Crop and Pasture Report South Australia

2015-16 WINTER CROP PERFORMANCE

SEPTEMBER 2015

PREMIUM FOOD AND WINE FROM OUR CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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).

Information current as of 4 September, 2015.

ALL ENQUIRIES

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State Summary

WEATHER

- Rainfall for July ranged from below average on Western Eyre Peninsula, Lower Eyre Peninsula and parts of the Yorke Peninsula, Mid North and South East to above average in the south western part of the Upper North.
- August rainfall was highly variable across the State, ranging from very much below average in parts of the South East and Southern Mallee to above average in parts of Eastern and Western Eyre Peninsula and very much above average in the southern part of the North East Pastoral district.
- Rainfall for the past 12 months remains very much below average for the South East, Southern Mallee, Fleurieu Peninsula and Southern Yorke Peninsula.
- Mean maximum temperatures for July were below average on most of Eyre Peninsula, Upper North and South East districts and average in most other agricultural districts.
- Mean maximum temperatures for August were below average on Eastern Eyre Peninsula and the South East and generally average in other agricultural districts.

CROPS

- Stored soil moisture levels across the State remain highly variable, with most of the Mallee and Upper South East having well below average moisture and the Upper North, Mid North and Lower Eyre Peninsula having good soil moisture stores.
- Crops have generally grown well, although crops on shallow and heavy soils in the Northern Mallee and Upper South East have been affected by moisture stress.
- Yield potential varies from above average on Eastern and Lower Eyre Peninsula, Upper and Mid North to below average in the Far West, Northern Mallee and Upper South East. In other districts, average spring rains will be needed to achieve average yields.
- In the high rainfall areas (Lower Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and Lower South East) drier conditions have favoured crops on waterlogged prone soils and there is above average yield potential on these soils.
- The growth stage of cereal crops ranges from stem elongation to full grain development.
- Cereal leaf diseases are relatively widespread but at low levels. Most farmers have applied protective fungicides to control stripe rust on susceptible wheat varieties. In a number of districts barley crops have been sprayed with fungicide to control low levels of leaf diseases.
- Post sowing nitrogen applications have been applied in most districts, although many farmers have reduced rates due to low stored soil moisture and seasonal outlooks issued earlier in the season indicating higher probability of below average spring rainfall.
- Canola crops have generally good yield potential across the State with low levels of disease and insect infestation at this stage. Most crops are at 50% to full flower stage with a few crops starting to pod.
- Pulse crops have grown well, with bean crops flowering and starting to set pods and field pea crops at flowering to early pod set stages.
- Despite favourable conditions for disease development most pulse crops only have low levels of disease, due to preventative fungicide application. There are low levels of ascochyta blight and chocolate spot in beans, and botrytis grey mould in lentils and vetch.
- Many bean and lentil crops have had two fungicide applications and a third may be required to keep disease levels low. There is a shortage of some pulse fungicides which could become a problem if conditions remain favourable for disease development.

- Insect pests remain at relatively low levels.
- Insecticides are being applied to pulse crops to protect developing pods.
- Oaten hay crops have grown well and have very low levels of disease at this stage.

PASTURES

- Pasture growth across the State is variable with high levels of quality feed on Eastern and Lower Eyre Peninsula and the Upper North but poor growth in most of the Mallee and Upper South East.
- Cereal and vetch pastures sown for livestock feed have high amounts of biomass in most districts, providing good opportunities to reach target market weights for livestock or to cut hay for replenishing fodder reserves.
- Livestock are generally in good to excellent condition across the State.
- In areas with poor pasture feed, most farmers destocked early to maintain enough feed for core breeding stock.
- Most cattle and sheep farmers are maintaining or increasing their breeding stock to take advantage of current good returns being achieved from livestock.

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.

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	*ha*	470 000	145 000	392 000	168 000	234 000	247 000	56 500	6 100
	t	588 000	465 000	686 000	488 000	468 000	741 000	159 000	16 000
Durum	*ha*	0	0	0	20 000	10 000	10 000	6 500	0
	t	0	0	0	48 000	22 000	26 000	17 000	0
Barley	*ha*	58 000	66 000	71 000	170 000	102 000	101 000	32 000	1 900
	t	77 000	224 000	135 000	475 000	205 000	304 000	90 000	5 000
Oats	*ha*	16 500	3 200	6 000	4 000	4 500	5 000	1 500	3 300
	t	16 500	8 000	8 500	9 000	6 500	11 000	3 300	8 000
Rye	*ha*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	t	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Triticale	*ha*	400	500	500	1 000	1 500	1 700	500	0
	t	400	1 500	800	2 200	3 000	5 000	1 300	0
Peas	*ha*	4 800	4 500	5 500	18 000	27 000	23 000	6 700	400
	t	4 300	6 700	5 500	27 000	34 500	34 500	10 500	600
Lupins	*ha*	1 500	26 000	5 500	1 000	3 500	1 800	500	1 000
	t	1 300	42 500	6 000	1 400	4 300	2 500	750	1 800
Beans	*ha*	0	6 000	400	12 500	7 200	13 500	6 000	600
	t	0	9 500	350	23 000	10 000	25 500	10 200	1 100
Chickpeas	*ha*	0	400	200	8 500	3 200	5 000	1 000	0
	t	0	600	150	10 500	3 800	6 500	1 200	0
Lentils	*ha*	0	2 000	200	85 000	4 000	12 500	6 200	0
	t	0	2 800	200	118 000	5 200	17 500	8 600	0
Vetch	*ha*	2 400	1 800	2 000	2 000	5 500	5 000	300	0
	t	1 200	900	1 000	2 000	3 300	3 700	300	0
Canola	*ha*	5 300	63 000	10 000	24 000	23 000	26 000	4 200	2 200
	t	4 800	95 000	10 000	36 000	32 000	40 000	5 800	4 400
Hay (not in total)	*ha*	4 500	3 500	2 500	21 000	21 000	32 000	6 000	6 900
	t	10 000	14 000	9 000	100 000	94 000	145 000	27 000	38 000
Total	*ha*	558 900	318 400	493 300	514 000	425 400	451 500	121 900	15 500
	t	693 500	856 500	853 500	1 240 100	797 600	1 217 200	307 950	36 900

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	*ha*	5 500	69 000	245 000	129 000	68 000	22 000	2 257 100
	t	13 800	110 000	294 000	206 000	143 000	75 000	4 452 800
Durum	*ha*	300	500	500	0	9 000	0	56 800
	t	600	600	500	0	16 000	0	130 700
Barley	*ha*	10 000	59 000	56 000	90 000	35 000	5 500	857 400
	t	25 000	100 000	73 000	141 000	70 000	19 000	1 943 000
Oats	*ha*	1 800	3 000	4 000	3 200	14 300	4 000	74 300
	t	4 500	3 600	4 800	4 800	22 000	9 500	120 000
Rye	*ha*	0	2 000	3 200	2 500	500	0	8 200
	t	0	2 400	3 000	2 500	400	0	8 300
Triticale	*ha*	500	2 800	6 000	7 000	2 000	500	24 900
	t	1 400	4 200	7 200	9 800	3 000	1 700	41 500
Peas	*ha*	1 500	5 000	2 400	3 600	3 000	400	105 800
	t	2 800	4 000	700	3 200	4 200	900	139 400
Lupins	*ha*	2 000	2 000	2 400	10 000	16 000	3 000	76 200
	t	4 000	1 800	1 200	9 000	22 000	4 800	103 350
Beans	*ha*	400	200	0	1 200	13 500	10 000	71 500
	t	800	170	0	1 100	19 000	20 000	120 720
Chickpeas	*ha*	200	0	800	1 000	200	200	20 700
	t	250	0	650	800	200	250	24 900
Lentils	*ha*	200	0	400	1 000	3 000	200	114 700
	t	250	0	200	850	3 300	320	157 220
Vetch	*ha*	0	1 200	3 600	5 000	800	0	29 600
	t	0	700	1 800	3 500	600	0	19 000
Canola	*ha*	4 300	4 000	11 000	5 500	26 000	12 500	221 000
	t	7 700	3 600	5 500	4 600	34 000	24 000	307 400
Hay	*ha*	23 000	7 200	2 500	13 500	48 000	27 500	219 100
(not in total)	*t*	117 000	25 000	5 000	47 000	153 000	116 000	900 000
Total	*ha*	26 700	148 700	335 300	259 000	191 300	58 300	3 918 200
	t	61 100	231 070	392 550	387 150	337 700	155 470	7 568 290

TABLE 2 CROP ESTIMATES AGAINST FIVE YEAR AVERAGE

		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	5 year ave	2015/16
Wheat	*ha*	2 237 100	2 226 100	2 176 300	2 295 900	2 236 000	2 234 300	2 257 100
	t	5 818 500	4 444 800	3 556 500	4 976 000	4 672 000	4 693 600	4 452 800
Durum	*ha*	69 800	74 600	77 200	68 300	51 300	68 200	56 800
	t	240 600	223 950	181 240	194 930	118 250	191 800	130 700
Barley	*ha*	965 200	987 700	907 100	854 900	804 000	903 800	857 400
	t	2 839 100	2 031 800	1 912 900	2 093 500	1 922 000	2 159 900	1 943 000
Oats	*ha*	75 300	75 800	85 800	85 000	73 300	79 000	74 300
	t	152 300	117 400	128 740	159 700	120 700	135 800	120 000
Rye	*ha*	9 500	9 500	9 500	7 100	9 000	8 900	8 200
	t	11 600	7 900	7 500	6 350	9 300	8 500	8 300
Triticale	*ha*	85 700	80 200	69 200	49 300	27 100	62 300	24 900
	t	167 100	117 500	95 920	86 500	44 300	102 300	41 500
Peas	*ha*	126 300	109 900	103 700	106 100	98 000	108 800	105 800
	t	238 500	144 400	116 100	143 250	114 600	151 400	139 400
Lupins	*ha*	64 900	64 900	63 200	69 300	64 700	65 400	76 200
	t	120 100	78 900	75 110	105 500	72 250	90 400	103 350
Beans	*ha*	71 500	72 200	69 400	69 000	65 600	69 500	71 500
	t	168 600	121 220	105 510	139 400	93 900	125 700	120 720
Chickpeas	*ha*	10 700	12 200	19 700	20 700	19 700	16 600	20 700
	t	16 000	19 550	21 810	29 280	20 250	21 400	24 900
Lentils	*ha*	97 700	106 100	88 800	94 800	106 200	98 700	114 700
	t	174 350	181 600	97 720	163 350	152 350	153 900	157 220
Vetch	*ha*	12 800	13 100	13 100	17 000	23 200	15 800	29 600
	t	12 900	11 120	6 800	14 320	13 150	11 700	19 000
Canola	*ha*	196 500	269 500	302 700	301 000	321 200	278 200	221 000
	t	381 700	435 700	398 700	434 400	313 800	392 900	307 400
Hay	*ha*	244 200	201 500	204 500	227 300	211 500	217 800	219 100
(not in total)	*t*	1 066 000	774 400	769 000	1 018 100	763 000	878 100	900 000
Total	*ha*	4 023 000	4 101 800	3 985 700	4 038 400	3 899 300	4 009 600	3 918 200
	t	10 341 350	7 935 840	6 704 550	8 546 480	7 666 900	8 239 000	7 568 300

District Reports

Western Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- July rainfall was average in the Far West and below average in the remainder of the district.
- August rainfall was well above average at Elliston and average to above average for the remainder of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average to below average in July and near average during August.
- A mild frost was reported around Wudinna in mid-August.

CROPS

- Stored subsoil moisture was very low at the end of July but above average August rainfall has resulted in some stored moisture in most soil profiles.
- Crops that were set back by dry conditions early in the season have responded to ideal winter growing conditions, apart from those on highly calcareous coastal grey loams where growth has been slow.
- Dry conditions at seeding resulted in some reduction of crop area sown, mainly restricted to paddocks where farmers had been considering growing a second consecutive cereal crop.
- Although there was concern earlier in the year about potential crop damage from herbicide residues due to the dry summer, growers have avoided significant crop damage by careful crop selection.
- Canola and pulses are setting pods and cereal crops are at early head emergence to flowering.
- Estimated yield potential is slightly below average in the Far West districts and average to above average in western Eyre districts.
- High grass weed numbers are present in many cereal crops due to dry sowing conditions resulting in poor weed control.
- Disease levels have been generally low with landholders applying preventative sprays to susceptible varieties.
- There have been a few reports of significant damage by insect pests.
- There have not been any reports of significant frost damage at this stage.

PASTURES

- Vetch and medic pastures have produced a high amount of biomass providing many farmers with the opportunity to cut hay to replenish depleted stocks.
- Producers who were impacted by the dry start to the season sold stock early to reduce grazing pressure on paddocks during pasture establishment.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.

Lower Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- July rainfall was below average in most of the district and well below average in the Coomunga area at the southern end of the district.
- August rainfall was average to above average near Cummins and Port Lincoln, however the coastal district around Coles Point received well below average rainfall.
- Mean maximum temperatures were below average for July and average to below average for August.

CROPS

- Rainfall during this period has allowed soil moisture reserves to build up without becoming waterlogged and affecting crop growth.
- Ideal growing conditions during July and August have resulted in crops with high biomass and above average yield potential.
- Farmers applied nitrogen to crops ahead of forecast rain in July and August.
- Canola and pulse crops are flowering and cereals are at head emergence stage.
- Post-emergent herbicide applications have been effective in controlling broadleaf and grass weeds.
- Powdery mildew was reported on some wheat crops as the activity of in-furrow fungicide applications wore off. At current levels it is not likely to significantly reduce yield.
- There have been some isolated reports of stem and leaf rust in wheat but no stripe rust as yet.
- Whilst the leaf disease net blotch is present on susceptible barley varieties, most growers have managed to control it with routine fungicide applications.
- There have been a number of reports of significant infestations of fungal diseases in pulses including ascochyta blight and chocolate spot in beans and botrytis grey mould in lentils.
- Fungicides have been applied to protect crops before warmer conditions encourage the rapid increase in disease levels.
- Aphid numbers in canola crops are below threshold levels for control and farmers are border spraying to limit their movement into the crops from other areas.
- Diamond back moth caterpillars have been found in canola crops in low numbers.
- Snail and mice pest numbers are low.

PASTURES

- Pasture paddocks have very high levels of high quality feed.
- Given the high levels of biomass present in annual and sown pasture paddocks there are a number of farmers planning to cut hay to replenish reserves that were depleted over autumn.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.

Eastern Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- July rainfall was average to below average, with most of the rain falling in isolated scattered showers.
- August rainfall was average to well above average. Heavy showers brought falls of around 25 mm to the district on 12 August with widespread follow up rain on 21 August resulting in average to well above average August rainfall.
- Temperatures have been below average over this period with some light frosts reported during July in Central Eyre, Darke Peak and the Cleve Hills.

CROPS

- Stored subsoil moisture levels are moderate across most of the district.
- Ideal winter growing conditions have resulted in a high amount of crop growth and above average yield potential.
- In the Buckleboo area the dry start resulted in patchy germination and poor early crop vigour on heavy soil types but good follow up rains have seen these crops respond rapidly and they now have the potential for average yields.
- Farmers applied nitrogen fertiliser before rains in late July and early August.
- Canola and legume crops are at late flowering to pod set growth stages.
- Cereal crops are at stem elongation to booting stages while early sown cereals in the Franklin Harbour district are flowering.
- Pre and post-emergent herbicide applications were generally very effective so the majority of crops in the region are relatively weed-free.
- Disease levels are generally low with most farmers applying preventative fungicide to susceptible varieties.
- There have been isolated incidents of leaf and stem rust in wheat crops and only low levels of stripe rust to date.
- High levels of net blotch were observed in susceptible barley crops, however fungicide applications have generally been effective and yield loss is expected to be minimal.
- Aphids have been a minor problem in canola with most farmers only requiring a border spray to limit their movement from adjoining pasture paddocks into the crop.

PASTURES

- Pasture paddocks have high levels of quality feed.
- Vetch and medic paddocks sown for livestock feed have high amounts of biomass with many growers intending to take the opportunity to cut hay cut and replenish fodder reserves.
- Warm days in late August resulted in rapid pasture growth.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.

Upper North

WEATHER

- Rainfall for July and August were average to above average across the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures for July were below average. August maximum temperatures were average.
- Numerous frosts were recorded throughout the district during July and August.

CROPS

- There are high levels of stored soil moisture in all parts of the district.
- Crops in the western part of the district suffered moisture stress in early July but have now recovered and have above average yield potential.
- Crops in the eastern part of the district have received adequate rain and most crops have well above average yield potential.
- With the forecast dry spring some farmers reduced the amount of nitrogen fertiliser applied at seeding.
- Many farmers have applied high rates of nitrogen post-seeding ahead of forecast rainfall events.
- In the western part of the district where farmers delayed nitrogen fertiliser application due to the dry conditions in late June and early July nitrogen deficiency will reduce yield potential in some crops, particularly barley.
- Cereal crops in the western part of the district are at flowering to grain fill while in the east they are at stem elongation to early head emergence.
- Stripe rust is present at low levels in susceptible crops in the southern part of the district but most farmers are managing the disease with early preventative fungicide applications.
- Net blotch is present in susceptible barley varieties and leaf rust is widespread in Scope barley. Fungicides are being applied to reduce the spread of these diseases.
- Canola crops are at 50% to full flowering with only low levels of aphids present.
- Field pea crops are at early flowering with low levels of blackspot and patches of bacterial blight.
- Bean crops are at early flowering and have low levels of disease with most crops having been sprayed with two applications of protective fungicides.
- Cow pea aphids are starting to build up in vetch and bean crops. Spraying of these pests will start in early September.
- Oaten hay crops have grown large amounts of biomass and farmers are planning to start cutting early sown crops in the second week of September.

PASTURES

- Cold winter conditions slowed pasture growth but there are still high levels of pasture feed available.
- Sown pastures have grown rapidly and have high levels of biomass.
- Livestock have performed well with high prices being received for lambs, wool and cattle.
- Livestock are generally in good to excellent condition.

Mid North

WEATHER

- July rainfall was average to below average and August rainfall was average to above average.
- Mean maximum temperatures for July and August were average to below average.
- Numerous frosts were recorded in most of the district during July and August.

CROPS

- Soil moisture levels were marginal to adequate in early July.
- Good rains since mid-July have resulted in good levels of stored soil moisture across the district.
- Crop yield potential is above to well above the long term average.
- Cereal crops are at the booting to early head emergence stages, with early sown crops beginning to flower.
- Low levels of stripe rust are present in susceptible varieties but most farmers are managing the disease with preventative fungicide applications.
- Barley crops have high yield potential.
- Low disease levels have been reported on susceptible varieties and most crops have been sprayed with a protective fungicide to reduce the further spread of these diseases.
- With the forecast dry spring many farmers reduced seeding applications of nitrogen fertiliser and crops have lost some yield potential.
- High rates of post-sowing nitrogen fertiliser have been applied and most crops now have adequate nitrogen levels.
- Although the area sown to canola is significantly lower than previous years, yield potential of crops is above average due to high levels of stored soil moisture.
- Western beet yellow virus and the green peach aphid which spreads the virus are both at low levels and are unlikely to affect yield at this stage in the season.
- Bean crops have grown well with low levels of disease and high yield potential. Crops are flowering and starting to set pods as the weather begins to warm
- Field pea crops have also grown well with low disease levels and are at flowering to early podding stage. Some crops have already been sprayed to control pea weevil and native budworm.
- Lupin crops have good yield potential and are flowering but very few pods have set at this stage, due to the cold conditions.
- Lentil crops have high yield potential but disease is now becoming a concern, particularly botrytis grey mould.
- Most lentil crops are at or past canopy closure stage and have been sprayed with fungicide.
- There is a shortage of some pulse fungicides and farmers without supplies on hand may find it difficult to source.
- Oaten hay crops have very high yield potential and are at the booting to early head emergence stages.

PASTURES

- Native and regenerating pastures have reasonable growth. Sown pastures have excellent growth and are providing high levels of good quality feed.

  Livestock are in excellent condition and returns from lambs, wool and cattle are well above average.

Lower North

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average to below average during July and average to above average for August.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average in July and August.
- Several light frosts were recorded in parts of the district during July and August.

CROPS

- Sub-soil moisture levels have increased with the rains received during August.
- Yield potential is close to the long term average but still well down on recent years.
- Wheat crops are at flag emergence to head emergence.
- Most barley crops are at early head emergence.
- Stripe rust has been found at low levels across a wide area of the district and most wheat crops have been sprayed with a protective fungicide.
- A second fungicide application may be required if cool damp conditions continue into spring.
- Barley crops have reasonable yield potential with low levels of net form of net blotch found in many crops. These have been treated with a fungicide to protect new leaves.
- Currently there are adequate supplies of fungicide still available for cereal crops but a shortage of some pulse fungicides.
- Disease levels on oaten hay and durum crops are very low.
- Field pea crops are at early flowering and many have been sprayed early with a fungicide to slow the spread of ascochyta blight.
- Bean crops are generally much shorter in height than normal and flowering with very few pods set yet. Most crops have had two applications of fungicide to control ascochyta blight and chocolate spot.
- Lentil crops have grown well and have been sprayed with a fungicide at canopy closure stage to control botrytis grey mould.
- Farmers will need to monitor crops and if necessary apply additional fungicide sprays to control chocolate spot in beans and botrytis grey mould in lentils.
- Canola crops are at 50% to 100% flowering. Crops that became moisture stressed in late June and early July have recovered to some degree but are still at below average yield potential.
- Other crops have grown well and have reasonable yield potential.
- Currently there are low levels of aphids and other insect pests but crops will be monitored in the next few weeks as temperatures increase.

PASTURES

- Medic pastures were severely stressed with the cold dry conditions in June and early July but recovered during August and have grown well.
- There is now adequate pasture feed available for livestock.

Yorke Peninsula

WEATHER

- July rainfall was below average across most of the district.
- August rainfall was below average on Southern Yorke Peninsula and average in the rest of the district.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average to below average during July and average during August.

CROPS

- Soil moisture levels are less than those of last season.
- Good spring rainfall is required to achieve above average yields.
- The lower rainfall has reduced nutrient leaching therefore crops on sandy soils are looking as healthy as those on heavier soils.
- Rhizoctonia root disease levels are greater than they have been for a number of years due to the dry start to the growing season. This will cause significant yield loss in some paddocks.
- Early sown wheat is now flowering and some is already at early grain fill, while the majority of wheat is around flag leaf growth stage.
- Canola is in full flower with early sown paddocks already podding.
- Most lentil crops have reached canopy closure stage with some varieties already flowering and early maturing varieties starting to form pods.
- Stripe rust was detected across the district during the third week in August and susceptible varieties have been treated with a fungicide.
- Barley crops have lower levels of net blotch, due to the cold weather, although levels are starting to increase.
- Leaf rust has also been present in barley crops since mid-August, with most paddocks receiving a protective fungicide application.
- Botrytis grey mould is present in some lentil crops and ascochyta blight is present in susceptible varieties which is a concern due to limited fungicide stocks in Australia, especially if wet conditions continue in September.
- Lucerne flea is still prominent in crops, particularly on the upper YP, with levels higher than usual for this time of year.
- Snails are in lower numbers than the last few years but are still a problem for many growers.
- Nitrogen applications were generally reduced this season due to drier conditions.
- There may be some late nitrogen applications to increase grain protein if the season and cost:benefit ratios are conducive.
- Small isolated areas of frost in August caused some damage to lentil crops.
- Post-emergent herbicides have caused crop damage but this is unlikely to affect yield. Weed control has generally been good this year across the district.

PASTURES

- Rains in August promoted good pasture stands, particularly as livestock numbers are quite low. Some pastures have been fertilised for increased pasture growth.
- Livestock condition is good. Excellent livestock prices have stimulated increased interest in sheep and cattle enterprises.
- Hay cutting in medic pastures will be later than previous years, due to the cold conditions throughout winter.

Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula & Kangaroo Island

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average across the region for July and average to below average for August.
- Winter rainfall was below average for the region.
- Mean maximum temperatures have been average for July and August.

CROPS

Central Hills/Fleurieu

- Crop yields will be slightly below average to average this season. The majority of crops were planted on time and established very well with good yield potential.
- Some water logged crops on heavy loam and clay soil types dried out during the dry June and some sandy soil types became too dry. Follow up rains will be needed through September to achieve average yields for all crops.
- Some additional nitrogen fertiliser was applied at tillering to cereals but not as much as average due to the dry winter and the predicted dry spring.
- Stripe rust was identified in susceptible wheat towards the end of August and protective fungicides are being applied to these crops.
- Redlegged earth mite has continued to cause minor damage to crops.

Kangaroo Island

- Yield potential could be above average if some warmer weather occurs and there is more rain in September.
- Soil moisture is very close to saturation. Further heavy rain in early September could cause crop damage from waterlogging.
- Crops have generally escaped waterlogging so far this season and if this continues, yields will be above average.
- High rates of nitrogen fertiliser have been applied due to the high yield potential, inducing copper deficiency in some wheat crops.
- Disease levels are relatively low, with some bacterial blight found in oat crops. Stripe rust has not yet been detected.

PASTURES

Central Hills/Fleurieu

- Pasture growth has been good but the dry June stressed many pastures for four weeks.
- Pasture feed availability is reasonable but good spring rains will be needed to achieve above average silage and hay cuts to fill almost empty fodder storages.
- Many livestock have been sold early because of current high prices and the possibility of a dry spring.

Kangaroo Island

- Pastures are beginning to grow rapidly and are getting ahead of livestock demand with longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures.
- Most livestock are in good condition with only a few health issues.
- Given higher livestock returns, some farmers are considering removing waterlogged prone areas from cropping and returning them to pasture.
- There has been good run off into dams in the western part of KI but little in the eastern end.

Lower Murray

WEATHER

- Rainfall for July and August was average to below average.
- Mean maximum temperatures for July and August were near average.
- Several frosts were recorded in late August and are likely to cause damage in some areas.

CROPS

- Cereals and pulse crops have average to slightly above average yield potential assuming an average finish to the season.
- There is minimal subsoil moisture and follow up rainfall is needed in early September to achieve above average yields.
- Cereals are generally at head emergence stage with some crops flowering. Legumes and canola are flowering.
- Farmers have been applying post-emergent herbicides to control weeds.
- Protective fungicides have been applied to susceptible crops to manage stripe rust and other leaf diseases.
- The application of nitrogen fertiliser ahead of forecast rainfall events has been common throughout the district.
- Rhizoctonia has been observed in crops, especially in later sown crops with inadequate preparation.
- There have been some reports of cereal aphids in the northern part of the district and farmers have sprayed to reduce crop damage.
- Botrytis grey mould has been observed in vetch crops and fungicides have been applied to prevent further spread of the disease.

PASTURES

- Pasture growth has been slow following winter rains and this has reduced the amount of grass control that would normally be undertaken in pastures.
- On-farm hay and grain supplies have been used to maintain livestock condition, depleting stored feed on many farms.
- Farmers have been reluctant to sell sheep due to their profitability and some crops have been grazed in the last two months to provide feed.
- Sown pasture feed has grown well and is providing more feed for livestock compared to regenerating pastures.

Northern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average to below average for July and average during August.
- Mean maximum temperatures were average during July and August.
- Numerous frosts were recorded during July and August.

CROPS

- Cereal crops generally range in growth stage from head emergence to flowering.
- Despite the below average rainfall this year, crops have reasonable yield potential, receiving just enough rainfall to maintain growth.
- Later-sown crops as well as those sown on heavy flats or shallow stony soils have suffered moisture stress.
- Indications are that there is minimal stored moisture remaining at depth in the soil to carry crops through the spring and more rainfall is needed to maintain yield potential.
- With good spring rainfall the majority of crops could still return average to above average yields but with poor spring rainfall yields will fall away quickly.
- While rhizoctonia is evident on some less fertile sands, there have been very little concerns over leaf disease in cereals across the northern Mallee.
- Canola has continued flowering and is beginning to form pods.
- Canola yield potential varies across the region, depending on soil types and specific rainfall events.
- Pulse crops such as field peas, vetch, chickpeas, lentils and lupins are generally surviving well despite the poor rainfall.

PASTURES

- Paddock feed is reported to be good at present but more rain is required to achieve good pasture growth as temperatures warm.
- Barley grass heads are starting to mature and spray topping will commence soon.

Southern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average for July and average to below average for August.
- Mean maximum temperatures for July and August were near average.
- Several frosts were recorded in late August with the potential to cause considerable damage to flowering crops.

CROPS

- Cereal crops across the district generally range in growth stage from late tillering to head emergence.
- Early sown cereals, canola and legume crops are flowering.
- Wet conditions throughout mid to late winter have set up crops for average to above yield potential, however with little to no subsoil moisture early spring rains will be critical for a good finish.
- Conventionally sown crops that were sown later are less advanced, have less subsoil moisture and lower yield potential.
- Rhizoctonia symptoms have been observed in many crops due to dry and cold conditions at the beginning of winter.
- Crops are doing well in the absence of significant leaf disease and insect effects.
- Some preventative spraying for leaf diseases has occurred.
- Top up nitrogen applications were common throughout the district in cereal and canola crops showing good potential.
- A dry winter has helped limit leaching and improved effectiveness of nitrogen applications, therefore few nutrient deficiency symptoms have been observed.

PASTURES

- Pasture growth has slowly recovered as temperatures have increased but some supplementary feeding of hay and grain is continuing.
- Spring growth is likely to be well below average as pastures have been stressed during winter with minimal subsoil moisture. There is a high risk of erosion in some paddocks.
- Some destocking has occurred in the last couple of months however farmers are doing what they can to hold on to livestock, due to their good returns.

Upper South East

WEATHER

- Rainfall was near average for July and below average to very much below average for August.
- Rainfall for the last 36 months has been very much below average across the whole district.
- Mean maximum temperatures for July and August have been average in the north and below average in the southern part of the district. Numerous severe frosts were recorded in July and August.

CROPS

- Crops are looking good in some areas whilst in other areas they are showing signs of moisture stress and are wilting.
- Overall, producers are expecting below average yields.
- Cereal crops are looking better than canola and bean crops.
- Rain is needed in the first two weeks of September to limit further production losses and without good rains, yields could be worse than last year's.
- There is no subsoil moisture across the whole district.
- Producers have reduced nitrogen fertiliser applications due to the dry season and further applications are unlikely if substantial rain is not received.
- Cereal leaf diseases have been detected earlier than normal this season. Stripe rust has been identified in susceptible wheat crops and powdery mildew, net blotch and barley scald in susceptible barley varieties.
- Fungicides have been applied to reduce the spread of these diseases.
- Some insect pests have been in greater numbers than normal, including cut worms and pasture day moths. Pasture day moths have been a beneficial pest in some instances targeting broad leaf weeds.
- Crops planted as early feed with the intent of being reaped for grain later in the season are now being grazed completely as there is insufficient moisture to realise worthwhile grain yields.
- Many cereal crops have lower tiller numbers than normal, reducing yield potential.
- Chemical applications for weeds and pests may be reduced with the continuing dry conditions.

PASTURES

- Pasture growth is poor or has ceased and nitrogen fertiliser application has been reduced.
- Barley grass is dominant in many pastures and has run to head and stopped growing. Further rain is unlikely to increase growth in these pastures.
- Recently renovated pastures on clayed sand or loam soils are performing the best. Pasture growth on un-clayed sand and very heavy clay soils is poor and there is no soil moisture available.
- Livestock condition has been maintained reasonably well. Supplementary feeding has begun on some properties and many producers are feed-lotting livestock to achieve target market weights.
- Some producers are taking advantage of high livestock prices and a lack of feed by selling animals as stores when they would normally finish them to target market weights.
- Some producers will begin to irrigate pastures in the next few weeks, particularly for early hay production.
- Lucerne growth is slow but due to its large tap root, it is holding on well in comparison to many other pasture species.
- Brown pasture looper has caused some damage in lucerne stands.

Lower South East

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average to below average for July and below average to very much below average during August.
- Mean maximum temperatures for July and August were below average across the district.
- Some significant frosts have occurred.

CROPS

- Drier conditions have enabled paddocks to grow crops successfully on soil types that would normally be water logged and unproductive for cropping.
- All crop types are performing well at this stage of the season.
- Despite rainfall being significantly less than the long term average, enough rain has been received for adequate crop growth. Further significant rainfall will be required to achieve current high yield potentials.
- Inputs into crops such as fertiliser and chemical have been about average but if adequate rain is not received in the short term nitrogen fertiliser inputs will decrease.
- There are high disease levels present in bean crops and diseases have infected crops earlier than normal, particularly ascochyta blight.
- Net blotch and barley scald are present in susceptible barley varieties or where treatment has not occurred.
- Broadleaf weeds emerged later than normal, resulting in later than normal control.
- In many areas there is only about two weeks of stored soil moisture remaining. There are already signs of moisture stress in crops around trees.
- September rainfall will be critical for crops to yield well.
- The top soil is dry and as a result there are more crop nutrient deficiencies than normal, particularly calcium, magnesium and copper. This is being managed with foliar fertiliser sprays.

PASTURES

- Some pastures are producing above average dry matter, particularly heavier soils that would normally be water logged this time of year. These paddocks are producing particularly well.
- Improved pastures are growing well with good pasture availability on most soil types.
- Soil moisture is significantly lower than average. Drains that would normally flow this time of year are carrying minimal water, and many swamps are still dry.
- Unimproved pastures or those that are over stocked have poor pasture growth and availability.
- Forage brassicas are being planted earlier than normal.
- Livestock are in good condition with good lamb growth rates as a result of high pasture availability.
- Some producers have increased cattle numbers and decreased sheep or crop area due to the increase in the cattle prices.