pre-drought levels.
Southern Murray Mallee

Weather
- Rainfall for March was average to below average.
- April rainfall was above average to very much above average with many areas receiving double their average rainfall.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and April.

Crops
- Some summer spraying continued into March following late January and early February rains.
- Farmers deep ripped sands in March and April to break up compacted soils.
- There are high levels of subsoil moisture across the district.
- Many farmers started dry seeding sheep feed and oaten hay in mid-April.
- There is now likely to be an increase in the area sown to canola and other pulse crops as the excellent soil moisture levels has decreased the risk of growing these crops.
- Stubble cover is good across most areas and, with moist soil, the conditions for sowing are excellent with even emergence expected.
- There has been little impact of herbicide or fertiliser shortages as retailers are managing to maintain supply at this stage.
- There is high farmer confidence in the season ahead, due to high levels of stored soil moisture and timely opening rains.

Pastures
- Pastures have germinated and are growing rapidly following April rainfall.
- Cereals sown for pasture are starting to emerge and will provide early feed in mid-May.
- Lucerne and veldt grass pastures have responded well to the rain with good early growth.
- The area sown to hay is likely to be reduced this year, down from the well above average area last year.
- Livestock are in very good condition.
- Lambing is well underway for most farmers, with early lambing percentages above 100%.
Upper South East

Weather
- March rainfall was generally below average.
- Rainfall in April varied from average in the south to very much above average north of Salt Creek.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for March and below average in April.

Crops
- Approximately 40-50% of beans and canola was sown by the end of April. Some producers are waiting for a germination of weeds prior to sowing.
- An estimated 20% of farmers are sowing long season wheat varieties in April. Short season wheat and barley will be sown in the third week of May to reduce frost risks and allow good weed control with less reliance on pre-emergent herbicides.
- More farmers are planning to graze sown cereals early and then harvest them for grain.
- Some fertiliser and chemicals are in limited supply. Farmers who pre-ordered have sufficient supplies to meet their needs, however late orders have not been filled, with delays of a week or more in delivery. The early break to the season drove demand earlier than normal.
- There is currently above average soil moisture with high levels of moisture well into the subsoil.
- Some farmers have changed sowing tactics this year, sowing heavy soil types first that are slow to germinate and have allowed weeds on lighter soils to germinate to ensure good weed control before sowing.
- Russian Wheat Aphid numbers have increased with the green bridge over summer and are likely to infest untreated emerging cereals.
- Mice, red-legged earth mite and lucerne flea numbers are low but are being monitored.
- Early rainfall has increased snail activity and baiting has commenced to ensure numbers are controlled before snails begin laying eggs.
- Pasture webworm have been reported in large numbers, predominately in weeds and forage brassicas. At the end of April, damage was not significant.
- Producer confidence is high because of good opening rains, forecasts for above average rainfall, several above average production seasons, and good commodity prices.

Pastures
- Germination and growth of volunteer cereals has provided good feed for livestock.
- There has been good germination and rapid growth of sown and regenerating pastures, but subclover growth is slow.
- Dry sown feed germinated on soil moisture before the opening rains occurred.
- There is sufficient pasture for sheep to graze but it will take another three to four weeks for there to be sufficient pasture growth for cattle.
- Producers have increased investment in sown pastures due to the high value of livestock.
- Supplementary feeding of livestock is continuing, particularly for cattle.
- Early lambs have been marked with reports of lambing percentages being down by 5-10% on average, due to the lack of quality feed. Most sheep flocks are in the middle of lambing.
- Most livestock are in good condition.
Lower South East

Weather
- Rainfall was generally below average for March and average to above average for April.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average in March and below average in April.

Crops
- Most canola crops were sown in late April, with long season wheat varieties to follow in early May and beans in mid-May.
- Stored soil moisture levels across the district are high.
- There has been a good germination of weeds and volunteer crops in stubble paddocks.
- Farmer confidence is high because of good early rains and high commodity prices, and most have increased their inputs to maximise production. There had been some apprehension by farmers with the onset of COVID-19 but this has reduced as SA infection rates have dropped.
- There have been some shortages of fertiliser and the price of urea has increased. Farmers who forward ordered were able to get adequate supplies to meet their needs.
- Some herbicides are unavailable, and farmers have had to use alternative products.
- Snail numbers have remained high because of the green bridge over summer and mild temperatures. Farmers are baiting paddocks, particularly canola and sown pastures.
- Field cricket and wingless grasshopper numbers are lower than normal.

Pastures
- Pastures have grown well with pasture availability above average for this time of the year.
- Pasture growth is beginning to slow as temperatures have fallen. Mild conditions will be required for good pasture growth to continue.
- Most producers are still supplementary feeding cattle, but this is slowly being reduced as pastures become available.
- Perennial pastures have continued to grow through summer with adequate summer rainfall.
- There has been an increased area of annual pastures sown, with many sown dry.
- The demand for hay has slowed with limited sales occurring.
- Livestock are in excellent condition throughout the district.
- Some lambing has commenced but the majority will not commence until late May.