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# Crop and Pasture Report South Australia

2013-14 CROPPING INTENTIONS

MAY 2013

growing  
sustainable  
regions



**Government  
of South Australia**

Primary Industries  
and Regions SA

## **CROP AND PASTURE REPORT - SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

This is a report prepared by Rural Solutions SA, for the Agribusiness and Regions Division of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

Information current as of 20 May 2013

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## State Summary

- Timely opening rains across the State have enabled farmers to progress seeding operations under near ideal conditions with the exception of areas with heavier soils (eg on Eastern Eyre Peninsula).
- Farmers in many districts started dry seeding in April.
- Crops sown dry included pasture feed, canola, beans, lupins, oaten hay and some wheat and barley.
- Rainfall during April and early May has been relatively light and patchy across the state.
- Rainfall in mid May has enabled farmers in all parts of the state to begin sowing.
- There was a large variation across districts and even within districts regarding the amount of crop sown by mid May.
- Some farmers were almost finished before their neighbour's had even started seeding.
- In the lower rainfall areas, farmers are concerned about the lack of stored soil moisture.
- Many of the lower rainfall districts of the state will complete seeding by early June, well ahead of the previous two seasons.
- There will be an increase in the area sown to hay across the state to replenish reserves.
- The area sown to canola has been reduced in many districts due to the lack of stored soil moisture and has been replaced with either pulses or wheat.
- Total crop area is likely to remain similar to last season.

### KEY LINKS TO OTHER INFORMATION

Dept Environment and Natural Resources - Land condition monitoring project:

[www.environment.sa.gov.au/Knowledge\\_Bank/Science\\_research/Monitoring\\_evaluation\\_analysis/Monitoring/Soil\\_and\\_land\\_condition](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/Knowledge_Bank/Science_research/Monitoring_evaluation_analysis/Monitoring/Soil_and_land_condition)

Bureau of Meteorology - Weather and rainfall observations:

[www.bom.gov.au](http://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 as available.

# District Reports

## Eyre Peninsula

- Crop area across the Eyre Peninsula will remain similar to previous years.
- Most Western Eyre Peninsula farmers are well advanced with their sowing program and should finish by end of May.
- Most Lower Eyre Peninsula farmers are 60-70% completed at this time.
- On Eastern Eyre Peninsula, most farmers have sown the lighter soils, but on the heavier soils around Kimba and Cleve Hills further rain will be needed to enable farmers to complete seeding.
- Most farmers are feeling reasonably confident given good falls in April, but are waiting for further follow-up rains.

## Upper North

- Most farmers sowed some pasture feed dry and approximately 50% of farmers sowed some crop dry.
- Rainfall in late April was patchy, but allowed some crop to be established in most areas and dry sown crops have emerged.
- In the western part of the district farmers are well into their seeding program (80-90% complete) with a number already finished. East of the ranges canola, beans, vetch, lupins and oats have all been sown with small amounts of wheat and barley.
- The northern part of the district has only received light patchy falls of rain and some farmers have not sown any crop to date and are concerned about a lack of stored soil moisture and no pasture feed for livestock.
- Area sown to canola will be significantly reduced with most farmers sowing lower risk crops due to low soil moisture levels.

## Mid North & Lower North

- Earlier districts have almost finished seeding and in later districts have sown canola, hay, beans and some wheat and barley (50% complete).
- Conditions are ideal with adequate soil moisture.
- Rain to date has only wetted the top 15 cm of soil and below average rains in winter would result in lower yields.
- A reduced area sown to canola and increased area of wheat is expected.

## Yorke Peninsula

- On Southern Yorke Peninsula seeding is progressing on time with approximately 10% sown.
- Despite low sub-soil moisture farmers in Southern Yorke Peninsula realise that in-season rainfall is far more important for final yields.
- More chickpea and beans and less canola are expected to be sown.

- Upper Yorke Peninsula is probably 60% sown, with more concern about lack of soil moisture.
- There has been a slow increase in the number of livestock across Yorke Peninsula over the past few years and this is continuing.

## Kangaroo Island and Fleurieu Peninsula

- On Kangaroo Island about 25% of area has been sown, while on the Fleurieu Peninsula seeding has only just commenced with less than 20% sown.
- Farmers are optimistic in this district given the rain in mid-May, with rains totaling between 15 and 25 mm across the island for the month to date.
- On Kangaroo Island, the main change has been a 30 % decrease in areas sown to canola with a corresponding 30 % increase in sowing to Broad beans. Wheat will be similar to last year.
- There is an expected increase in area sown to hay (cereal mix) on the Fleurieu Peninsula as hay reserves are very low after last season.

## Murray Plains

- Rainfall has been very variable and patchy.
- Some farmers are dry sowing.
- There is likely to be a decrease in area sown to canola and increased area of hay to replenish reserves.
- Across the Mallee there has been considerable variation in rainfall.
- Generally farmers are feeling confident about the start to the season, having most of the crop in early with enough early rain even though they do not have the deep soil moisture insurance of last season.
- Most farmers are continuing with their planned cropping program in the expectation/hope that the rain will continue.
- Canola growing has increased as a good rotational break along with other pulses (often for grazing and grass control), and this has been encouraged by many consultants. Clearfield varieties are also being used for grass control.

## Murray Mallee

- At least 75% has been sown in the Northern Mallee and seeding will be finished by early June.
- Most of the crop has emerged, particularly canola and legumes which were mostly sown dry.
- Crops were sown with no or limited subsoil moisture. Since then there have been about 3 rainfall events of generally between 8mm and 15mm with moisture in the top 20-30cm making it ideal for crop growth.
- In the Southern Mallee approximately 25-50% has been sown.

## Upper South East

- 5-10% producers dry sowed crops.

- Early dry sown crops included some beans but mostly cereals for early feed as most producers are still facing a feed deficit for livestock.
- 80% farmers waited for the recent break before starting seeding and are now well underway.
- Some are waiting for good weed germination and control before they commence seeding.
- Farmers overall are feeling positive and confident since the break with good rain forecast for future weeks.
- Most farmers have maintained their original crop and pasture programs.
- There are reports of Lucerne paddocks dying out due to no moisture and overgrazing. These paddocks are planned to be re-sown even though they were not in many farmer's original programs for this year.

## Lower South East

- Less than 5% of farmers dry seeded and the crops dry seeded were predominantly hay crops and pasture.
- Most farmers are actively seeding now since the last rain.
- Farmers are still a little apprehensive about temperatures getting too low for optimal growth but overall most are feeling more confident about the season.
- There was very poor weed germination and this may cause issues later.
- Most farmers have maintained original crop and pasture intentions.
- There has been a decrease in the establishment of new permanent pastures due to the decline of sheep and cattle prices.

## Timetable for 2013-14 Crop and Pasture Reports

This Report describes conditions current at 20 May 2013.

To assist transparency and industry certainty the planned schedule for future releases of Crop and Pasture Reports is provided below. In each case the release of the report is scheduled for the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of the month.

Seeding and crop establishment	5 July 2013
Winter Crop Performance	6 September 2013
Spring Crop Performance	7 November 2013
Harvest	7 January 2014
Crop performance summary and final crop estimates	7 March 2014