

**PIRSA Crop and Pasture Summary**

**Issue 4 Spring Crop Performance – November 2018**

**Season Summary**

The first half of the season was dry with frequent frosts, slowing crop and pasture growth. Average to above average rains in August in most districts provided improved production prospects, but a dry, frosty September and October set production potential at the lowest since 2008–09. By the end of spring the northern and eastern Eyre Peninsula, parts of the northern Murray Mallee, Yorke Peninsula and the eastern Mid North finished with well below average crop production and poor pastures. Strong winds caused frequent soil erosion events in these districts. Many districts with reasonable production, lost production potential through frequent severe frosts during the dry September. However, despite the finish, crops in parts of the lower Eyre Peninsula, South East and Kangaroo Island districts have retained average to above average potential.

Harvest is now underway with some farmers already finished around Port Pirie. Viterra’s latest harvest update reports the receipt of more than 500,000 tonnes of grain, with weather permitting more than 200,000 tonnes a week now delivered from most regions.

**South Australian Rainfall Deciles 1 April to 31 October 2018 Season**

**South Australian Count of Frost Days, September 2018**

**Crop area and production for previous five seasons and the new crop**

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area sown (ha)</td>
<td>4,038,000</td>
<td>3,899,000</td>
<td>3,821,000</td>
<td>3,894,000</td>
<td>3,565,000</td>
<td>3,503,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production (t)</td>
<td>8,551,000</td>
<td>7,667,000</td>
<td>7,211,000</td>
<td>11,144,000</td>
<td>6,920,000</td>
<td>4,894,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Gate Value</td>
<td>$2.0 billion</td>
<td>$2.0 billion</td>
<td>$1.6 billion</td>
<td>$2.2 billion</td>
<td>$1.7 billion</td>
<td>$1.7 billion</td>
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Next update for release January 2019 – Early Crop Harvest

Information accurate as at 6 November 2018.
The season so far...

RAIN – Below average rainfall and above average maximum temperatures across the state during early winter with average to above average rain and near average temperatures in August followed by dry, frosty September and October.

SUBSOIL MOISTURE – Soils in all districts except parts of the South East and Kangaroo Island have low moisture.

CROP MIX – As expected, area sown to barley increased in most districts by an estimated 15%, mostly replacing area sown to pulses including lentils. Wheat area increased on last season to near average wheat crop size. Around 10% of cereal grain crop cut for hay instead for grain production due to the frost damage.

CROP GROWTH – Dry conditions across the State in September, combined with multiple severe frosts damaged crops during flowering and grain fill. Many damaged crops were cut for hay. Harvest has commenced in most districts with a number of farmers around Port Pirie already finished. Harvest is progressing on the Eyre Peninsula, with crops producing more grain than expected. Mallee area harvest is now underway.

LIVESTOCK CONDITION AND FEED – Across all districts, paddock feed levels are extremely low. High levels of livestock supplementary feeding. Many farmers have sown an increased area of pasture feed and hay.

Outlook for the year

RAINFALL OUTLOOK – Bureau of Meteorology season update is for hotter than normal conditions during early summer, but rainfall outlook returning to average in early summer, which may result in normal number of rain interruptions to harvest.

Challenges and opportunities

PESTS AND DISEASES – Snail numbers and activity across most of the state is less due to the dry unfavourable conditions for breeding. Reports of foliar diseases in most crops are minimal across the state, but reports of root disease in moisture stressed pulses is higher than normal.

ADVERSE EVENTS – Strong winds continue to cause soil erosion in paddocks on Eyre Peninsula and in the Murray Mallee with dry soil surface and no plant residue cover. Widespread and frequent spring frosts caused grain production losses or prompted decisions to cut for hay.

MARKET DRIVERS – Weather related grain supply issues globally are supporting above average pricing. Eastern state drought conditions are creating local demand for fodder and feed grains with traders positioning grain into domestic markets, likely reducing grain traded for export. Improved prospects for eastern state’s sorghum crop is easing local feed grain prices. Frost damaged cereal crops has resulted in significant areas cut for hay throughout the state.

REGIONAL ISSUES – Below average crop and pasture production and feed and fodder shortages for animals in some districts. Drought affected districts include eastern and western Eyre Peninsula, upper North, northern Yorke Peninsula, Murray Mallee, eastern Mid North region and North East Pastoral.

2018-19 Crop Estimates and comparison with 10-year average (tonnes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Jan 2019</th>
<th>Mar 2019</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>-38%</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>-38%</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>-38%</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>-38%</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
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Seeding Intentions | Seeding and crop establishment | Winter Crop Performance | SPRING CROP PERFORMANCE | Harvest | Final summary and estimates