Crop and Pasture Report
South Australia

2018-19 WINTER CROP PERFORMANCE

SEPTEMBER 2018
# Table of Contents

**State Summary**
- Page 4

**Crop Estimates**
- Page 7

**District Reports**
- Page 10
  - Western Eyre Peninsula
  - Lower Eyre Peninsula
  - Eastern Eyre Peninsula
  - Upper North
  - Mid North
  - Lower North
  - Yorke Peninsula
  - Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula & Kangaroo Island
  - Northern Murray Mallee
  - Southern Murray Mallee
  - Upper South East
  - Lower South East
  - Pastoral Areas
State Summary

WEATHER

• Growing season rainfall to date (1 April to 31 August) has been below to very much below average across most agricultural districts. An area in the Franklin Harbour Council (near Cowell) has received its lowest growing season rainfall on record.

• Areas on Lower Eyre Peninsula, the Far West Coast and South East have received average growing season rainfall. Only parts of the Lower South East have received above average growing season rainfall.

• July rainfall was below average to very much below average in most districts. Parts of the Southern Mallee and Upper South East received average rainfall and the Lower South East was average to above average.

• August rainfall was very much above average on Western and Lower Eyre Peninsula, Southern Yorke Peninsula, Western Kangaroo Island and the Mid South East. Parts of Eastern Eyre Peninsula, Upper and Mid North and Southern Mallee received below average rainfall. An area around Cummins on Lower Eyre Peninsula received the highest August rainfall on record.

• Mean maximum temperatures for July were average in the Lower South East, above average in the Upper South East and Kangaroo Island and very much above average in all other agricultural districts.

• Maximum temperatures for August were average in the South East and most of Eyre Peninsula and above average in all other agricultural districts.

• Minimum temperatures for July were average on Lower Eyre Peninsula, Upper North, Kangaroo Island and the Lower South East and above average in all other areas. August minimum temperatures were above average to very much above average in most agricultural areas.

• Frequent strong winds and several frosts in inland districts occurred during this period.

Pastoral Zone

• In the six months to the end of August, almost 50% of the North East Pastoral area has received very much below average rainfall with several areas receiving their lowest rainfall on record. Over 50% of the North Western Pastoral areas has received below average rainfall for this period with approximately 10 to 20% being very much below average.

• July rainfall across large areas of the North East Pastoral was below average to very much below average. Average to above average rainfall was recorded in most pastoral districts during August, with the southern part of the North West Pastoral area receiving very much above average rainfall.

CROPS

• Despite average to above average rainfall in most areas during August, crop yields in most districts will be below average and well below average in a number of districts. Only crops on Lower Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and the South East are likely to be average or above.

• Estimated total State crop production, although below average at 5.8 million tonnes (from an area of 3.7 million hectares), has not fallen to levels seen in previous drought years, due to the average to above average growing conditions in some districts.

• Soil moisture reserves are highly variable across the State with good levels on Lower Eyre Peninsula, Southern Yorke Peninsula and most of the South East, but low in the eastern part of Eastern Eyre Peninsula, northern part of the Upper North and most of the Murray Mallee.

• On sandy soils on Upper Eyre Peninsula and the Murray Mallee, strong winds caused soil erosion and sandblasting damage to crops and pastures, further reducing yield potential.
• Even with above average August rainfall across Western Eyre Peninsula the tops of sandy rises remain bare and subject to wind erosion, but non-dune areas of most paddocks now have adequate surface cover to protect against wind erosion. Significant areas of the Franklin Harbour district remain bare and at risk of wind erosion.

• Many farmers have tried re-sowing eroding sand dunes a number of times this season, with emerging crops being severely damaged by sandblasting during recurring strong wind events.

• Crop maturity and vigour is highly variable across the State with early sown cereal crops on Western Eyre Peninsula and coastal areas of the Upper North at grain fill, while later sown or emerged crops in a number of districts are at late tillering to stem elongation.

• Cereal crops in many districts suffered moisture stress during July, reducing tiller formation and hastening crop development. Many crops are thin, much shorter than normal and two to three weeks more advanced in their growth stage, with significantly reduced yield potential.

• Crops on Lower Eyre Peninsula, Southern Yorke Peninsula and most of the South East, did not suffer moisture stress and have grown well during this period with average to above average yield potential.

• Later sown crops on Western and Central Eyre Peninsula that had low yield potential in early August have benefited from the above average August rainfall and now show significantly improved yield potential.

• Crops on Lower Eyre Peninsula, Southern Yorke Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and the South East are at early flower and show average to above average yield potential. Crops in other areas of the State are at early to full flower and although many have low plant numbers per unit area the plants have branched well, and show 50 to 80% of average yield.

• Pulse crops are highly variable across the State. Where they have suffered moisture stress, growth has been slow, and crops are very short, showing reduced yield potential.

• Pulse crops on Lower Eyre Peninsula, Southern Yorke Peninsula and the South East have grown well and show average to above average yield potential.

• Foliar disease is generally low with worst affected crops confined to districts with the higher production potential.

• In many areas of the State, bean crops are short, flowering and setting pods close to the ground.

• Peas have tolerated the dry conditions better than other pulse crops and are growing well with lower disease levels. Early sown crops are beginning to flower.

• Cereal crops with high grass levels will be cut for hay in areas where they have sufficient growth. Despite high hay prices, there is likely to be only a small percentage of cereal crops cut for hay, although this may change if further frost damage becomes evident.

• Oaten hay crops in most districts have low tiller numbers and are short with significantly lower biomass potential than average.

• Insect pests are at relatively low levels compared to normal. There have been no reports of Russian wheat aphid, although other aphids are present at low numbers.

PASTURES

• Pastures across most of the State have continued to be moisture stressed and grew slowly through July and early August. Average to above average rainfall in many areas of the State during August, combined with warmer temperatures, enabled pasture to grow where adequate plant numbers are present.

• There has been insufficient rainfall for adequate pasture growth in the Franklin Harbour area, northern part of the Upper North, western Northern Mallee and northern Lower Murray districts.
• In most areas of the State, farmers have continued to feed hay and grain to livestock either in paddocks or confinement areas. Many farmers have used up available supplies but are finding it difficult to source additional hay supplies.

• Lambing percentages have varied, but mostly have been lower than normal due to the poorer condition of ewes and limited feed supplies available.

• Most farmers have weaned lambs earlier than normal to enable ewes to recover and are supplementary feeding with grain and hay to increase growth rates. Most will be sold at lighter weights than normal.

• Where feed supplies are low, farmers have reduced livestock numbers to preserve their limited feed supplies for core breeding stock.

• Some farmers in the South East and Kangaroo Island have bought young stock from other areas of the State.

HAY AND FODDER

• Both pastures and cereal crops were cut for hay in early September in areas of the Upper Eyre Peninsula, Upper North and Southern Mallee. Most hay in these districts will be kept on-farm but small quantities should be available for sale by late September.

• Frost in late August into September has damaged some cereal crops in a number of districts, with the worst affected areas likely to be cut for hay.

• The majority of hay will be cut from mid to late September with good supplies available by mid-October.

PASTORAL AREAS

• Pastoralists have continued to reduce stock numbers because feed supplies and/or water supplies are depleted. Some pastoralists have totally destocked, while most have reduced numbers by 40 to 50%.

• Lambing percentages have been very low with high ewe losses due to lack of available feed in most pastoral areas, with minimal lambs available for sale or replacement. This will further reduce breeding stock.

• Most stock have continued to lose weight.

• New season hay supplies will be available from the Mid-North by mid-October.

KEY LINKS TO OTHER INFORMATION

Department for Environment and Water - Soil and Land Condition monitoring:

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.
### TABLE 1: CROP ESTIMATES BY DISTRICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Western, ha</th>
<th>Lower, ha</th>
<th>Eastern, ha</th>
<th>Yorke, ha</th>
<th>Upper, ha</th>
<th>Mid, ha</th>
<th>Lower, ha</th>
<th>Kangaroo Island, ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>401 000</td>
<td>150 000</td>
<td>348 000</td>
<td>172 000</td>
<td>236 000</td>
<td>241 000</td>
<td>68 000</td>
<td>156 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>360 000</td>
<td>450 000</td>
<td>313 000</td>
<td>445 000</td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>519 000</td>
<td>15 000</td>
<td>13 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>8 500</td>
<td>9 200</td>
<td>6 100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48 000</td>
<td>13 500</td>
<td>19 000</td>
<td>12 800</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>59 000</td>
<td>70 000</td>
<td>66 000</td>
<td>161 000</td>
<td>95 000</td>
<td>101 000</td>
<td>17 000</td>
<td>1 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53 000</td>
<td>225 000</td>
<td>62 000</td>
<td>410 000</td>
<td>132 000</td>
<td>223 000</td>
<td>39 000</td>
<td>4 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>15 300</td>
<td>35 000</td>
<td>6 200</td>
<td>6 000</td>
<td>4 800</td>
<td>9 500</td>
<td>3 500</td>
<td>3 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 700</td>
<td>7 200</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>12 000</td>
<td>5 300</td>
<td>17 000</td>
<td>6 100</td>
<td>8 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triticale</td>
<td>400 000</td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>1 700</td>
<td>400 000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>300 000</td>
<td>1 300 000</td>
<td>400 000</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>1 800</td>
<td>3 400</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>3 400</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>11 000</td>
<td>15 000</td>
<td>12 500</td>
<td>8 000</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 400</td>
<td>4 800</td>
<td>2 200</td>
<td>15 500</td>
<td>15 000</td>
<td>13 800</td>
<td>12 000</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lupins</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>22 500</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>3 600</td>
<td>1 800</td>
<td>500 1 000</td>
<td>1 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>750 000</td>
<td>33 700</td>
<td>2 500</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>2 900</td>
<td>1 800</td>
<td>400 1 700</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 500</td>
<td>400 10 000</td>
<td>10 100</td>
<td>10 500</td>
<td>3 100</td>
<td>3 200</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8 250</td>
<td>200 13 500</td>
<td>8 000</td>
<td>12 700</td>
<td>3 400</td>
<td>1 700</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpeas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>400 200</td>
<td>10 000</td>
<td>5 800</td>
<td>3 500</td>
<td>2 200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>550 120</td>
<td>11 800</td>
<td>4 600</td>
<td>3 100</td>
<td>2 600</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>3 100</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>107 000</td>
<td>6 600</td>
<td>13 000</td>
<td>7 000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td>4 600</td>
<td>800 150 000</td>
<td>5 200</td>
<td>14 200</td>
<td>8 400</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vetch</td>
<td>2 400</td>
<td>1 800</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>5 500</td>
<td>5 200</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>450 000</td>
<td>1 250</td>
<td>400 1 600</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>2 600</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>70 500</td>
<td>10 000</td>
<td>15 800</td>
<td>16 500</td>
<td>28 500</td>
<td>3 700</td>
<td>3 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 500</td>
<td>92 000</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>20 500</td>
<td>13 300</td>
<td>31 300</td>
<td>4 400</td>
<td>7 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>21 000</td>
<td>21 000</td>
<td>21 000</td>
<td>6 000</td>
<td>7 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 000</td>
<td>11 000</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>72 000</td>
<td>51 000</td>
<td>60 000</td>
<td>15 500</td>
<td>33 500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total     | 488 600     | 331 200   | 444 700     | 516 800   | 408 600   | 437 400 | 119 800   | 18 500              |
|           | 430 600     | 828 650   | 391 620     | 1 131 000 | 502 700   | 860 900 | 246 550   | 40 420              |
### TABLE 1 (cont): CROP ESTIMATES BY DISTRICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central Hills &amp; Fleurieu</th>
<th>Lower Murray</th>
<th>Nth Murray Mallee</th>
<th>Sth Murray Mallee</th>
<th>Upper South East</th>
<th>Lower South East</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>58 000</td>
<td>220 000</td>
<td>110 000</td>
<td>70 000</td>
<td>2106 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>5 100</td>
<td>70 000</td>
<td>177 000</td>
<td>115 500</td>
<td>196 000</td>
<td>3 204 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durum</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>9 500</td>
<td>55 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>21 000</td>
<td>116 660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>9 000</td>
<td>70 000</td>
<td>65 000</td>
<td>112 000</td>
<td>31 000</td>
<td>863 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>16 000</td>
<td>91 000</td>
<td>55 000</td>
<td>123 000</td>
<td>83 000</td>
<td>1 535 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>2 200</td>
<td>3 500</td>
<td>17 500</td>
<td>83 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>38 000</td>
<td>132 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>2 100</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>5 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1 300</td>
<td>3 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triticale</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>8 000</td>
<td>1 600</td>
<td>13 000</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>30 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>9 500</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>14 500</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>40 050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>6 000</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>2 400</td>
<td>70 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>2 400</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>3 600</td>
<td>75 770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lupins</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>1 300</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>4 800</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>15 000</td>
<td>64 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>1 700</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>75 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>8 500</td>
<td>62 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>13 500</td>
<td>89 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpeas</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>6 400</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>33 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>2 500</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>1 400</td>
<td>29 520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>3 900</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>3 600</td>
<td>152 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1 600</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>1 800</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>193 770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vetch</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>6 500</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>31 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>13 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>3 700</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>13 000</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>20 500</td>
<td>209 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>4 400</td>
<td>1 050</td>
<td>5 200</td>
<td>2 500</td>
<td>35 000</td>
<td>249 050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay (not in total)</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>30 000</td>
<td>10 000</td>
<td>2 500</td>
<td>21 000</td>
<td>66 000</td>
<td>27 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>97 000</td>
<td>26 000</td>
<td>3 500</td>
<td>55 000</td>
<td>277 000</td>
<td>123 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2: CROP ESTIMATES AGAINST FIVE YEAR AVERAGE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 295 900</td>
<td>4 976 000</td>
<td>2 200 000</td>
<td>2 237 700</td>
<td>2 024 100</td>
<td>2 198 700</td>
<td>2 106 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68 300</td>
<td>194 930</td>
<td>51 300</td>
<td>86 750</td>
<td>55 700</td>
<td>149 800</td>
<td>116 660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durum</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>854 900</td>
<td>2 093 500</td>
<td>804 000</td>
<td>1 922 000</td>
<td>799 300</td>
<td>714 600</td>
<td>802 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>106 100</td>
<td>143 250</td>
<td>98 000</td>
<td>114 600</td>
<td>97 300</td>
<td>113 750</td>
<td>98 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69 300</td>
<td>105 500</td>
<td>64 700</td>
<td>72 250</td>
<td>76 700</td>
<td>63 850</td>
<td>70 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69 000</td>
<td>139 400</td>
<td>65 600</td>
<td>93 900</td>
<td>68 600</td>
<td>77 300</td>
<td>69 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94 800</td>
<td>163 350</td>
<td>106 200</td>
<td>152 350</td>
<td>123 700</td>
<td>120 080</td>
<td>135 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 700</td>
<td>29 280</td>
<td>19 700</td>
<td>20 250</td>
<td>20 500</td>
<td>19 240</td>
<td>22 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpeas</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 000</td>
<td>14 320</td>
<td>23 200</td>
<td>13 150</td>
<td>29 600</td>
<td>11 900</td>
<td>26 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>301 000</td>
<td>434 400</td>
<td>321 200</td>
<td>313 800</td>
<td>210 500</td>
<td>293 300</td>
<td>247 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>227 300</td>
<td>1 018 100</td>
<td>211 500</td>
<td>763 000</td>
<td>282 700</td>
<td>1 094 800</td>
<td>238 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 400</td>
<td>7 666 900</td>
<td>3 899 300</td>
<td>7 211 400</td>
<td>3 893 700</td>
<td>1 055 800</td>
<td>3 769 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not in total)</td>
<td>3 893 700</td>
<td>7 666 900</td>
<td>3 820 600</td>
<td>7 211 400</td>
<td>3 893 700</td>
<td>1 055 800</td>
<td>3 769 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 038 400</td>
<td>8 546 480</td>
<td>3 899 300</td>
<td>7 666 900</td>
<td>3 820 600</td>
<td>1 094 800</td>
<td>3 843 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 893 700</td>
<td>7 211 400</td>
<td>3 893 700</td>
<td>7 211 400</td>
<td>3 893 700</td>
<td>1 094 800</td>
<td>3 769 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEPTEMBER 2018  CROP AND PASTURE REPORT SOUTH AUSTRALIA  PAGE 9
District Reports

Western Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- July rainfall was below average across most of the district and very much below average rainfall in coastal areas from Streaky Bay to the west of Ceduna. Rainfall across the district was very much above average during August.
- Growing season rainfall to date (1 April to 31 August) has been average to below average.
- A number of light frosts were reported in inland districts.
- Very strong winds were experienced across the region.

CROPS

- Soils contain some moisture but good spring rains are required for crops to meet their yield potential.
- Crops suffered some moisture stress in July.
- Strong winds resulted in erosion on lighter soil types and sandblasting of emerging crops. Although the tops of sandy rises remain bare and are drifting, most paddocks now have adequate surface cover to protect against wind erosion over the majority of the paddock.
- Warmer sunny days and wet conditions in August resulted in rapid growth of crops, reducing some of the variation in crop maturity within paddocks that was observed earlier in the season.
- Most canola and pulse are flowering and cereals are in head.
- Later sown crops have established and grown well and show good yield potential but will require further rain and cool temperatures to achieve this potential.
- Early sown crops which suffered significant moisture stress in early winter have not recovered and have low tiller number and well below average yield potential.
- Farmers have controlled grass and broadleaf weeds in crops, although poor pre and post sowing control has resulted in high levels of barley and brome grass in some crops. Herbicide applications have been later than normal due to delayed crop and weed maturity resulting from the dry start.
- There have been isolated reports of low numbers of aphids in canola and pulses with other pests such as mice and snails at normal levels for this time of year.
- Fungal disease levels in crops are currently low with only low levels of spot form net blotch and leaf rust reported on susceptible varieties.

PASTURES

- On sandy soils, winds caused some sandblasting to emerging pastures.
- Cool temperatures and dry conditions in July slowed pasture growth and caused some moisture stress.
- Good growing conditions during August prompted rapid pasture growth but pasture biomass is still well below average for this time of year. Pastures will be spraytopped in early September to minimise grass weed seed set.
- Most farmers weaned lambs early and sold excess stock to reduce pressure on spring/summer feed.
- Low biomass levels in medic pastures and crops mean that hay yields will be well below average. However many farmers will endeavour to cut some hay to replenish their depleted supplies.
- Many farmers are still supplementary feeding livestock, with sources of hay and grain becoming increasingly difficult to find. There will be limited feed from pastures and stubbles over summer, and most livestock producers aim to retain grain and cut or buy hay where possible to replenish supplementary feed reserves.
Lower Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- July rainfall was generally below average throughout the district.
- August rainfall was above average to very much above average, with some areas around Cummins recording the highest August rainfall on record.
- Growing season rainfall to date (1 April to 31 August) has been average to below average.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and average for August. Minimum temperatures were average for July and above average for August.

CROPS

- Despite below average rainfall in July, regular light rainfall resulted in good crop and pasture growth.
- Above average rainfall and slightly warmer than average temperatures in August, resulted in excellent conditions for crop and pasture growth.
- Most soils contain some stored moisture. Waterlogging affecting crop growth has been observed in some paddocks south of Yeelanna, however this is generally only in small areas of paddocks.
- Crops have good levels of nutrition and show average to above average yield potential.
- Canola crops are in full flower.
- There is some variation in the crop maturity of pulse and cereal crops - early sown pulses are flowering and most cereal crops are at head emergence.
- Wet conditions during August enabled many farmers to apply urea to address symptoms of nitrogen deficiency and to maximize yield potential.
- Farmers applied herbicides during July to control weeds in-crop, however the wet conditions in August made many paddocks un-trafficable and further herbicide applications have been delayed.
- Insect pest numbers have been low with isolated and low-level reports of cabbage and turnip aphids reported in canola crops as well as cowpea aphids in vetch crops and some army worm in barley.
- Low levels of spot form net blotch and leaf rust have been observed, however these have largely been controlled with planned fungicide applications.
- Disease levels in canola and pulse crops have been relatively low.

PASTURES

- Good conditions have seen rapid growth of pastures and paddocks now have good levels of biomass.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.
- Stud breeders held ram sales during this period, with reports that the number of rams sold was lower than usual due to dry conditions in other districts and regions.
- Paddocks sown for hay contain good levels of biomass with the expectation that the area cut for hay will be above average to help replenish supplies depleted by dry conditions in upper Eyre Peninsula.
- It is expected that stubbles will provide good levels of feed over summer with the opportunity for farmers without livestock to bale straw as a potential source of livestock feed for producers in other parts of the Eyre Peninsula.
Eastern Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- July rainfall was below average to very much below average.
- Rainfall for August varied from very much above average in the south west to below average in the east.
- Growing season rainfall to date (1 April to 31 August) has been below to very much below average across the district. An area in the Franklin Harbour Council (near Cowell) has received its lowest growing season rainfall (to end of August) on record.
- Very strong winds were recorded on a number of days during this period. A number of frosts have been reported during this period.

CROPS

- Rainfall in August resulted in some soil moisture in the western parts of this region, however good spring rains will be required for crops to reach their potential.
- Crop yield potential varies significantly with slightly below average yields estimated for Kimba, Lock and Buckleboo, and well below average yields around Darke Peake, Rudall, Verran, Cleve, Wharminda and Arno Bay. Crops on the Cowell Flats are unlikely to be harvested.
- Crop maturity and vigour is highly variable depending on soil type, time of sowing and where rain fell. There are high cover levels in the Lock and Kimba districts and low levels in the Yalanda, Rudall, Cleve, Arno Bay and Franklin Harbour.
- Early sown cereal crops that received follow up rain have grown well, are in head and flowering. Later sown crops, or crops which remained un-germinated for a number of weeks before receiving follow up rains have variable maturity between late tillering and head emergence.
- Strong winds resulted in erosion of detached and exposed soils in the Verran, Cleve and Franklin Harbour districts and significant areas of Franklin Harbour district remain at risk of wind erosion. Crops sown on early rains, germinated but suffered terminal moisture stress with dry, warm and windy conditions continuing throughout winter.
- Some farmers have undertaken emergency tillage to manage erosion on paddocks near Cowell, Arno Bay, Cleve and Rudall. Many farmers have tried re-sowing drifting sand dunes a number of times this season, with emerging crops sandblasted during strong wind events. Most will wait until the risk of wind has reduced in early spring and re-sow again if there is adequate moisture to establish cover on these areas.
- In other parts of the district, good growing conditions in August have resulted in sufficient growth of crops and pastures to cover the majority of paddocks with only the tops of sandy rises remaining at risk of erosion.
- Some cow-pea aphids have been found in vetch crops and medic pastures and farmers are monitoring numbers to avoid potential animal health implications with livestock grazing in these paddocks.
- Crop disease levels have been low and most farmers have applied preventative fungicides.

PASTURES

- Pastures have responded well in those districts that received good August rainfall (in the areas west of Cleve). These pastures now contain enough biomass for livestock to graze. Most farmers have not removed grasses from pastures, to retain as much biomass as possible. Grasses will be spray-topped to stop grass weed seed set.
- Paddocks sown to vetch and oats for hay have grown slowly and hay yields are expected to be well below average, with most of the hay retained on farm or sold locally.
There will be limited feed from pastures and stubbles over summer and most livestock producers aim to retain grain and cut or buy hay to replenish supplementary feed reserves. A number of farmers are also considering cutting crops low at harvest and baling stubble to retain on farm as a feed reserve.

Pasture and cereal hay will be cut in the Kimba / Buckleboo district in early September with most hay likely to be kept on-farm with limited supplies may become available for sale.

Some growers are looking to plant summer feed options such as forage millet, sorghum or Sudan-grass.

Upper North

WEATHER

July rainfall was below average to very much below average. Rainfall in August was below average in the north east and average in the remainder of the district.

Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and above average for August. Minimum temperatures were average for July and average to above average for August. Several frosts were recorded in the last week of August.

Growing season rainfall to the end of August was below average to well below average.

CROPS

Stored soil moisture levels are low across most of the district. Yield potential of most crops north of Jamestown is well below average.

Despite below average rainfall south of Jamestown during July, there was adequate moisture for good crop growth and average rainfall in August has increased yield potential to near average in the Spalding, Georgetown and Yacka areas.

In other parts of the district most cereal crops are relatively thin and cereal plants have not tillered well due to the dry conditions. As a result, yields will be well below average.

Early sown cereal crops in the western part of the district are at grain fill, while late sown or emerged crops north of Booleroo Centre are at mid-tillering.

The continued dry conditions resulted in patchy emergence and slow growth of crops north of Booleroo Centre, with many of these crops unlikely to be harvested. August rainfall is unlikely to improve significantly the yield potential of many of these crops.

Very few weeds germinated earlier in the season but later rain in August has resulted in a germination of weeds, which has been controlled.

Frost in the last week of August may have damaged crops in low lying areas in the south of the district, with concern for stem frost damage in wheat.

Early sown pea crops have grown well, with low levels of disease and have begun to flower.

Fungal leaf diseases are at very low levels in all crops. In the higher rainfall areas, farmers have applied protective fungicides to pulse crops but very little has been applied to cereal crops.

Other pulse crops have grown slowly and are just starting to flower. Many of these crops are very short, which will make harvest difficult and high grain losses likely.

Oaten hay crops have reasonable density but are short with significantly reduced hay yield potential.

Low-lying areas of some cereal crops have been frosted with the worst affected areas likely to be cut for hay.
PASTURES

- Pasture growth has been slow. Sown pastures have provided some feed for livestock, but these have been rapidly depleted.
- Farmers have continued to supplement pasture feed or feed stock in confined areas, although on-farm feed supplies are very low.
- Despite low pasture growth most pasture paddocks still have adequate ground cover to protect soils from erosion.
- Most farmers have weaned lambs earlier than normal and will sell them as soon as they reach market weights.
- Farmers have reduced stock numbers by selling older ewes and other ewes with lower performance to maximise the feed available for more productive ewes.
- There will be limited feed from pastures and stubbles over summer, and most livestock producers aim to retain grain and cut hay from frosted crops or buy hay where possible to replenish supplementary feed reserves.

Mid North

WEATHER

- July rainfall was below average to very much below average. August rainfall was below average in the north east and average across the remainder of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and above average for August. Minimum temperatures were average to above average for July and August. Several frosts were recorded in the last week of August.
- Growing season rainfall to the end of August is below average to very much below average

CROPS

- Stored soil moisture varies from low to moderate, depending on August rainfall received.
- Crop development has been accelerated by the dry conditions. Cereal crops have low tiller numbers and thin canopies. Most cereal crops are at the booting to early head emergence growth stages.
- Many crops are further advanced than farmers realised, which has impacted on herbicide use for late weed control with more expensive herbicides needing to be applied.
- Yield potential of cereals varies from 50% up to 80% of average, given an average finish to the season. The eastern part of the district is relatively dry with poor crop and pasture growth.
- Canola crops have low plant numbers. However, most crops have branched well with yield potential of 70 to 80% of average. Most crops are at the early flowering stage.
- Pulse crops have grown slowly, but with low disease levels most are likely to yield 80% of average. Most pea crops are relatively thin with early sown crops beginning to flower.
- Lentil crops have grown slowly, are shorter than usual potentially making harvest difficult. Most crops are beginning to flower and farmers are applying fungicide prior to canopy closure to control disease.
- Frost in late August has damaged lentil crops, particularly Hurricane but most crops should recover with minimal yield loss.
- Faba bean crops are very short, beginning to flower but have not set many pods at this stage.
- Generally, fungal diseases in cereal crops are at lower levels than normal, although there are high levels of Septoria tritici in susceptible wheat varieties in the southern part of the district.
• Disease levels in pulse crops are very low, due to the application of preventative fungicide.
• Insect pests have increased towards the end of August with Etiella being found in lentil crops and native budworm in pea and bean crops. Insecticides have been applied to control these pests.
• Oaten hay crops have not tillered and most crops are relatively thin and short with well below average yield potential. Hay cuts are only likely to be 60 to 70% of average.
• Low lying areas of some cereal crops have been frost with worst affected areas likely to be cut for hay.

PASTURES

• Pasture growth has been slow with low levels of pasture feed available.
• Most farmers have sold off excess stock, including young ewes and old ewes. Lambs have been weaned early and supplementary fed and sold at lighter weights than normal.
• Lambing percentages in the agricultural areas have only been slightly below average but very low in pastoral areas with many below 20%.
• Hay reserves on-farm are now very low with no surplus stocks available for sale. Grain feed supplies are also low on-farm with only small amounts of warehoused grain remaining for farmers own use.

Lower North

WEATHER

• Growing season rainfall to the end of August varies from below average to very much below average.
• July rainfall was below average to very much below average.
• August rainfall was average across most of the district.
• Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and above average for August. Minimum temperatures were above average for July and above average to very much above average for August.

CROPS

• Soil moisture levels across the district have begun to fall rapidly as crop growth has increased.
• Most wheat crops are at head emergence, while barley crops are at booting to early head emergence.
• In the western part of the district, crops were moisture stressed during July and are two to three weeks ahead of normal and have well below average yield potential. Wheat crops are a reasonable height of 400 mm. Barley crops are short with most only 300 mm.
• Crops in the eastern part of the district have not been moisture stressed to the same degree, but yields are still likely to be well below average, even with an average finish to the season.
• In-crop weed control has been successful despite difficult spraying conditions with strong winds and regular light showers.
• Septoria tritici has been widespread, particularly in Sceptre wheat and most farmers have sprayed to control the disease. There are minimal levels of net blotch present in barley crops.
• Despite high hay prices, most farmers are likely to harvest crops for grain rather than cutting them for hay, as they consider this to be a higher risk.
• Lentil crops in the western part of the district have begun to flower, are very short, but should be high enough to harvest. Crops further east are at canopy closure and have better growth.
• Chickpea crops are also very short and ascocytta blight is present in most crops, despite the application of preventative fungicides.
• Bean crops are only 150 mm to 200 mm high and have been flowering for several weeks with early pod set very close to the ground.

• Despite the dry conditions, pea crops have grown well, with early sown crops beginning to flower. These crops show good yield potential, due to low levels of disease.

• Those farmers planning to cut wheat for hay intend to do so in the second week of September. Oaten hay crops are not yet at head emergence and will likely be cut in late September.

**PASTURES**

• Pasture paddocks have low levels of growth with some paddocks over grazed.

• On the sandy soils in the western part of the district, strong winds have sandblasted pasture plants.

• Hay that had previously been destined for export markets has been reassigned for domestic use, reducing hay stocks at export facilities. With lower hay cuts from new season hay, exporters may not be able to fully supply export contracts.

• Most livestock producers have reduced stock numbers by 25 to 30%, heavily culling ewes and selling all their ewe lambs.

**Yorke Peninsula**

**WEATHER**

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

• Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and above average for August, while mean minimum temperatures have been average to above average. Several frost events occurred in late July and again in late August.

• Growing seasonal rainfall varies from very much below average at Kadina to above average at Warooka.

**CROPS**

• Crops are in good condition throughout the middle strip of the Yorke Peninsula in a north/south direction, with good soil moisture following above average August rainfall.

• The coastal areas suffered moisture stress during June and July and as a result, cereal crops have gone into reproductive phase early, severely reducing their yield potential.

• Southern Yorke Peninsula has had excellent growing conditions for the majority of the season and yield potential is close to average. Crop conditions in the northern half of the district vary from poor to good, with the worst affected areas around Kadina and Port Broughton.

• Early sown wheat is now at flowering to grain fill, while the majority of crops are at flag leaf to early head emergence.

• Although some canola crops have low plant densities due to patchy germination, plants have branched well and show reasonable yield potential. Crops are in full flower, with the majority starting to pod.

• Most barley crops are at flag leaf to head emergence, are less affected by the dry conditions than wheat crops. Crops with low plant numbers have tillered well; increasing yield potential.

• Septoria tritici is present in most wheat crops with lower levels of powdery mildew requiring protective fungicide application. In some crops, minor yield loss has already occurred.

• Barley disease levels have been low, with only minor net blotch and leaf rust present. The dry winter and preventative fungicides had kept disease levels low until mid-August.

• Early sown lentil crops reached canopy closure in mid-August and most crops have just started flowering. Pre-emergent herbicides reduced plant numbers in patches and these have not recovered.
• Disease levels are currently low in lentil crops with ascochyta only present in susceptible varieties. Rain at the end of August will increase disease risk.

• Chickpea crops have ascochyta blight present at varying levels and preventative fungicides are being applied prior to rainfall events to reduce infection.

• Nitrogen has been applied later than the optimum timing due to the dry conditions.

• Vegetative frost damage has been seen in pulse crops across the district but most crops are likely to recover with minimal yield loss. A few early sown wheat crops north of Kadina, have been damaged by stem and head frost with yield loss of up to 30%.

• Oaten hay crops are extremely variable, with coastal areas having short thin crops with low biomass, while other crops have excellent growth. Hay production will be significantly lower than average.

PASTURES

• Most pastures have low feed levels due to slow growth in early to mid-winter. There will be less pasture area cut for hay due to the reduced biomass produced. The exception has been the Southern Yorke Peninsula which now has excellent feed levels.

• Supplementary feeding of livestock continuing for a large number of producers.

• Some producers purchased additional livestock, leading to some overgrazing of pastures.

Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula & Kangaroo Island

WEATHER

• July rainfall varied from average to very much below average. August rainfall was average to very much above average.

• Growing season rainfall to the end of August was average on western Kangaroo Island and below average in other areas.

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

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

CROPS

Central Hills/Fleurieu

• Crop performance is highly variable but most crop establishment and growth is well below average.

• Most crops will yield well below average. Many will be cut for hay or grazed to finish lambs, unless significant rain occurs in the first few weeks of September.

• There are high weed levels in some crops, particularly those dry sown, as they were too moisture stressed to spray at the optimum time.

• There are very few pest and diseases present in crops.

Kangaroo Island

• Overall crop performance is reasonable.

• Early sown crops are growing well and late crops now have sufficient soil moisture to boost growth. Yield potential is mixed, with a need for good spring rains for late sown crops to achieve their potential.

• Crop growth stages are normal for this time of the year. Canola is in full flower, cereals at stem elongation to flag leaf emergence and beans at early flowering.

• There is some minor waterlogging in some crops.
• Current levels of cercospora and ascochyta in beans could increase significantly with the potential to affect yields if not managed with fungicides.

• Cereal leaf diseases, including septoria tritici in wheat, net blotch in barley and small areas of powdery mildew are present in crops at normal levels and are being managed as required.

• Snails, cereal aphids, red-legged earth mite and lucerne flea are present at normal levels.

PASTURES
Central Hills/Fleurieu
• Pasture growth and feed levels are well below average and farmers are continuing to supplementary feed livestock, although reserves are very low.
• Potential feed sources are limited and producers will consider sowing summer crops if there is sufficient soil moisture.
• Livestock condition is variable with many producers struggling to finish lambs to market weights.
• Producers are selling any excess stock, particularly those in poorer condition.
• With reduced pasture growth farmers are likely to cut cereal crops for hay.

Kangaroo Island
• Pasture growth and feed levels are variable, especially in areas prone to waterlogging but growth has increased significantly and pasture growth is matching or exceeding livestock demand in most areas.
• Potential yield for hay crops is average with producers applying urea to boost spring growth.
• Livestock are generally in good condition. Some weaning rates are below average due to the poorer condition of ewes.
• Producers are selling old ewes and buying in young ewes from other areas.

Lower Murray

WEATHER
• Growing season rainfall to the end of August has been between very much below and below average across the district.
• Rainfall for July was very much below average in the north and below average in the south. August rainfall was average across most of the district.
• Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and above average for August with above average minimum temperatures for the period.
• Strong winds have been recorded throughout July and August.

CROPS
• At the end of August cereal crops range in maturity from stem elongation to head emergence.
• Pulse and canola crops are starting to flower.
• Following August rains, the Lower Murray has improved on the east side of the river where the soils are generally loamy, however on the west side of the river on harder soils conditions are still very dry and in need of more moisture.
• The district, although late, still has some crops with above average potential and good crop management has been a critical success factor in such a dry season.
• Late sown crops have not been able to provide sufficient ground cover and are suffering ongoing wind damage. Average to above average spring rainfall will be required for these crops to be harvestable.
• Some farmers have applied nitrogen fertiliser to crops with good yield potential while others have seen no need to spend any more on struggling crops.

• Snail and mice numbers are very low and not causing notable damage.

• Most crops are thin, short and not providing soil cover, making the soils prone to evaporation and adding to the problem of low soil moisture levels.

• There are reports of some dry sown crops having higher levels of grasses in them and these are likely to be cut for hay given the season and the lack of feed.

PASTURES

• Pasture growth has been slow, not keeping up with livestock grazing, resulting in limited pasture availability.

• August rains have helped contribute to some growth in feed paddocks.

• Stock are generally in reasonable condition due to continued supplementary feeding with hay and grain.

• Some farmers are decreasing livestock numbers by selling lambs early and heavily culling ewe flocks.

• Pasture on irrigated river flats has good growth but these pastures have high stocking densities as the amount of pasture feed on non-irrigated land is well below average.

Northern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

• Growing season rainfall has been below average across the district.

• July rainfall was very much below average in the western half of the district and below average in the east. August rainfall was average across most of the district.

• Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for July and above average for August. Minimum temperatures were average to above average for July and August with only a few frosts record over the period.

• There were numerous days of strong winds recorded with raised dust.

CROPS

• Soil moisture levels are very low with crops relying on regular rainfall events to maintain growth.

• Crops in the western part of the district have begun to suffer moisture stress, particularly in the area from Waikerie to Swan Reach.

• Crops sown early with no-till have higher yield potential than later sown or conventionally sown crops.

• Many crops have suffered wind damage with lack of soil cover.

• Cereals will be relying on average to above average spring rainfall to fill grain.

• The yield potential of cereal crops in the Waikerie area and later sown crops further east, is well below average with some unlikely to be harvested. East of Waikerie earlier sown crops have average potential.

• Barley crops are at head emergence and could mature quickly, if they become moisture stressed.

• With high grain prices, farmers are still hopeful that adequate spring rainfall will provide enough grain to provide a reasonable income for the season.
• Some cereal crops sown into marginal moisture have high levels of grass weeds, due to poor control with knockdown and pre-emergent herbicides.

• While there are some areas where peas are still growing well, generally pulse crops such as chickpeas and lentils are moisture stressed and performing poorly. Average to above average September rainfall will be required to achieve any substantial yield.

• Canola suffering in the dry conditions will yield well below average.

• Weed levels in crops have been relatively low but most farmers have still controlled grass weeds in break crops to control disease and weed seed levels in preparation for next season.

• There are no major insect or disease concerns in crops.

PASTURES

• Livestock farmers are supplementary feeding, mainly with grain, because hay has either been used or sold to the eastern states.

• Pasture feed levels are extremely low, with some farmers in dryer areas considering grazing poorly performing crops.

• With poor pasture growth and thin crops, limited hay will be cut in the district and most will need to be sourced from other districts.

• Lambing percentage has been lower this season due to the poorer condition of ewes.

• There is a high risk of soil erosion on sandy soil types that are being grazed and have low levels of soil cover.

Southern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

• Rainfall was average to below average for July and August. Regular rainfall but in small amounts.

• Growing season rainfall to the end of August was below average to very much below average.

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

• Strong to gale force winds recorded through the period. Several frosts recorded in late July and again in late August.

CROPS

• Crops are extremely variable, with significantly better crops in paddocks that were fallowed or cut for hay last year, resulting in extra soil moisture being available.

• Crop development varies from stem elongation to head emergence and pulse and canola crops had started to flower by the end of August.

• Crops sown into dry, bare soil have grown slowly and achieved poor ground cover.

• Winds in July damaged and battered crops even on areas with good cover and any late sown or conventionally sown crops were severely damaged by those winds. Some farmers have re-sown the worst affected areas of crop across the district.

• Despite July and August rainfall being below average, the reasonably falls have allowed crops to keep growing and maintain yield potential.
• By the end of August most farmers had finished their herbicide spraying programs. Fungicides will be applied to pulse crops to protect new growth.
• Nitrogen fertiliser has been applied to crops, although most farmers have reduced rates.
• Recent frosts have slowed crops and dried soils.
• Throughout August crops began to show signs of moisture stress and browning on the heavier soils but have not been affected on the lighter soils.
• Soil moisture is now critically low with rain required in early September to maintain yield potential. Without substantial rain in early September some cereal crops will be cut for hay.
• Spring rainfall will determine what crops have potential to be harvested and what may be better to cut for hay or graze.

PASTURES

• Livestock condition is highly variable. Lambs that have been weaned onto sown pastures are doing well but are at lower weights than normal.
• Regenerating pastures have high levels of grass with poor growth due to moisture stress. Annual grasses are beginning to form seed heads.
• Supplementary feed has mainly been reserved for new season lambs as stocks of grain and hay are beginning to be depleted.
• Hay and grain reserves are at very low levels due to hay moving interstate. Local farmers are finding it very hard to source feed reserves.
• Permanent pastures like veldt grass and lucerne are growing well despite the dry conditions.
• Many farmers have sold old ewes to reduce numbers and reserve feed for new seasons lambs to enable them to achieve market weights.

Upper South East

WEATHER

• July rainfall was below average along the coast and average in the remainder of the district.
• August rainfall varied from average in the north to very much above average in the south-east.
• Growing season rainfall to the end of August was average in the south and below average in the north of the district.
• Mean maximum temperatures were average to above average for July and August and some frosts occurred.

CROPS

• Crops have grown well with most well advanced with thick canopies.
• Disease levels are high due to wet conditions and thick crop canopies. The application of fungicides delayed by the wet and windy conditions has enabled disease levels to increase.
• Approximately 20% of crops are waterlogged and many producers have to weigh up damaging some paddocks to control disease pressure.
• Septoria tritici levels are high in wheat crops due to the wet conditions and large crop canopies enabling the disease to spread rapidly, particularly in susceptible varieties.
• Leaf scald and net blotch have been present in barley crops but most producers have been able to manage these diseases with early fungicide applications where they have been able to traverse paddocks. Further rain is likely to increase the disease pressure.

• Canola crops have low levels of disease at this stage but blackleg levels will be closely monitored. Some early flowering canola has been frost affected, resulting in yield losses of approximately 5%. Some minor frost damage is evident in lucerne paddocks but these should recover with minimal loss.

• Fungicides applied to beans, lentils and vetch have helped manage disease. Further wet conditions will require careful disease management.

• There are some lucerne flea present in crops but overall pest numbers are low. Russian wheat aphids are at low levels, due to the dry summer combined with the application of insecticide seed treatments.

• Many producers have adopted early nitrogen application. This reduces yield loss potential experienced in previous years where paddocks become too wet for later applications.

• Crops are receiving higher than normal nitrogen applications to maximise yield potential and capitalise on high grain prices. Above average yields are predicted at this stage.

• Crops with high ryegrass levels will be cut for hay, due to high hay prices. Economics for most crops are still in favour of harvesting for grain rather than cutting for hay.

PASTURES

• Cold temperatures slowed pasture growth during July and most of August but growth has increased in the second half of August with warmer temperatures.

• Producers have confinement fed or supplementary fed stock to compensate for slow pasture growth. On-farm feed reserves are low and farmers are planning to cut additional hay to replenish stocks.

• Water logging of some areas within paddocks has restricted livestock grazing. As a result, some paddocks have been over grazed and pastures have been slow to recover.

• Many producers are carrying high livestock numbers and livestock are in good condition. Some producers have purchased young ewes or trade lambs from drought affected areas.

• Marking percentages have been average due to low pasture availability during autumn and winter.

• Lucerne seed production area is down 30-40% due to poor contract prices as a result of low export and domestic demand. Many producers will cut hay instead, particularly on lower seed yielding varieties.

Lower South East

WEATHER

• Growing season rainfall to the end of August was average to above average.

• July rainfall was average to above average and August rainfall varied from average in the south to very much above average in the northeast of the district.

• Temperatures were average for July and August with some frosts occurring.

CROPS

• There is some water logging present in paddocks but no more than normal and only minor yield losses are expected.

• Timely rainfall events have ensured good soil moisture without conditions becoming too wet.

• Disease levels have increased in bean crops and septoria tritici is at low levels in wheat crops.

• Deficiencies of trace elements, particularly zinc, manganese and copper are present in some crops.
• Producers are aiming to maximise yield potential given the favourable conditions in conjunction with high grain prices and are applying nitrogen and trace elements where possible. Wet conditions have reduced paddock access, delaying application in some paddocks.
• There have been more aerial applications of nitrogen than normal, to ensure timely application.
• There have not been any reports of significant pest or weed levels in crops.
• There have not been any reports of significant frost damage with most crops at vegetative growth stages.
• Yield potential of most crops is above average.
• Wet or windy weather has delayed the application of pesticides. Most chemical applications have been applied in the second half of August due to more suitable weather conditions.

PASTURES

• Pasture growth has been slow due to cool temperatures in July and early August, but has started to increase with warmer weather in the last half of August.
• Many producers were supplementary feeding cattle and sheep through July, due to slow pasture growth.
• On-farm supplementary feed reserves of hay and grain are low across the district.
• Most producers have maintained their current livestock numbers at this stage.
• Some producers are considering selling lambs earlier than normal and then using the additional pasture feed to produce hay.
• Livestock are in good condition and marking and weaning percentages have been average.

Pastoral Areas

• Most pastoralists, both cattle and sheep, are reducing livestock numbers, with some properties totally de-stocking and most having reduced numbers by 30 to 40%.
• Hay produced in the cereal zone crop production areas may become available to pastoralists retaining livestock as supplies improve with hay crops (and frosted grain crops) are cut and baled, starting from late September.
• Surface water supplies have dried up and properties totally reliant on surface water have been forced to de-stock.
• Reports of low lambing percentages and high ewe losses are prevalent, mainly due to lack of available feed in most pastoral areas.
• Minimal lambs will be available for sale or replacement. This will further reduce future breeding stock.
• Most stock have continued to lose weight.
• Kangaroos remain in high numbers.