Crop and Pasture Report
South Australia
2017-18 HARVEST CROP PERFORMANCE
JANUARY 2018
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State Summary

WEATHER

• November rainfall was very much above average in Lower and Central Eyre Peninsula and parts of the Southern Mallee; average to above average on Eastern Eyre Peninsula, Upper North, Lower Murray, Northern Mallee and Upper and Lower South East; and average to below average in all other areas.
• December rainfall was average to above average across most agricultural districts. The Mid South East received below average rainfall.
• Despite well below average growing-season rainfall, many districts recorded close to average annual rainfall for 2017.
• Mean maximum temperatures were above average across Western and Eastern Eyre Peninsula and the Upper and Mid North and very much above average in other agricultural districts in November.
• Maximum temperatures for December were above average for Lower Eyre Peninsula, southern Yorke Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and southern part of the Lower South East, and average in other agricultural districts.
• Mean minimum temperatures for November were very much above average in all districts with the South East recording the highest levels on record.
• Minimum temperatures for December were average to above average in all districts.
• Several frosts were recorded in a number of districts in late October and early November.

CROPS

• Despite below average growing-season rainfall in many districts, total state crop production has been only slightly below the long-term average at 6.8 million tonnes from a smaller than average crop area at 3.6 million hectares.
• A dry finish to the season reduced yield potential in most districts, with crops on deep sands or shallow soils drying off early. Crops on soils with good moisture-holding capacity were able to ripen slowly.
• Where good summer weed control allowed soil moisture to be conserved and where crops were sown and emerged early, crops yielded above average. Paddocks with poor summer weed control, or where crops were sown or emerged late, yielded below average.
• Frosts in late October and early November severely affected crops yields in the Northern Mallee with average losses of 20%. There was also severe frost damage in areas of the South East and isolated frost damage in a number of other districts.
• Despite well above average rainfall in the South East, crop yields were only average to slightly above average due to frost and waterlogging.
• Harvest was completed in most districts by the end of December. Farmers on Kangaroo Island, Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Lower South East will complete harvest by mid to late January.
• Cool and damp weather slowed harvest in early November and heavy rain in late November and early December halted harvest in many districts.
• Heavy rain resulted in weather damage and down-grading of unharvested wheat and barley crops in some districts.
• Given the seasonal conditions, cereal crops generally yielded exceptionally well, with most districts achieving close to average yields and some districts above average yields.
• Grain harvested before the rain was generally of good quality with low levels of screenings. Higher than expected yields in some districts and fewer opportunities for nitrogen application during the dry growing season resulted in low grain protein in some areas.
• Bean crops in Central Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and South East yielded average to above average yields but most crops in other districts were well below average. The area sown to beans is likely to continue declining in a number of districts.

• Canola yields were variable with Eyre Peninsula, Upper and Mid North and Northern Murray Mallee being below average but average to above average in other districts.

• Oil content was highly variable both within and across districts, ranging from 35 to 48%. Frost damage resulted in green seed levels above receivable standards in some crops in the South East, which diminishes oil quality.

• Following the November and December rainfalls there has been germination and growth of summer weeds and volunteer crops. Most farmers have begun applying herbicides to control this growth.

• Elevated mouse numbers have damaged this year’s crop causing yield losses in the Lower and Southern Murray Mallee areas where hail storms destroyed crops in 2016 (the fallen grain providing a food source).

• More ‘pasture topping’ and less elimination of grasses from pastures during spring on Eyre Peninsula increases the risk of certain cereal root diseases in the new season cereal crops.

• High numbers of Russian wheat aphids caused some crop damage on Eyre Peninsula before crops were sprayed for the pest.

PASTURES

• Pasture feed levels in the Central Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and South East are high with pastures still green in parts of the Lower South East. In other areas of the State, pasture feed reserves are low and rain has reduced the quality of the remaining feed.

• Farmers on Eyre Peninsula have sold surplus stock due to concerns about low amounts of paddock feed.

• Farmers on Eyre Peninsula replenished feed grain supplies and are buying in hay from other areas of the state to provide supplementary feed to livestock when required.

• Livestock are grazing crop stubbles which have reasonable amounts of feed from split grain and volunteer growth, but feed is quickly being eaten by livestock.

• A number of farmers have sown summer forage crops, including sorghum and millet, following November and December rains.

• Perennial pastures have responded well to late rains and warm conditions and produced a large amount of biomass.

• The humid weather in early December resulted in some sheep being fly struck.

KEY LINKS TO OTHER INFORMATION


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.
## Crop Estimates

**TABLE 1: CROP ESTIMATES BY DISTRICT**

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

JANUARY 2018    CROP AND PASTURE REPORT SOUTH AUSTRALIA    PAGE 7
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District Reports

Western Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- November rainfall varied from above average in the east to below average in the north west of the district. December rainfall was average to above average.
- Mean maximum temperatures were above average for November and average to above average in December.
- Mean minimum temperatures were very much above average for November and average to above average for December.

CROPS

- Good conditions for harvest enabled most Western Eyre Peninsula farmers to finish in early December.
- Crop yields were highly variable depending on rainfall distribution, summer weed control and soil type but were generally better than expected given the challenging season.
- Cereal yields in the Far West were average to slightly below average with reports of 0.8 to 1.1 t/ha. Earlier-sown crops around Wirrulla/Nunjikompita yielded better, and achieved 1.0 to 1.3 t/ha depending upon summer weed control and time of sowing.
- Crops yielded very poorly on heavier soils near Wudinna, however there were reports of yields above 3.5 t/ha on the loamier soils south of Wudinna.
- Grain quality was generally good with very high protein; much of the wheat delivered achieved AH classification.
- In coastal districts where a high percentage of malting barley varieties are grown, high protein levels reduced the amount of barley achieving malt grade.
- Significant yield penalties occurred on paddocks where Russian wheat aphid were not controlled. Some farmers reported yield differences of up to 1.0 t/ha with poorer grain quality compared to treated paddocks.
- Few canola and pulse crops were sown at Mt Cooper this season. Canola yields in the Wudinna district were in the range 0.7 to 1.0 t/ha and peas were up to 1.4 t/ha when not affected by frost. Lentil yields were generally disappointing with reports of 0.5 to 0.7 t/ha.
- Farmers are concerned about increased mice numbers around Mudamuckla and Wirrulla, and many intend to bait vulnerable cropping paddocks early in 2018 to minimise the risk of crop damage.
- Snails did not cause contamination at harvest as most growers had a number of opportunities to control them during the season.
- Warm, damp conditions during December resulted in rapid germination and growth of summer weeds and volunteer cereals.
- Soil moisture levels are generally low.

PASTURES

- Livestock are in generally good condition.
- Farmers have already sold surplus stock due to concerns about low amounts of paddock feed supplies.
- Farm feed grain reserves have been replenished and hay is being bought from other areas of the State.
Lower Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- Regular thunderstorms throughout November and December resulted in above average rainfall for this period.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for November and average for December.
- A number of hot, windy days were experienced toward the end of December.

CROPS

- Damp conditions delayed the harvest of ripe crops. Many farmers worked long hours to reap high value crops such as lentils and canola before forecast wet weather.
- There has been a rapid germination and growth of summer weeds and volunteer crops following the rain. Farmers who finished harvest early have sprayed significant areas of their property while those still harvesting will spray paddocks in early January.
- Crop yields and quality were highly variable, but generally better than expected, given patchy opening rains and dry conditions in spring.
- Canola and pulses were harvested toward the end of November. Pulse crops generally yielded poorly with peas, lentils and beans producing less than 1.0 t/ha and lupins 1.0 to 1.5 t/ha. Canola yields ranged from 0.6 to 0.7 t/ha around Cockaleechie and Ungarra, to 1.4 to 2.0 t/ha near Kapinnie, Cummins and Wanilla. Oil content was generally good, between 43 and 46%.
- In districts where crops were sown early, cereal yields were around the long term average. Reports of 2.0 to 3.5 t/ha were common around Lock, Karkoo, Kapinnie and Koppio, and 3.0 to 4.0 t/ha on the better soil types around Cummins. Where dry conditions led to late sowing as seen at Ungarra and Cockaleechie, crop production was below average, with yields of 1.5 to 2.0 t/ha.
- Wheat grain protein levels were generally good and a high proportion of wheat achieved AH and APW classification. Higher-yielding crops were generally only ASW. Barley quality was also good with many farmers achieving malt grade on malting varieties and the remainder making F1.
- Apart from minor sprouting of some wheat crops and low grain test weights, there were no reports of high levels of screenings or other effects on grain quality caused by the late rains.
- As there was more ‘pasture topping’ in spring rather than early control of grasses in pastures there is an increased risk of cereal root diseases such as take-all in new season cereal crops.
- Most farmers are intending to apply seed dressings to protect cereal crops against the threat of Russian wheat aphids. Many have already ordered or had the seed treatment delivered in preparation for this.
- Most soils contain some stored moisture as a result of rainfall after crop maturity.

PASTURES

- Livestock are in excellent condition.
- Late rains produced some green feed in paddocks but reduced the feed quality of stubbles.
- Farmers have replenished feed grain supplies and are buying hay from other areas of the state in expectation of the need for supplementary feed in late summer to maintain livestock condition.
- A number of farmers have sown summer forage crops, including sorghum and millet, following rains in November and December.
- Perennial pastures have responded well to late rains and warm conditions, producing a large amount of biomass.
Eastern Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- Rainfall was well above average for November and December.
- Mean maximum temperatures were above average for November and average for December, with only a few hot windy days toward the end of the month.

CROPS

- Despite wet weather delaying harvest, most farmers finished by mid-December.
- Warm days and rain led to rapid germination and growth of summer weeds and volunteer crops. Farmers began spraying herbicide to control weeds immediately after finishing harvest.
- Cereal yields were highly variable across the region. Crops north of Kimba and around Cowell which were not impacted by frost or Russian wheat aphids yielded above average. Reports of wheat crops yielding 2.0 to 2.5 t/ha at Kimba/Buckleboo and 3.0 to 4.0 t/ha near Cowell were common.
- Crop yields were well below average south of Waddikee, around Darke Peak, Kielpa, Verran and Wharminda.
- Much of the earlier-sown wheat achieved hard classification. Lower protein on higher yielding paddocks resulted in about 50% of the wheat being delivered as ASW.
- Screenings were slightly higher than average, however low test weights and sprouted grain had the biggest impact on cereal grain quality.
- Pea crops yielded well (2.0 t/ha) but lentil and lupin yields were variable from 0.3 to 1.0 t/ha, depending on soil type and rainfall distribution. There were reports of small areas of lentils yielding exceptionally well, around 1.6 t/ha.
- Canola yields were below average at 0.6 to 0.8 t/ha. Oil content varied from 35% to 46%.
- More ‘pasture topping’ for seed set reduction, rather than earlier control of grass in pastures last spring, could increase the risk of cereal root diseases such as take-all in this year’s wheat crops.
- Farmers are concerned about the potential damage from Russian wheat aphid in crops next year and the majority intend to treat at least a portion of their seed with an insecticidal seed treatment.
- Snail and mice numbers at harvest were generally low due to in-season control measures.
- Most soils contain some moisture at depth resulting from rains received after crop maturity.

PASTURES

- Livestock are in excellent condition; most growers sold surplus stock to decrease the demand for feed over summer.
- Most paddocks currently contain some feed as stubble or summer weeds and volunteer crops.
- A number of farmers have taken advantage of the late rainfall to sow summer forage crops such as sorghum, canola and millet.
- Farmers have replenished supplies of feed grain and are purchasing hay to ensure adequate supplies for supplementary feeding in late summer.
Upper North

WEATHER

- Rainfall was above average on the western edge of the district in November and average in the remainder of the district.
- December rainfall was above average to very much above average across the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were above average for November and average for December. Mean minimum temperatures were very much above average for November and average to above average for December.

CROPS

- Despite numerous harvest delays due to cool, wet weather, most farmers completed harvest by the middle of December and all had finished by the end of December.
- Early sown crops, in paddocks with good summer weed control and in areas with better rainfall, achieved average to slightly above average yields.
- Later-sown crops or those sown into paddocks with poor or no summer weed control, suffered moisture stress and yielded below average. In the north eastern part of the district from Yongala to Quorn, yields were below average.
- Most pulse crops generally yielded below average with the warm, dry conditions in spring reducing yields; beans and later-sown pea crops the worst affected.
- Canola crops were disappointing with most farmers reporting lower yields than expected and most crops yielding below average.
- Most barley was reaped before the rain with a high percentage of malting varieties making malting grade.
- Before the rain in late November, most wheat crops were being classified as hard or APW but following the rain, test weights fell and a high percentage of the crop was down-graded to General Purpose.
- The rain in late November and December resulted in a germination of summer weeds and volunteer crops. Farmers commenced spraying herbicide immediately after harvest.

PASTURES

- Rain in December provided adequate green feed in stubble paddocks, although quality of stubbles was reduced.
- The wet and humid conditions in early December resulted in increased fly strike of sheep.
- Livestock are in good condition with most farmers having adequate hay and grain supplies to maintain livestock numbers.
- Lucerne stands responded to the November and December rain with rapid growth of quality feed.
Mid North

WEATHER

- Rainfall was generally average in most of the district in November and above average in December.
- Mean maximum temperatures were above average for November and average for December.
- Mean minimum temperatures were very much above average for November and average for December.

CROPS

- Harvest was delayed by rainfall in December but most farmers finished by the end of December with only a few farmers still harvesting in the New Year.
- Cereal crops generally yielded as expected with early sown crops and those in areas of better rainfall above average. Later-sown crops yielded below average.
- Wheat harvested before the rain was of excellent quality with low screenings and moderate to high protein with most graded as APW or Hard. A high percentage of barley malting varieties were graded as malt.
- Much of the unharvested wheat and barley was downgraded after rains in late November and early December.
- Canola yields were slightly lower than expected with most yielding below average. Crops that were direct-headed yielded as well as windrowed crops and most farmers are likely to continue direct-heading in the future.
- There were high levels of cabbage aphids in many canola crops and some farmers sprayed two or even three times to get effective control. Oil content was highly variable with some very low levels due to aphid damage.
- Bean crops were very disappointing with most crops yielding well below average so the area sown to beans is likely to continue to decline.
- Lentil yields were variable with some high-yielding crops but most were average to below average.
- Early-sown pea crops yielded average to above average but later-sown crops were below average.
- Mice caused some damage to crops just prior to harvest but damage was generally relatively minor.
- Volunteer crops and summer weeds germinated following rain in late November and early December, farmers commenced controlling this growth once harvest was completed.

PASTURES

- Pasture feed is very limited across the district. Stubble feed supplies are adequate but being quickly eaten by livestock.
- There is still plenty of cheap, moderate quality hay available, which should ensure adequate feed supplies.
- Farmers with livestock might be considering increasing stock numbers, given current good returns, however intensive croppers are unlikely to move into livestock as they have little appropriate infrastructure.
Lower North

WEATHER

- November rainfall varied from below average in the west to above average in the east of the district.
- December rainfall was average to above average across the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for November and average for December, with only a few hot windy days toward the end of the month.

CROPS

- Harvest in the western part of the district progressed rapidly during November with many farmers completed by early December. Wet weather in late November and early December in the eastern part of the district slowed harvest so that many farmers only finished in late December.
- Cool conditions in October and early November enabled most crops to ripen slowly so that yields in most of the district were average to above average.
- Yields of wheat, barley and lentil crops were average to above average, while canola yields were slightly below average to average.
- Bean crops were affected by the dry conditions and yields were 10 to 15% below average. Pea crops performed well under the dry conditions with low disease levels, resulting in average yields.
- Low levels of disease in chickpea crops led to above average yields.
- Hay yields were average to above average with reasonable quality. The area cut for hay has been significantly reduced as high stocks remaining from last season tempered demand.
- Farmers have cut and baled cereal straw to meet an increased demand for cereal straw from the chicken industry.
- Germination of volunteer cereals and summer weeds in some paddocks has been controlled with herbicide, with careful choice of product taking proximity to sensitive crops and spraying conditions into account.

PASTURES

- Volunteer cereals and summer weeds have provided some feed for livestock but most farmers sprayed this growth, limiting its feed potential.
- There are currently adequate levels of feed available in stubble paddocks but this is being rapidly depleted by livestock.
- Farmers have enough feed grain and hay on hand to provide supplementary feed to stock in late summer.
- Medic seed crops set good quantities of seed and there should be adequate seed supplies available for sowing in 2018.
Yorke Peninsula

WEATHER

- Rainfall for November was average to below average across most of the district.
- Rainfall for December was above average in Northern and Central Yorke Peninsula and above average to very much above average in Southern Yorke Peninsula.
- Mean maximum temperatures were above to very much above average for November and average for December. Mean minimum temperatures have been very much above average for November, and average to above average for December.

CROPS

- Harvest was completed by early January. Cool and wet weather prolonged harvest; some farmers finished in mid-November before the rain, whereas others were still harvesting into the New Year.
- Yields across Yorke Peninsula were highly variable.
- Northern Peninsula had above average yields on loamy-sand soils but some of these areas were affected by frost.
- An area around Kadina suffered moisture stress all season resulting in below average yields. The Paskeville area had a very dry start to the season but well above average July and August rain enabled crops to yield close to average.
- Yields on Central Yorke Peninsula were generally above average, despite the late start to the season. Mild temperatures during grain-fill enabled crops to reach their yield potential. Grain quality was good although some wheat was downgraded, due to low test weight.
- Yields on Southern Yorke Peninsula were generally well above average. Most wheat was only ASW quality due to low protein as a result of the higher than expected yields.
- Cereal grain protein levels were below average and amount of screenings was generally low, except for barley on shallower soils. Very little wheat was downgraded following the November and December rains.
- Most barley was premium feed quality, with small amounts of lower feed grades. Significant amounts of barley of malt varieties were received with low grain protein causing classification as feed.
- Quality of early-harvested lentils was very good but quality deteriorated after high winds and rain.
- Pea samples contained a high number of snails as rainfall during harvest made them active. The dry spring led to less fungicide being needed for disease control.
- Chickpea seed size was larger than previous years with the majority of seed being larger than 8mm which is attributed to the mild finish.
- Conical snails caused problems in pulse crops and cereals along the coast. A lot of seed grading has been undertaken to remove the snails out of grain samples.

PASTURES

- Feed grain reserves have been replenished following harvest but hay levels have been depleted due to the dry growing season and a large amount of hay being fed out through late autumn and winter.
- Volunteer cereals and summer weeds germinated following the rains during harvest and combined with stubbles, should provide some feed over the coming months.
- Livestock condition is considered good to fair.
- Body strike of sheep from blowflies has required monitoring over spring and early summer.
Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula & Kangaroo Island

WEATHER

• Rainfall for November was average to below average and December rainfall was above average to very much above average.

• November mean maximum temperatures were very much above average across all districts and above average for Kangaroo Island and average for Fleurieu and Central Hills for December.

• November mean minimum temperatures were very much above average in all districts and average to above average for December.

CROPS

Central Hills/Fleurieu

• Harvest was delayed by cool and damp weather conditions. Most barley crops have been harvested but harvest of wheat was interrupted.

• Wet weather resulted in some sprouted grain. Wheat was downgraded to ASW and barley downgraded to feed quality due to weather damage.

• Yields of most crops were above average with reports of cereals yielding 4-5 t/ha, canola 2-3 t/ha and faba beans 2.5-3 t/ha.

Kangaroo Island

• Harvest was approximately 75% complete by the end of December. The cool weather and light showers caused some harvest delays.

• Strong winds in late December resulted in some bean losses however most canola had been harvested so was not affected.

• There were no reports of rain affecting grain quality.

• Yields were variable with canola yielding well above average, cereals slightly above and beans below average.

PASTURES

Central Hills/Fleurieu

• Pasture feed levels are excellent across the district.

• Stubble feed quality is variable with rain damage reducing quality but quantity remains high.

• Feed reserves on-farm are of excellent quality and quantity, due to good hay cuts.

• There are no major livestock health issues except for a few reports of sheep fly strike in early December.

Kangaroo Island

• Pasture feed levels are declining rapidly in terms of quality and quantity.

• Stubble feed quality and quantity is variable.

• Feed reserves on-farm are average for grain and slightly below average for hay reserves.

• The humid weather in early December resulted in some sheep being fly struck.

• Stock water supplies are adequate.
Lower Murray

WEATHER

- Rainfall for November and December was average to above average.
- Mean daily maximum temperatures were very much above average for November and average for December. Mean minimum temperatures were very much above average for November and above average for December.
- Windy conditions helped dry crops following rainfall events.

CROPS

- Harvest had started by the end of October with barley, legumes and canola harvested first.
- Rain caused harvest delays in November and early December, however most farmers had finished reaping by mid to late December.
- Early sown crops yielded average to above average but later-sown crops suffered from the dry finish and yielded below average.
- Grain quality was generally good for all crops, however rain in late November and early December reduced test weight and led to down-grading of some wheat.
- Pulse crops generally performed poorly with lower than average yields.
- Elevated mice numbers in the areas affected by the 2016 hail storms have caused yield losses in this year's crop. Fallen grain in the crops destroyed by the storms provided a food source allowing mice numbers to build up.
- Mice numbers are still high in some areas heading into 2018.
- Significant rainfall in November and December germinated summer weeds and farmers were spraying paddocks where possible, since mid-December.
- Apart from several rain delays, harvest was generally straightforward with few problems.
- Hay quality was good where farmers baled before significant rains fell in November.

PASTURES

- Livestock are doing well in stubble paddocks with little supplementary feeding taking place.
- November rain germinated summer weeds that provided some green feed in pasture paddocks however weeds left uncontrolled will become unpalatable and feed quality will decline.
Northern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall was well above average for November and average to above average for December.
- Most areas received close to their average annual rainfall with summer rainfall amounts being similar to amounts falling within the growing season.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for November and average for December. Mean minimum temperatures were very much above average for November and average during December.

CROPS

- Harvest has been completed across the district, with most farmers finishing well before Christmas.
- Average yields were significantly reduced across the district as a result of frost damage being more severe than initially thought. Some farmers estimated yield losses were up to 50% in wheat, pulses and canola, while the average yield loss from frost across the district was about 20%.
- While some areas and early sown wheat crops on pulse stubbles yielded well above average, yields across the district were estimated to be slightly below average.
- Grain quality was initially reported as very good with a high percentage of malt quality barley as well as high protein wheat, however the heavy rains in November resulted in down-grading of quality with some sprouted grain observed in wheat.
- Pulse and canola crops were severely affected by frost and the dry finish to the season, with most crops yielding well below average.
- Rain in November resulted in the germination of summer weeds and volunteer crops and most farmers have sprayed paddocks to control this growth.

PASTURES

- Pasture feed for livestock is generally adequate following the summer rainfall and the availability of crop stubbles.
- Livestock are generally in good condition, with no immediate threat to feed availability or stock health.
Southern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- November rainfall was above average to very much above average and average for December.
- Mean maximum temperatures for November were very much above average and average for December.
- Mean minimum temperatures were very much above average for November and average to above average for December.

CROPS

- Despite harvest delays throughout November and the first half of December due to rain events, most farmers finished harvest by the end of December.
- Rain in November affected grain quality by lowering cereal test weights. Malt barley was downgraded to feed grades and wheat to downgraded from premium grades to general purpose.
- Cereal crops generally yielded average to slightly above average.
- Apart from low test weight, cereal quality was good.
- Canola performed well, achieving reasonable yields and quality. There were some reports of very high oil content.
- Frost damage was patchy with pulse crops the worst affected, however the dry finish also reduced pulse yields.
- Hay crops yielded well and were of good quality apart from areas around Lameroo, where crops were severely weather damaged.
- Mice caused some visible yield losses and are present in stubbles.
- Farmers are already taking action to control mouse numbers.
- Farmers have been spraying summer weeds throughout December and will continue into January.

PASTURES

- Livestock are grazing stubbles and are in very good condition.
- November rains diminished feed quality of stubbles but grain on the ground after harvest is providing high quality feed for livestock.
- Lucerne and veldt grass pastures have benefited from the November rains and are growing well.
Upper South East

WEATHER

- November rainfall was average to very much above average and December rainfall average to above average.
- Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for November and average for December. Minimum temperatures for November were very much above average with most of the district being the highest on record.
- A significant frost event was experienced at the start of November.

CROPS

- Most farmers completed harvest by the end of December with only 5-10% of farmers still to harvest some wheat and barley paddocks. Most of these crops are lower-grade crops as a result of weather damage.
- Some crops of Persian and Balansa clover will be harvested in early January.
- Despite the above average November rainfall, harvest was only extended by approximately one week. Most rainfall events were followed by hot, dry conditions allowing harvest to quickly resume after the rain.
- Whilst temperatures were warmer than normal there were not many fire danger days to disrupt harvest.
- Barley, oats, beans, peas and lupins all yielded average. Wheat and canola yields were 20% above average overall. Lentils yielded 20% below average due to frost.
- Approximately 20% of producers reported some green seed in canola upon delivering grain to the silos. This is suspected to be as a result of the frost damage, with about 5% of the canola seed being affected in isolated loads. Oil content of canola crops was very high with most at 46-47%.
- The top portion of bean plants were also affected by frost which severely affected yields.
- About 5% of wheat was severely affected by frost, causing yield losses of up to 50%. Lentil crops were also severely damaged by frost.
- Approximately 75% of farmers had crops of wheat and barley downgraded due to low grain weight and 40% of farmers had mouldy or discoloured beans.
- Populations of annual ryegrass have increased following two wet seasons and are likely to be difficult to manage in 2018.
- Snails were problematic for about 10% of farmers this year and there are concerns they will be a significant issue in 2018 following the wet summer.

PASTURES

- Farmers have continued to graze livestock on lucerne paddocks rather than removing them to allow lucerne seed production, as returns for lambs are more favourable compared to lucerne seed.
- Dryland lucerne stands responded to the November rainfall and look exceptional.
- Significant amounts of dry feed are available in paddocks but the quality has deteriorated due to rain damage. Late-germinating ryegrass is still green in paddocks and providing good quality feed.
- Large amounts of summer weeds are present in stubbles with sheep deaths reported and attributed to toxic weeds including Chenopodium spp. (goosefoot), heliotrope and Lesser loosestrife.
- There are good hay reserves on most properties.
- Flies have not been a problem for sheep as expected due to better management practices and dry, warm weather following most rain events.
Lower South East

WEATHER

• November rainfall was well above the long term average throughout most of the district.
• December rainfall varied from below average around Kingston and Robe to above average around Frances.
• Mean maximum temperatures were very much above average for November and average to above average for December. Minimum temperatures were the highest on record for November and above average for December.
• Frost was recorded in early November.

CROPS

• Most farmers commenced harvest after Christmas and will not be completed until late January.
• Frost damage has been reported in barley and wheat crops around Naracoorte and Bool Lagoon and has resulted in lower grain test weights.
• Early indications are that pulse crops are yielding close to average.
• Canola crops are only yielding average to slightly above average, although areas not affected by waterlogging yielded well above average. Canola oil content is reported to be around 42%.
• Wheat and barley crops harvested to date are producing average yields.
• There has been significant frost damage to wheat crops with yield losses of up to 15%.
• Hot windy days have also had affected some crops.
• Broad beans are slightly smaller in size than normal but yields are above average so far.
• Waterlogging affected many paddocks but areas in paddocks not waterlogged have better than average yields. This has resulted in the paddock’s overall yield being average.
• There has been no damage to grain as a result of rains during harvest.
• Unavailability of seed cleaners before sowing delayed some farmers from sowing crops until two weeks after the optimum sowing time, resulting in lower yields.
• Earlier-sown crops were more resilient to waterlogging and had better weed control than later-sown crops.
• The amount of annual ryegrass has increased on most properties as a result of consecutive, wet years despite good management practices.

PASTURES

• Pastures are still green in paddocks around and south of Millicent, particularly on heavier soil types. Further north, pasture has died off. Dry feed is still of good quality as there has been little rain since haying off.
• Livestock are in exceptional condition.
• Hay reserves are high with carryover from the previous year. Some producers did not bale hay in some areas as it was too weather damaged.
• Barbers Pole worm has been a significant issue around Naracoorte and Lucindale and has resulted in sheep deaths.
• Footrot has been a greater problem than normal.