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Crop and Pasture Report South Australia

2015-16 SPRING CROP PERFORMANCE

NOVEMBER 2015

PREMIUM
FOOD AND WINE FROM OUR
CLEAN
ENVIRONMENT



Government
of South Australia

Primary Industries
and Regions SA

Crop and Pasture Report - South Australia

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

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ALL ENQUIRIES

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State Summary

WEATHER

- Rainfall for September ranged from very much below average in parts of the South East to average in the Northern Mallee and parts of Eyre Peninsula.
- October rainfall was the lowest on record for most of the Lower South East and very much below average for most of the agricultural areas. The Northern Mallee and parts of the Mid and Upper North were below average.
- Growing season rainfall ranged from very much below average in the South East and parts of the Southern Mallee, Southern Yorke Peninsula and Lower Eyre Peninsula to average in the Upper North and Central Eyre Peninsula.
- Mean maximum temperatures for September were near average for most of the State.
- Hot windy conditions were observed on the 4th and 5th October across the State's agricultural areas.
- Mean maximum temperatures for October were the highest on record for the majority of the State with only Lower Eyre Peninsula, Western Kangaroo Island and the Lower Lakes area being very much above average.

CROPS

- Harvest began in the Upper North in early October and other districts began soon after. This is two to three weeks earlier than usual in most areas of the State.
- Significant loss of crop yield potential has occurred in most districts as a result of below average September rainfall combined with hot windy conditions in early October resulting in stressed crops.
- At the end of September yield potential on most of Eyre Peninsula and the Upper, Mid and Lower North was well above average. Hot dry conditions reduced crop yield potential in these areas by between 10 to 30% to average to above average.
- In other parts of the State, particularly the Lower Murray, Southern Mallee and Upper South East the combination of frost, dry conditions and heat has reduced yield potential to well below average.
- Barley grain quality is variable depending on yield potential (bio-mass) and stored soil moisture. Barley crops with high yield potential and low stored soil moisture suffered the worst producing small-sized grain with high levels of screenings causing downgrading to feed grades. Barley crops with sufficient stored soil moisture to fill grains made malting or higher grades of feed.
- Significant areas of crop have been cut for hay in the Southern Mallee, Upper South East and Mid North, due to frost and the dry conditions reducing grain yield potential. The quality of the hay has been very good but yields have varied from relatively low in parts of the Upper South East to very high in the Mid North.
- In the Upper South East, cereals, beans and canola crops were all cut for hay.
- Some Mid North producers with hay machinery have opted to cut a significant proportion of their crop for hay, given the high prices being offered and the high crop biomass.
- Canola crops had generally finished flowering before the hot weather so yields were not as severely affected as the pulse crops. Yields are likely to be average to below average with early reports of reasonable oil content.
- Foliar diseases began to build-up in early September and most farmers applied protective fungicides to susceptible crops.
- Pulse crops appear to be the worst affected by the hot dry conditions with pea, bean and lentil crops likely to be 30 to 50% below average in most areas of the State.

- Bean crops had generally grown exceptionally well but had not set pods due to the cool conditions in August and early September. The hot windy conditions in early October caused crops to abort flowers with very few pods set in many crops, resulting in well below average yields.
- Lentil crops have also been severely impacted by the hot dry conditions with yields losses of 30% or more in most areas of the State.
- The dust produced during lentil harvest is highly flammable and numerous fires have been started during harvest. Farmers are regularly cleaning harvesting machinery to prevent the build-up of flammable material to reduce risk of fire, slowing the harvesting operation.

PASTURES

- The hot dry conditions in early October caused annual pastures to dry off rapidly across the State.
- Good medic growth in some parts of the State enabled farmers to cut good quality hay to replenish fodder reserves.
- Pasture growth across the State is highly variable with good levels of quality feed on Eastern and Lower Eyre Peninsula and the Upper North, but very limited pastures in most of the Mallee and Upper South East.
- In the Southern Mallee and Upper South East farmers are moving livestock onto stubbles as soon as crops are harvested, however once these have been grazed stock will need to be supplementary fed.
- Livestock are generally in good to excellent condition across the State, despite the dry spring.
- In the South East livestock are being turned off earlier than normal at lower weights but while they are still in good condition.

KEY LINKS TO OTHER INFORMATION

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

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.

Supplement: Early November Weather Impacts

(Information as at 6 November 2015)

- Severe storms and rain traversed the State's cereal zone on 3 and 4 November 2015.
- Rainfall observations varied from 7mm up to 30mm with more significant isolated rainfall occurring under thunderstorms. Extreme observations for Tuesday include Redhill (55mm, two day total 90mm), Port Pirie (87mm) and Cleve (61mm). For Wednesday extreme observations include Copeville (55mm), Keith (59mm) Jamestown (88mm with two day total 107mm), Stockport (70mm) and Tarlee (70mm).
- It is normal for several rain events to occur during the grain harvest with the rains of 3rd and 4th November 2015 being the first significant rain for this harvest.
- For most of the State, harvest operations will resume around 8th November with first deliveries expected on Monday 9th November with minimal impact on crop yields.
- Normally grain quality is minimally affected provided the rain is followed by good drying conditions as is forecast with fresh SW winds late in the week followed by temperatures increasing to the low to mid-30°C temperatures across the State on 8th November.
- Pulse crops (particularly beans and lentils) may have some discolouration resulting in downgrading, but this will not be known until post-rain harvest deliveries are assessed.
- Grain quality (e.g. shot grain) of wheat and barley usually becomes more prevalent if ripe unharvested crops are rained on several times or where the crop remains damp after rain for extended periods beyond a few days. Cereal grain quality is not expected to be significantly poorer as the conditions following the rain has been good for crop drying in most areas. However, Viterro are preparing to assess crop deliveries with the resumption of harvest.
- In some districts, heavy rains under the storms has left some paddocks temporally flooded in places. Harvesting will be difficult in boggy paddocks and area of crops in standing water may not be harvested or at least harvest delayed until the areas dry out.
- Crops impacted by the heavy storms may have lodged (fallen over), which makes harvest more problematic but yield losses are minimal with correct harvest techniques.
- The only reports of hail damaged crop came on 4 November in the mid north in isolated areas including, Red Hill and Burra.
- The rain may have impact on feed quality in pastures increasing reliance on stored fodder reserves for feeding livestock.
- While the severely impacted areas are not widespread, PIRSA will continue to assess the impacts and include information in a later update of the Crop and Pasture Report.

Crop Estimates

TABLE 1 CROP ESTIMATES BY DISTRICT

		Western Eyre Peninsula	Lower Eyre Peninsula	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	Yorke Peninsula	Upper North	Mid North	Lower North	Kangaroo Island
Wheat	<i>ha</i>	470 000	145 000	392 000	165 000	228 000	234 000	56 500	5 800
	<i>t</i>	705 000	465 000	784 000	429 000	433 000	585 000	159 000	14 000
Durum	<i>ha</i>	0	0	0	20 000	9 500	8 500	6 500	0
	<i>t</i>	0	0	0	35 000	17 000	14 500	14 500	0
Barley	<i>ha</i>	58 000	66 000	71 000	168 000	102 000	100 000	32 000	1 800
	<i>t</i>	94 000	224 000	156 000	428 000	193 000	251 000	90 000	5 000
Oats	<i>ha</i>	16 500	3 200	6 000	4 000	4 500	5 000	1 500	3 300
	<i>t</i>	19 500	8 000	8 500	8 000	6 500	10 000	3 300	8 000
Rye	<i>ha</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<i>t</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Triticale	<i>ha</i>	400	500	500	1 000	1 500	1 700	500	0
	<i>t</i>	550	1 500	800	2 200	3 000	4 250	1 250	0
Peas	<i>ha</i>	4 800	4 500	5 500	16 000	27 000	23 000	6 700	400
	<i>t</i>	4 300	6 700	5 500	21 000	26 500	23 000	8 700	550
Lupins	<i>ha</i>	1 500	26 000	5 500	1 000	3 500	1 800	500	1 000
	<i>t</i>	1 350	42 500	6 000	1 050	3 600	2 200	650	1 500
Beans	<i>ha</i>	0	6 000	400	12 500	7 200	13 500	6 000	3 500
	<i>t</i>	0	8 500	250	14 500	5 000	14 800	7 200	5 000
Chickpeas	<i>ha</i>	0	400	200	8 500	3 200	5 000	1 000	0
	<i>t</i>	0	500	140	9 800	2 600	4 000	1 100	0
Lentils	<i>ha</i>	0	2 000	200	93 000	4 000	12 500	6 200	0
	<i>t</i>	0	2 200	160	89 000	4 000	11 500	6 200	0
Vetch	<i>ha</i>	2 400	1 800	2 000	2 000	5 500	5 000	300	0
	<i>t</i>	1 200	1 400	1 000	2 000	1 600	1 000	250	0
Canola	<i>ha</i>	5 300	63 000	10 000	23 000	23 000	26 000	4 200	2 200
	<i>t</i>	5 300	114 000	10 000	36 000	29 000	40 000	4 600	4 000
Hay (not in total)	<i>ha</i>	4 500	4 500	2 500	22 000	27 500	45 500	6 500	7 000
	<i>t</i>	13 800	27 000	9 000	120 000	132 000	228 000	33 000	29 000
Total	<i>ha</i>	558 900	318 400	493 300	514 000	418 900	436 000	121 900	18 000
	<i>t</i>	831 200	874 300	972 350	1 075 550	724 800	961 250	296 750	38 050

TABLE 1 CROP ESTIMATES BY DISTRICT (CONT)

		Central Hills & Fleurieu	Lower Murray	Nth Murray Mallee	Sth Murray Mallee	Upper South East	Lower South East	State Total
Wheat	<i>ha</i>	5 200	69 000	245 000	129 000	53 000	22 000	2 219 500
	<i>t</i>	12 000	103 000	294 000	142 000	80 000	75 000	4 280 000
Durum	<i>ha</i>	300	800	300	0	6 500	0	52 400
	<i>t</i>	500	800	300	0	9 000	0	91 600
Barley	<i>ha</i>	10 000	59 000	56 000	88 000	30 000	5 500	847 300
	<i>t</i>	23 000	88 000	83 000	106 000	45 000	19 000	1 805 000
Oats	<i>ha</i>	1 800	3 000	2 800	3 400	12 200	4 000	71 200
	<i>t</i>	4 100	3 600	3 300	3 400	14 500	9 500	110 200
Rye	<i>ha</i>	0	2 000	2 400	2 500	500	0	7 400
	<i>t</i>	0	1 800	2 100	1 500	400	0	5 800
Triticale	<i>ha</i>	500	2 800	5 000	6 500	1 000	500	22 400
	<i>t</i>	1 100	3 200	5 500	6 500	1 500	1 700	33 050
Peas	<i>ha</i>	1 500	4 500	2 400	3 600	3 000	400	103 300
	<i>t</i>	2 100	3 100	1 200	1 500	3 000	900	108 050
Lupins	<i>ha</i>	2 000	2 000	2 400	10 000	16 500	3 000	76 700
	<i>t</i>	2 800	1 500	1 200	6 000	18 500	4 800	93 650
Beans	<i>ha</i>	400	200	0	1 200	8 000	10 000	68 900
	<i>t</i>	600	120	0	350	6 000	15 000	77 320
Chickpeas	<i>ha</i>	200	0	800	1 000	200	200	20 700
	<i>t</i>	250	0	550	800	180	250	20 170
Lentils	<i>ha</i>	200	0	400	1 000	3 000	200	122 700
	<i>t</i>	200	0	200	400	2 500	320	116 680
Vetch	<i>ha</i>	0	1 200	3 600	5 000	800	0	29 600
	<i>t</i>	0	350	1 800	1 800	400	0	12 800
Canola	<i>ha</i>	4 300	4 000	11 000	5 500	26 000	12 500	220 000
	<i>t</i>	7 700	3 600	5 500	4 600	34 000	24 000	322 300
Hay (not in total)	<i>ha</i>	23 000	7 200	2 500	13 500	48 000	27 500	241 700
	<i>t</i>	117 000	25 000	5 000	47 000	153 000	116 000	1 054 800
Total	<i>ha</i>	26 400	148 500	332 100	256 700	160 700	58 300	3 862 100
	<i>t</i>	54 350	209 070	398 650	274 850	214 980	150 470	7 076 620

TABLE 2 CROP ESTIMATES AGAINST FIVE YEAR AVERAGE

		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	5 year ave	2015/16
Wheat	<i>ha</i>	2 237 100	2 226 100	2 176 300	2 295 900	2 236 000	2 234 300	2 219 500
	<i>t</i>	5 818 500	4 444 800	3 556 500	4 976 000	4 672 000	4 693 600	4 280 000
Durum	<i>ha</i>	69 800	74 600	77 200	68 300	51 300	68 200	52 400
	<i>t</i>	240 600	223 950	181 240	194 930	118 250	191 800	91 600
Barley	<i>ha</i>	965 200	987 700	907 100	854 900	804 000	903 800	847 300
	<i>t</i>	2 839 100	2 031 800	1 912 900	2 093 500	1 922 000	2 159 900	1 805 000
Oats	<i>ha</i>	75 300	75 800	85 800	85 000	73 300	79 000	71 200
	<i>t</i>	152 300	117 400	128 740	159 700	120 700	135 800	110 200
Rye	<i>ha</i>	9 500	9 500	9 500	7 100	9 000	8 900	7 400
	<i>t</i>	11 600	7 900	7 500	6 350	9 300	8 500	5 800
Triticale	<i>ha</i>	85 700	80 200	69 200	49 300	27 100	62 300	22 400
	<i>t</i>	167 100	117 500	95 920	86 500	44 300	102 300	33 050
Peas	<i>ha</i>	126 300	109 900	103 700	106 100	98 000	108 800	103 300
	<i>t</i>	238 500	144 400	116 100	143 250	114 600	151 400	108 050
Lupins	<i>ha</i>	64 900	64 900	63 200	69 300	64 700	65 400	76 700
	<i>t</i>	120 100	78 900	75 110	105 500	72 250	90 400	93 650
Beans	<i>ha</i>	71 500	72 200	69 400	69 000	65 600	69 500	68 900
	<i>t</i>	168 600	121 220	105 510	139 400	93 900	125 700	77 320
Chickpeas	<i>ha</i>	10 700	12 200	19 700	20 700	19 700	16 600	20 700
	<i>t</i>	16 000	19 550	21 810	29 280	20 250	21 400	20 170
Lentils	<i>ha</i>	97 700	106 100	88 800	94 800	106 200	98 700	122 700
	<i>t</i>	174 350	181 600	97 720	163 350	152 350	153 900	116 680
Vetch	<i>ha</i>	12 800	13 100	13 100	17 000	23 200	15 800	29 600
	<i>t</i>	12 900	11 120	6 800	14 320	13 150	11 700	12 800
Canola	<i>ha</i>	196 500	269 500	302 700	301 000	321 200	278 200	220 000
	<i>t</i>	381 700	435 700	398 700	434 400	313 800	392 900	322 300
Hay (not in total)	<i>ha</i>	244 200	201 500	204 500	227 300	211 500	217 800	241 700
	<i>t</i>	1 066 000	774 400	769 000	1 018 100	763 000	878 100	1 054 800
Total	<i>ha</i>	4 023 000	4 101 800	3 985 700	4 038 400	3 899 300	4 009 600	3 862 100
	<i>t</i>	10 341 350	7 935 840	6 704 550	8 546 480	7 666 900	8 239 000	7 076 600

District Reports

Western Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- September rainfall was below average in the Far West and average in the rest of the district. Rainfall in October was very much below average across the district.
- Growing season rainfall was below average in a strip along the coast from Smoky Bay to south of Elliston and average for the remainder of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were above average in the Far West and average in the remainder of the district in September and the highest on record for October.

CROPS

- Some crops in earlier maturing Far West districts were harvested in the first two weeks of October but the majority of growers only began towards the end of October.
- Much of the crop in the Streaky Bay and Piednippie districts is considered too poor to harvest because of the dry seasonal conditions. The best wheat crops in these areas are expected to yield 0.8 t/ha.
- The hot north winds experienced early in the month are expected to reduce yields by up to 20%. Despite this farmers are reporting barley yields at or slightly above the long term average.
- Barley yields have been good with reports of 3 to 3.5 t/ha common. Some exceptional yields of up to 5 t/ha have been reported on early-sown crops in the Wudinna and Kyancutta districts.
- Canola yields of 1.2 to 1.5 t/ha have been reported in the areas around Mount Cooper, Wudinna and Kyancutta which received good rainfall over the growing season. Oil content has also been good.
- Cereal grain quality has been variable with high screenings and low test weights being the main problems.
- Most growers are yet to start harvesting wheat but reports of early wheat yields from Port Kenny and Kyancutta have been in the order of 3.5 t/ha
- Pea crops around Wudinna suffered some light frost damage and some damage from a late flight of native budworm. Despite this, yields of 0.8 to 1.0 t/ha are being reported.
- Minor native budworm damage on pulse crops.
- Reports of snail and mice numbers to date have been low, with minimal impact on harvest or grain delivery

PASTURES

- Good winter growing conditions over much of the region resulted in high levels of biomass in late spring allowing growers to cut hay from medic pastures and cereal crops to restore farm supplies fed out over autumn.
- Pasture paddocks contained high levels of dry matter at the end of spring.
- Farmers are moving livestock onto stubbles after harvest.
- Many producers spray-topped medic pastures to reduce grass weed seed set.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.
- Growers in the drier districts around Streaky Bay de-stocked early and bought hay where necessary to provide sufficient feed over summer.

Lower Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average in most of the district for September and very much below average in October.
- Growing season rainfall was below to very much below average in the south and west of the district and average in the east.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for September and very much above average in the south and the highest on record in the north of the district for October.

CROPS

- The last significant rainfall in the region was received on September 1. Crops dried out the soil profile as they utilised soil moisture to fill grain.
- Although affected by the hot dry conditions yields are still expected to be above average.
- Harvest is less than 20% complete for the region. Canola paddocks were windrowed throughout October with farmers beginning to harvest windrows in the last week of October.
- Growers are generally confident that canola yields will be above average with most crops in the region expected to yield better than 1.5 t/ha. Early yield reports from Ungarra, Edillilie and Yeelanna are in the range 1.8 to 2.3 t/ha with good oil content.
- Many farmers have windrowed barley crops this season to induce even ripening and prevent head loss at harvest. There have also been isolated reports of growers windrowing lupins to prevent pod shattering at harvest.
- Early barley yields have been above average with reports of 4.0 to 4.5 t/ha common.
- Few farmers have begun harvesting wheat yet.
- Grain quality has been highly variable depending on soil type with reports of low test weights and high screenings. Grain from some crops had over 40% screenings.
- Pests and diseases have had little impact on canola and cereal crops late in the season. Most farmers applied preventative treatments for stripe rust. This, combined with a dry finish, resulted in little infection in crops.
- Despite good growing conditions producing bulky bean crops, hot windy conditions experienced at flowering are expected to significantly limit bean yields with many crops only podding on the upper third of the stem.
- Native budworm was reported in crops in late October. While this was too late to cause significant damage to canola crops, there are reports of high infestations in lupin, bean and pea crops, resulting in some crop damage.

PASTURES

- Good growing conditions over winter produced a high amount of biomass in pastures and paddocks sown for hay. The area cut for hay was above average with producers replenishing on-farm supplies that were used over the autumn period.
- Although feed supplies in pasture paddocks have reduced with the dry spring conditions, there is a large amount of biomass in stubbles which livestock will be able to utilise as harvest is completed.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.

Eastern Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- September rainfall was average in the west and below average in the east of the district. October rainfall was very much below average across the district.
- Growing season rainfall was average in the southern and western part of the district and below average in the Kimba/Buckleboo areas.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for September and the highest on record for October.

CROPS

- Crop ripening has been highly variable across the region depending on soil type and early rain events.
- Most growers began harvest toward the end of October with early-sown crops in the coastal Arno Bay and Franklin Harbor districts maturing first and crops in the Cleve Hills maturing at least 10 days later than most of the region.
- Harvest is less than 30% completed across the district. Yields have reflected the variability in soil type and rainfall across the region with below average yields on the heavier red soils near Buckleboo and above average yields on the lighter textured soils near Wharminda and Darke Peake.
- Whilst the majority of the region received good growing season rainfall, low winter rainfall in the Yalanda district east of Kimba, Buckleboo and Wilcherry districts has resulted in poor crops with high screenings levels.
- The hot dry days at the beginning of the month may have reduced potential yield by up to 20% in some areas. However many of these areas will still produce average to above average grain yields.
- Canola yields of 0.6 to 0.8 t/ha have been reported on the heavy red soils near Buckleboo with the lighter textured soils near Darke Peak and Lock yielding 1.2 to 1.5 t/ha. Oil content has generally been high.
- Barley yields of 3.5 to 4.0 t/ha have been reported in the Franklin Harbour, Wharminda and Lock areas.
- Grain quality has been highly variable with low protein, high screenings and low test weights recorded at delivery. There have been reports of screenings as high as 26% on barley from heavier soil types around Buckleboo.
- Few pulse or wheat crops had been harvested at the end of October.
- Native budworm larvae caused some damage to filling pods on canola and pea crops where not controlled.

PASTURES

- Good growing conditions resulted in a large amount of biomass on medic pastures and hay paddocks in late spring.
- The amount of hay cut during September was well above average with most farmers replenishing hay stocks depleted over the previous summer.
- Livestock are in excellent condition with plentiful high quality feed available in stubbles as harvest progresses.

Upper North

WEATHER

- Rainfall for September was generally below average. October rainfall was below average in the south and well below average in the north of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures for September were average. October maximum temperatures were the highest on record.
- Growing season rainfall was average for most of the district with the Quorn to Carrieton area receiving above average rainfall.

CROPS

- Harvest commenced around Port Germein in early October about two weeks earlier than normal with crops in this area yielding well above average.
- Harvest began in the north-eastern part of the district during the third week of October at least two weeks earlier than usual with early reports of barley and wheat crops producing above to well-above average yields.
- South of Port Pirie, lower stored soil moisture levels in early October have had a greater impact on grain yields and quality with reports of high screenings levels in barley and low pulse yields.
- The extended dry period from early September to late October combined with record daily maximum temperatures has reduced yield potential, particularly in the southern part of the district.
- Early-sown cereal crops in the northern part of the district were at the grain-fill stage during the hot weather in early October. Crops with stored soil moisture held up better through these conditions.
- Later-sown crops or those with lower soil moisture levels have suffered higher losses of yield potential but could still produce average to above average yields.
- Early-sown pea crops podded well before the hot weather and have good yield potential but later-sown crops were more severely affected as flowers were aborted.
- Bean crops grew exceptionally well but podded poorly due to the cool conditions in August and early September. The hot weather caused crops to abort flowers so most crops have well below average yield potential.
- Flowering and pod set of lupin, lentil, vetch and chickpea crops was also affected by the hot weather and many of these crops will have below average yields.
- Most canola crops had either finished or were at the end of flowering during the hot weather. Most crops have average to above average yield potential.
- Grain quality has been variable with some barley achieving malting quality but most classified Feed 1 or 2. Wheat crops with high nitrogen status and or lower stored soil moisture levels have lower test weight and higher screenings levels.
- Some growers in later districts have cut crops for hay, given the high hay prices and reduced yield potential of grain crops. Hay yields have been high and the quality excellent given favourable weather for curing and baling.

PASTURES

- Good stored moisture levels ensured adequate growth before the hot dry conditions in early October dried pastures off.
- Livestock are in good condition and most growers have been able to finish lambs and young cattle for target markets.

Mid North

WEATHER

- Rainfall for September and October was below to very much below average.
- Mean maximum temperatures for September were average and the highest on record for October.
- Growing season rainfall ranged from average in the north to below average in the south.

CROPS

- Harvest has commenced in the western and northern parts of the district.
- Most areas had very low levels of stored soil moisture remaining by early October.
- The hot weather in early October reduced the very high crop yield potential down by about 30% to be closer to the long term average.
- Barley quality is poor with high levels of screenings and most classified Feed 2 and 3. Shallow soils and those with low water holding capacity have been the worst affected with reports of some grain being undeliverable.
- Wheat quality will vary depending on variety and time of sowing but there is likely to be higher proportions of screenings.
- Some areas west of Balaklava have been severely affected by frost and cut for hay.
- Significant areas of cereal crops have been cut for hay where there was no or limited soil moisture to finish the crops. High hay yields, excellent quality and good hay prices should result in good returns. A number of farmers who own hay equipment have cut large areas of their crop for hay.
- Hay quality has been excellent with good conditions for curing and baling.
- The cool weather in August and early September did not allow bean crops to pod well and the hot weather and wind in early October caused aborted flowers, resulting in poor pod set.
- Pea crops have been severely affected by the heat and lack of moisture with significant loss of yield potential, less so in early-sown crops than later-sown crops.
- Many lentil crops have not podded well and the hot weather has caused significant damage, particularly later-sown crops which have produced small grain size.
- Canola crops finished flowering before the hot weather and have not been greatly affected. Yields are likely to be close to average.

PASTURES

- Pastures put on good growth in spring but dried off rapidly with the hot dry weather in early October.
- There should be adequate feed in pastures before stubbles become available.
- Stubbles are likely to have high quantities of good quality feed.

Lower North

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average during September and very much below average for October.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average in September and the highest on record during October.
- Growing season rainfall was below average across most of the district with a small area of well below average rainfall in the south east of the district.

CROPS

- Harvest is well underway in the western part of the district, at least two weeks earlier than normal. Early indications are that yields will be average to below average in the lower rainfall parts of the district.
- Crops on soils with lower water holding capacity have lower yields.
- Crops with high rates of nitrogen applied after sowing have suffered more from the season's dry finish with reduced yield and potential for high screenings levels.
- Early indications are that wheat yields could be close to average with varying quality depending on rainfall and paddock history.
- Barley yields have been variable with below average yields in the south and yields closer to average further north.
- The normally higher rainfall areas of the district have suffered from well below average rainfall and any crops with high nitrogen fertiliser applications will have poorer yields and grain quality.
- Bean crops have grown well but pollination was poor due to the cool conditions in August and early September. Hot dry conditions caused flower abortion reducing yield potential to below average with very small bean seed size.
- Pea crops are yielding 30% below average with smaller grain size.
- Canola yields are likely to be 20 to 40% below average, although early indications are that oil contents will be reasonable.
- Lentil crops have also suffered from the dry weather and heat with below average yield potential, although grain quality appears to be reasonable at this stage.
- Durum crops have suffered from the dry conditions and yields are expected to be below average in the west but closer to average in the later districts where soil moisture levels were higher.
- There has only been a small increase in the area cut for hay.

PASTURES

- Medic pastures have dried off early and seed production is likely to be below average.
- Pasture growth has been good despite the dry conditions and there is adequate pasture available for livestock.

Yorke Peninsula

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average for September and very much below average for October.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for September and the highest on record during October.
- There were several severe hot wind events during October.
- Growing season rainfall has been below average in Central and Northern Yorke Peninsula, and very much below average in the south.

CROPS

- The majority of crops grew well through the season but due to high temperatures, strong winds, and poor finishing rainfall, grain yields and quality will be below average.
- Less nitrogen fertiliser was applied than usual based on forecasts of a dry spring, however grain protein is expected to be high due to smaller grain size.
- The dry September and October prevented the development of major pulse diseases.
- Late crops are beginning to ripen and even late-sown paddocks are in the late stages of grain fill. Most pulse crops will be desiccated to stop weed seed set and hasten harvest.
- Harvest is even earlier than last year across the Yorke Peninsula, with producers in the north around 15% complete, central 10% complete, and the south expected to start harvest soon.
- Lentil and barley crops were the first to be harvested with canola, beans, peas and wheat to be started by mid-November. Numerous fires have been started during lentil harvesting.
- Cereal grain quality in the northern Yorke Peninsula has been down with high screening levels, poor retention and low test weights reported.
- In the south, where less hot wind damage occurred, around 70% of barley has been achieving higher grades of feed and early-harvested barley yields have been average to slightly below average.
- August frost events in isolated areas resulted in some crops being cut for hay and poor yield and grain quality in those that were left for grain harvest.
- Lentil producers are reporting below average yields with high levels of screenings. Some grain handlers are taking high screening loads at a discounted price and re-cleaning. October wind events resulted in pod loss in some lentil crops.
- Crops with large amounts of biomass have been severely affected by the hot dry conditions.
- Lighter soil type paddocks appear to be yielding better than heavier soils, especially in the northern areas.
- Canola canopies had even density prior to windrowing, however pod length and seed size is variable.
- Oaten hay paddocks yielded well and early testing is showing excellent quality. The area cut for hay is close to the average.
- Snails have not been a problem in northern and central Yorke Peninsula but snail numbers are of concern in the south again.
- Some native budworm damage has been reported in chickpeas but other crops seem relatively free of insect damage.

PASTURES

- A reasonable number of medic pastures have been cut with high quality hay produced.
- Pasture feed has dried off and some pastures have already been heavily grazed.
- Livestock condition is still excellent but will decline until they are moved into stubbles after harvest.

Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula & Kangaroo Island

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average across the region for September and very much below average for October.
- Mean maximum temperatures for September were average and very much above average to the highest on record in October.
- Growing season rainfall was below average to very much below average.

CROPS

Central Hills/Fleurieu

- Cereal crops are ripening quickly and harvest of pulses has commenced in the drier areas.
- Harvest in general will be three to four weeks earlier than normal.
- Direct-drilled and early-sown crops have the potential to provide average yields.
- Later-sown crops prepared using more tillage will struggle to finish and their yields will be below average.
- Early sown crops will have some modest increases in screenings whereas later-sown crops will have much higher screenings and lower overall quality.

Kangaroo Island

- Windrowing has started on early sown early-season canola varieties, a month earlier than normal. Many crops will be direct harvested. The majority of windrowing will probably start at the beginning of November.
- Wheat and barley crops are at the soft-firm dough stage.
- The impact of the hot dry conditions on crop yields is not yet known. Early sown canola and cereals have the potential for average to above average yields.
- The lack of soil moisture combined with heat will reduce bean yield potential.
- Crops on sandy soils are likely to have higher screenings due to a lack of moisture at grain fill.
- A small area of crop has been cut for hay.

PASTURES

Central Hills/Fleurieu

- The area of crop cut for hay has increased as fodder reserves are very low. Some later-sown barley and wheat crops that had lower than average yield potential have been cut.
- Pasture hay yields are lower than average except where livestock had been removed very early in the season.
- Current pasture feed availability is well below average and diminishing quickly in volume and quality with the dry warm weather.
- Livestock are in reasonable condition as producers have been selling stock early in response to changing weather and market conditions.

Kangaroo Island

- Pastures are beginning to dry off on the coastal fringes but are still fresh and actively growing inland where 9-12mm rain fell in late October.
- Livestock are generally in good condition.

Lower Murray

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average for September and very much below average for October.
- Growing season rainfall was average in the south to below average in the north of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average for September and the highest on record for October.

CROPS

- The dry finish has hastened crop ripening and brought harvest forward by approximately two weeks.
- The hot dry October conditions led to some crop patching in moisture-stressed paddocks.
- Harvest began in late October with barley and some canola being harvested first.
- There have been some reports of frost damage but the extent of damage is unknown at this stage and unlikely to be as severe as the Southern Mallee.
- Pea crops have been affected by frost.
- Haymaking took place in September and October.

PASTURES

- Pastures have struggled all year and poor spring conditions have finished pastures early.
- There is little valuable feed left in paddocks and some confinement feeding is taking place.
- Livestock are still in good condition and they are being moved onto stubble paddocks as they become available.

Northern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average for most of the district in September and below average for October.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average in the west and above average in the east of the district during September. October temperatures were the highest on record in the district.
- Growing season rainfall across most of the district was below average.

CROPS

- Coming into spring, Northern Mallee crops were generally showing average to above average yield potential, despite the low rainfall year and little subsoil moisture.
- The late August frost appears to have been more severe than first expected across the district.
- Some useful rains in September generally allowed crops to maintain this potential, except on shallow soils or deep sands.
- Heat stress in the first week of October brought a fast finish to the season, particularly for pulse crops which rapidly dried within days.
- Despite the many yield-limiting factors this season, the Northern Mallee appears to have generally finished well.
- The vast majority of farmers began harvest much earlier than usual and have reaped about 10-15% of their crop at the end of October.
- Early harvested pea crops have revealed some excellent yields amongst the badly frosted areas.
- Barley reports so far suggest some paddocks producing above average yields with reasonable quantities of malt quality.
- It is likely that wheat might have been more heat stressed than barley in early October but despite this and the significant frost damage, average yields may still be achieved across the district.
- Eastern areas of the Northern Mallee generally received more rain through the growing season and appear to be yielding more consistently than crops on the western part of the district.

PASTURES

- Paddock feed is reported to be adequate at present despite the very dry October.
- Farmers will begin to move livestock onto crop stubbles as harvest continues.

Southern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average for September and very much below average for October.
- Growing season rainfall was below average to very much below average.
- Mean maximum temperatures for September were average to above average and the highest on record for October.
- Significant frosts were recorded at the end of September.
- Dry, hot to very hot conditions occurred throughout October.

CROPS

- All crops have matured early with the onset of hot, dry weather in October.
- Harvesting of canola, some legumes and barley began in the last week of October, around two weeks earlier than average.
- Cereal yields are likely to be below average and legume and canola yields will be well below average.
- Legumes and canola have been heavily hit by frost and affected by hot dry weather.
- Widespread stem frost damage has been reported in wheat.
- Some malting barley has been delivered but the majority of barley has been Feed 1 quality. Much of the barley is small-sized grain with low protein values.
- Harvested canola has small grain size and low oil content.
- Some fungicide and insect treatments were applied to crops in September.
- Hay cutting began in mid-September and haymaking has progressed throughout October with nearly all hay baled by the end of the month.

PASTURES

- Pastures have dried off and are quickly deteriorating with minimal bulk.
- Grass seeds are causing problems for livestock.
- Confinement feeding has been taking place and paddock supplementary feeding is likely to begin very soon.
- Livestock condition is still good at this stage and is a sign that stocking rates have remained conservative to match seasonal conditions.

Upper South East

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average to very much below average for September and very much below average in October.
- Growing season rainfall was very much below average across most of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average to slightly above average for September and the highest on record across the district for October.
- A severe frost (-6°C at crop height) was recorded around Keith in late September.

CROPS

- Harvest commenced around two weeks earlier than usual.
- A dry growing season followed by several days with temperatures over 30 degrees in early October will result in a poor harvest across most of the district, and particularly in the Bordertown to Wolseley area.
- Grain yields in this part of the district are likely to be around 50 to 70% of average, and of poor quality, particularly on heavy black soils.
- Crops immediately north of Keith were severely impacted by frost, with isolated mild frosts through the remainder of the district.
- A number of canola crops will be direct harvested, having insufficient bulk for windrowing.
- Most producers with livestock opted to cut 10-50% of crop area for hay, including some beans and canola crops, either to replenish fodder reserves, or to recover some economic benefit from frosted or hayed off crops. Some crops were too light to bale and left as standing feed.
- Hay yields are around average on paddocks sown as a hay crop but hay crops that were grazed have yielded poorly. Crops sown for hay performed reasonably well in wetter parts of the district.
- Partly filled grain crops have been left standing and crops that are flowering are being cut for hay.

PASTURES

- Pastures have gone to head and are senescing much earlier than normal.
- Pastures based on subclover or balansa clover have not seeded well this season and there is concern there are inadequate seed reserves for germination and persistence next season.
- Irrigators started earlier than usual this year to maintain hay and seed production, particularly on lucerne stands. The prospect of higher seed and hay prices is resulting in areas that have not been irrigated for many years being brought back into production.
- Many farmers will be looking to confinement feed or commence supplementary feeding livestock in mid to late November.
- Many producers have sold off stock early to reduce grazing pressure and also because they do not have pasture or hay reserves available.

Lower South East

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average to very much below average for September and very much below average to the lowest on record during October.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average to above average for September and the highest on record in October.
- Growing season rainfall was very much below average across the whole district.

CROPS

- Many producers are concerned with the dry finish but early sown crops are still likely to yield well.
- Frost had minimal impact on cereals, while heat has impacted pulses and oilseeds causing flower loss.
- The Mid to Lower South East as a whole has had an exceptionally productive winter particularly on the areas that are prone to water logging. This has also significantly reduced the incidence of foliar diseases.
- Many of the heavier soils still have adequate soil moisture but sandy and shallower soils are drying out rapidly.
- Cereals will still benefit from any rainfall in early November.
- Bean crops were affected by the heat in early October but grain quality is still likely to be good.
- Canola crops were also severely affected by the heat. Some recovery is possible if there is rain received in early November.
- Hay crop yields, dependent on variety, are reduced on earlier potential, but, higher prices are offsetting the lower yield. Hay crops e.g. oats have been cut earlier to retain quality.
- Harvest is likely to be at least two weeks earlier than normal for canola and bean crops.

PASTURES

- Green feed will still be available in November in many parts of the district depending on the severity of weather conditions ahead and the finish to the season.
- Some of the later sown lucerne may struggle from a lack of soil moisture.
- A significantly larger area of pasture has been cut for hay but hay yields are well below average, particularly in the southern part of the district around Mt Gambier, leading to higher hay prices.
- Irrigators are watering earlier to keep pastures actively growing.
- Livestock are looking exceptionally well and are being turned off at excellent weights.
- Lambs and calves are being turned off at slightly lighter weights, two to four weeks ahead of last year but are still in good condition ensuring good prices. At this stage there has not been drastic de-stocking.