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Crop and Pasture Report South Australia

2013-14 HARVEST REPORT

JANUARY 2014

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 Agribusiness and Regions Division of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

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ALL ENQUIRIES

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State Summary

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average across the State for November with average rainfall recorded in most areas during December.
- Maximum temperatures were average across most of the state during November with below average temperatures recorded in the Lower South East. December maxima were above average with several days of extreme heat.
- Average annual rainfall for 2013 varied from well above average on parts of Kangaroo Island, above average on Eastern and Lower Eyre Peninsula and Northern Yorke Peninsula to below average in most of the Northern and Southern Mallee.

CROPS

- Harvest was completed in the earlier districts by early December.
- Showery weather and several severe fire danger days slowed harvest in the last two weeks of December in many parts of the State.
- Harvest on Kangaroo Island and the South East will not be completed until mid to late January.
- Yields across the State were average to above average despite the dry spring and above average temperatures during spring.
- Wheat yields were generally above average but significant yield losses occurred in barley crops from the strong winds in mid October.
- Grain quality was variable with average protein levels in some areas and below average levels in others, despite higher than normal applications of nitrogen fertilizer.
- Wheat screenings (small, pinched, underdeveloped grain) were higher than normal in many areas of the State, particularly on the heavier soil types.
- Wheat test weights were lower than normal in some areas, particularly on Western and Lower Eyre Peninsula and the Mid North.
- The frosts in October caused significant yield loss in isolated areas with actual losses higher than predicted prior to harvest.
- Snails were generally at lower levels than normal but still caused problems during harvest in pea crops in a number of districts.
- Mice are currently in low numbers in most districts but there is concern that they could build up rapidly in areas with high levels of grain on the ground.
- Summer weeds have germinated in some districts, mainly on lighter soils. Growers have begun spraying to control them.
- On heavier soil types there has generally been insufficient moisture for weeds to survive.

PASTURES

- Pastures dried off rapidly and have broken down or been grazed off in most districts resulting in moderate to low ground cover.
- Pastures have remained green in the higher rainfall districts of Kangaroo Island, Adelaide Hills and Lower South East.

- Across most districts of the State, stubbles are providing a large amount of high quality feed for livestock and most livestock producers have stored large feed reserves in the form of hay and grain on farm.
- Livestock are generally in good to excellent 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 dry-land 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	<i>ha</i>	503 000	142 000	405 000	161 000	253 000	242 000	48 500	4 600
	<i>t</i>	780 000	510 000	730 000	644 000	507 000	751 000	141 000	11 000
Durum	<i>ha</i>	0	0	0	24 000	12 500	12 500	5 900	0
	<i>t</i>	0	0	0	77 000	30 000	37 000	17 000	0
Barley	<i>ha</i>	75 000	70 000	76 000	146 000	91 000	87 000	30 000	2 700
	<i>t</i>	120 000	253 000	145 000	527 000	178 000	277 000	84 000	6 500
Oats	<i>ha</i>	15 000	3 200	5 000	5 000	9 000	8 000	2 000	3 300
	<i>t</i>	19 500	7 000	7 000	14 000	14 000	17 000	4 400	8 300
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>	1 500	500	4 000	2 000	2 500	3 000	500	300
	<i>t</i>	2 100	1 700	6 500	7 000	5 800	10 000	1 500	900
Peas	<i>ha</i>	5 000	5 500	5 500	21 000	26 600	24 000	7 700	400
	<i>t</i>	4 750	8 000	5 500	32 000	32 000	34 000	13 000	500
Lupins	<i>ha</i>	1 200	23 000	5 000	1 500	2 700	3 000	900	1 500
	<i>t</i>	1 000	44 000	5 500	2 500	3 400	4 500	1 400	2 400
Beans	<i>ha</i>	0	6 000	200	12 000	6 500	14 200	6 000	600
	<i>t</i>	0	12 000	200	26 500	10 000	34 000	10 500	1 300
Chickpeas	<i>ha</i>	0	200	200	10 000	3 200	5 000	1 000	0
	<i>t</i>	0	280	100	15 000	3 800	7 000	2 000	0
Lentils	<i>ha</i>	0	2 000	0	68 000	4 000	12 000	5 400	0
	<i>t</i>	0	3 300	0	124 000	5 400	19 000	7 500	0
Vetch	<i>ha</i>	200	1 500	500	2 000	5 000	2 600	300	0
	<i>t</i>	100	1 400	300	3 000	3 000	3 200	350	0
Canola	<i>ha</i>	5 400	63 000	8 500	34 000	26 000	55 600	11 000	4 100
	<i>t</i>	5 400	82 000	9 000	66 000	36 000	90 000	16 500	7 400
Hay (not in total)	<i>ha</i>	7 700	4 500	6 700	21 000	21 000	27 000	7 000	7 200
	<i>t</i>	19 000	18 000	21 000	146 000	91 000	143 000	35 000	37 000
Total	<i>ha</i>	606 300	316 900	509 900	486 500	442 000	468 900	119 200	17 500
	<i>t</i>	932 850	922 680	909 100	1 538 000	828 400	1 283 700	294 750	38 300

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>	5 800	69 000	245 000	126 000	69 000	25 000	2 298 900
	<i>t</i>	14 000	114 000	320 000	190 000	207 000	87 000	5 006 000
Durum	<i>ha</i>	300	800	500	0	11 800	0	68 300
	<i>t</i>	550	880	500	0	32 000	0	194 930
Barley	<i>ha</i>	8 200	53 000	48 000	82 000	75 000	16 000	859 900
	<i>t</i>	22 000	85 000	62 000	122 000	195 000	52 000	2 128 500
Oats	<i>ha</i>	1 800	3 000	2 000	3 200	19 500	5 000	85 000
	<i>t</i>	4 500	3 600	2 000	4 500	47 000	12 000	160 400
Rye	<i>ha</i>	0	1 500	2 000	2 600	1 000	0	7 100
	<i>t</i>	0	1 350	1 500	2 600	900	0	6 350
Triticale	<i>ha</i>	1 500	6 500	3 000	16 000	7 000	1 000	49 300
	<i>t</i>	4 500	8 000	3 000	21 000	13 000	3 500	88 500
Peas	<i>ha</i>	1 500	1 500	1 000	3 000	3 000	400	106 100
	<i>t</i>	3 100	1 600	1 000	3 000	4 500	900	143 850
Lupins	<i>ha</i>	1 300	1 000	1 200	10 000	14 000	3 000	69 300
	<i>t</i>	2 700	900	1 200	8 000	21 000	5 000	103 500
Beans	<i>ha</i>	400	100	0	1 000	12 000	10 000	69 000
	<i>t</i>	800	100	0	1 000	20 000	23 000	139 400
Chickpeas	<i>ha</i>	0	0	200	500	200	200	20 700
	<i>t</i>	0	0	150	500	200	250	29 280
Lentils	<i>ha</i>	0	0	0	200	3 000	200	94 800
	<i>t</i>	0	0	0	200	3 600	350	163 350
Vetch	<i>ha</i>	0	400	600	3 500	400	0	17 000
	<i>t</i>	0	120	250	3 000	500	0	15 220
Canola	<i>ha</i>	1 400	4 000	22 000	10 000	38 000	18 000	301 000
	<i>t</i>	3 000	3 600	11 000	6 000	61 000	36 000	432 900
Hay (not in total)	<i>ha</i>	24 000	6 000	7 200	6 500	47 500	28 000	221 300
	<i>t</i>	121 000	18 600	14 500	20 000	190 000	129 000	1 003 100
Total	<i>ha</i>	22 200	140 800	325 500	258 000	253 900	78 800	4 046 400
	<i>t</i>	55 150	219 150	402 600	361 800	605 700	220 000	8 612 200

TABLE 2 CROP ESTIMATES AGAINST FIVE YEAR AVERAGE

		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	5 year ave	2013/14
Wheat	<i>ha</i>	2 043 000	2 111 100	2 237 100	2 226 100	2 176 300	2 158 700	2 298 900
	<i>t</i>	2 347 000	4 032 500	5 818 500	4 444 800	3 556 500	4 039 900	5 006 000
Durum	<i>ha</i>	59 100	60 000	69 800	74 600	77 200	68 100	68 300
	<i>t</i>	88 700	157 200	240 600	223 950	181 240	178 300	194 930
Barley	<i>ha</i>	1 210 500	1 152 300	965 200	987 700	907 100	1 044 600	859 900
	<i>t</i>	1 795 000	2 544 100	2 839 100	2 031 800	1 912 900	2 224 600	2 128 500
Oats	<i>ha</i>	72 100	79 700	75 300	75 800	85 800	77 700	85 000
	<i>t</i>	80 200	136 600	152 300	117 400	128 740	123 000	160 400
Rye	<i>ha</i>	11 000	9 400	9 500	9 500	9 500	9 800	7 100
	<i>t</i>	7 300	8 200	11 600	7 900	7 500	8 500	6 350
Triticale	<i>ha</i>	85 700	85 900	85 700	80 200	69 200	81 300	49 300
	<i>t</i>	86 600	117 700	167 100	117 500	95 920	117 000	88 500
Peas	<i>ha</i>	128 500	127 700	126 300	109 900	103 700	119 200	106 100
	<i>t</i>	129 100	181 150	238 500	144 400	116 100	161 900	143 850
Lupins	<i>ha</i>	74 000	66 500	64 900	64 900	63 200	66 700	69 300
	<i>t</i>	69 600	97 200	120 100	78 900	75 110	88 200	103 500
Beans	<i>ha</i>	72 400	71 200	71 500	72 200	69 400	71 300	69 000
	<i>t</i>	82 880	144 350	168 600	121 220	105 510	124 500	139 400
Chickpeas	<i>ha</i>	11 550	13 200	10 700	12 200	19 700	13 500	20 700
	<i>t</i>	9 200	17 150	16 000	19 550	21 810	16 700	29 280
Lentils	<i>ha</i>	46 500	52 100	97 700	106 100	88 800	78 200	94 800
	<i>t</i>	36 870	89 450	174 350	181 600	97 720	116 000	163 350
Vetch	<i>ha</i>	15 900	12 900	12 800	13 100	13 100	13 600	17 000
	<i>t</i>	4 980	10 650	12 900	11 120	6 800	9 300	15 220
Canola	<i>ha</i>	178 200	182 700	196 500	269 500	302 700	225 900	301 000
	<i>t</i>	192 600	297 100	381 700	435 700	398 700	341 200	432 900
Hay (not in total)	<i>ha</i>	288 000	274 100	244 200	201 500	204 500	242 500	221 300
	<i>t</i>	831 000	1 004 000	1 066 000	774 400	769 000	888 900	1 003 100
Total	<i>ha</i>	4 008 500	4 024 700	4 023 000	4 101 800	3 985 700	4 028 700	4 046 400
	<i>t</i>	4 930 000	7 833 400	10 341 400	7 935 800	6 704 600	7 549 000	8 612 200

District Reports

Western Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- November and December rainfall was near average.
- Some hot days were experienced in the first and last week of November and there was a run of very hot days in the week starting 16th December.
- Maximum temperatures for November were about average with above average temperatures experienced in December.

CROPS

- Harvest was finished in most Western Eyre Districts by the end of November.
- Crop yields were well above average (20 – 50% above average).
- Quality was good with most canola having high oil content and wheat generally achieving APW or above.
- Screening percentages were generally low, however grain test weights were lower than average.
- Some paddocks were affected by frost and yielded below expectations, particularly canola and pea crops.
- Barley crops flattened by winds in October were difficult to reap and a large amount of grain has been left on the ground. There has been an emergence of volunteer cereals following November and December rainfall events.
- Wet winter conditions caused a late germination of grassy weeds in cereal crops.
- Grassy weeds are becoming an increasing problem in cereal crops resulting in an increased adoption of Clearfield technologies in cropping rotations.
- Growers began spraying summer weeds immediately following harvest to conserve moisture and reduce the buildup of root disease.
- There has been increased interest in the use of vetch as a break crop in place of canola.
- Increased mice numbers were noted as harvest progressed.
- Snail numbers were a large issue for growers on calcareous soils in the coastal districts with many growers needing to clean grain prior to delivery.

PASTURES

- Annual pasture paddocks dried off rapidly with hot weather during this period and contain little biomass.
- Stubbles are providing a large amount of high quality feed for livestock and most farmers have large feed reserves in the form of hay and grain stored on farm.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.

Lower Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- Rainfall was above average for November.
- Scattered showers and thunderstorm throughout December brought rainfall totals close to the monthly average.
- A number of hot days were experienced in mid December.

CROPS

- Most growers finished harvest before Christmas.
- Crop yields were highly variable. The potential yields were reduced by waterlogging, strong winds and hot temperatures at grain fill.
- Wheat yields and pulse yields were generally 20- 25% above average.
- Canola yields were average to below average in most districts and many growers reported yields less than 1 t/ha compared to the long term average of 1.5 t/ha.
- Grain protein was generally high resulting from increased applications of nitrogen fertilizer during the growing season.
- Screenings were generally low, however grain test weights were lower than average.
- Although light rain delayed harvest, there have been very few reports of it affecting grain quality.
- Damp conditions caused an early germination of summer weeds, including new populations of wild radish, and volunteer crops. Landholders began spraying summer weeds immediately following harvest.
- Pest damage was generally low, apart from isolated armyworm damage to cereal crops in eastern coastal districts and low numbers of native budworm on pulse crops.
- Snail numbers in western coastal districts are very high and control measures will need to be taken by growers to protect this year's crops.

PASTURES

- Feed in pasture paddocks rapidly dried off with hotter conditions during this period.
- Stubble paddocks contain a high amount of quality feed and most growers have significant stores of hay and grain on farm.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.

Eastern Eyre Peninsula

WEATHER

- November and December rainfall was generally average to slightly below average.
- Scattered showers and thunderstorm activity throughout this period caused some delays to harvest.
- Several hot windy days were recorded during this period.

CROPS

- Despite difficult conditions for harvest, most growers in the region finished harvest by mid December.
- A number of high fire risk days also delayed harvest.
- Good spring rainfall delayed crop ripening on heavier soils, particularly in the Cleve Hills (with these growers being some of the last to finish harvest in the region).
- Yields were generally around 20-30% above average with reports of some of the best crops ever in Kimba and Cleve Hills districts.
- These yields were lower than estimated earlier in the season, probably because of the effect of hot, dry and windy conditions at the time of grain fill.
- Significant yield losses caused by frosts were confined to isolated areas around Kimba and Darke Peake.
- Grain quality was high with good protein and low screenings. Barley grain from paddocks that were significantly damaged by wind was also downgraded in quality.
- Grass weed competition was very high this year. Many growers are looking to incorporate a range of herbicides (i.e. Clearfield) into their rotations to achieve better grass weed control.
- Native budworm was reported as causing significant damage to pulse crops and also some wheat paddocks.
- Mice and snail pest numbers are generally low.

PASTURES

- Annual pastures rapidly dried off with hot and dry conditions so pasture paddocks now contain very little biomass.
- Stubbles have high amounts of quality feed and most farmers have adequate hay reserves stored on farm.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.

Upper North

WEATHER

- Rainfall was well below average for November and average to slightly above average for December.
- Maximum temperatures were average during November and above average (1 to 2°C) for December.

CROPS

- Ideal weather conditions during November and early December enabled harvest to progress rapidly.
- Harvest on the western side of the Southern Flinders Ranges was completed by the end of November and a number of growers on the eastern side also finished early. This was two to three weeks earlier than normal.
- Harvest during December was slowed by light rain, heavy dew and several severe fire-danger days.
- By the end of December harvest was more than 95% complete.
- Wheat yields were generally above average across the district, although quality was variable.
- Wheat grain protein levels were below average and screenings levels very variable (although most growers were able to deliver grain with less than 5% screenings).
- Frost damage was more severe than estimated prior to harvest, with the flats in later maturing districts worst affected.
- The dry finish and frost caused high screenings and low test weights in some barley crops.
- Only a low percentage of barley was classified as malting grade.
- Pea yields were generally disappointing with early sown crops affected by blackspot or frost, and later sown crops affected by hot dry conditions.
- Summer weeds have germinated on lighter soils in the eastern part of the district and most growers have begun spraying to control them.
- Rainfall events have been relatively light resulting in only minimal germination of weeds on heavier soils.
- Mice are currently at low numbers. There are concerns that they will increase rapidly where high grain losses from wind damaged crops.

PASTURES

- Pasture paddocks have some feed and adequate soil surface cover, despite the dry spring.
- Stubbles contain high amounts of quality feed and most livestock producers have adequate hay reserves stored on farm.
- Livestock are in excellent condition.

Mid North

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average during November and average to above average in December with frequent light showers.
- Temperatures were near average during November and above average during December.

CROPS

- Harvest was interrupted by cool moist weather during December, especially in later districts.
- Harvest was completed on the plains and mostly completed in the eastern areas by early January.
- Cereal grain yields were consistently above average on the plains.
- Wheat crops were typically above 4t/ha in the better areas and above 3t/ha in lower rainfall areas. In the later north eastern areas, cereal grain yields were more typically 3t/ha although some areas were much lower, largely due to frost damage.
- Barley yields were also similar despite grain losses from strong winds before harvest.
- Canola yields were generally in the range of 1.5 to 2t/ha.
- Pulse yields were affected by the dry spring and were generally in the range of 2 to 2.5t/ha.
- Grain screenings were higher than normal, especially in wheat in the later districts. Lower test weights were also relatively common.
- Wheat grain protein was average due to adequate nitrogen fertiliser being used during the growing season.
- Snails were a problem in some pea crops during harvest.
- There are concerns about the potential for a mouse plague this autumn because of the amount of grain left on the ground. Although mice numbers are not high yet, they are present in paddocks and fresh holes are evident.
- Snails could cause problems this year if appropriate control measures are not applied before seeding.
- Rainfall events have not been sufficient for a widespread germination of summer weeds and spraying has been more for isolated areas of weeds such as caltrop.

PASTURES

- There is generally ample stubble and pasture feed for livestock.

Lower North

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average for November and average to slightly below average for December.
- Maximum temperatures were average for November and 1 to 2°C above average for December.

CROPS

- Harvest progressed rapidly with ideal weather during November and early December.
- The majority of growers were finished harvest by early December.
- Showery weather and several severe fire danger days caused some delays mid December but despite this most growers completed harvest before Christmas.
- Cereal yields were generally 20% below earlier expectations with many producers only harvesting 4t/ha in crops with 5t/ha stubbles.
- Grain quality was highly variable with high screenings and low protein in parts of paddocks.
- Even crops with high applications of nitrogen fertilizer (> 120kg/ha N) had low grain protein levels.
- Strong winds caused some canola crops to lodge, become tangled and unable to be windrowed. Significant yield losses also occurred in some crops with pods being blown off the stems.
- Bean crops that had been bent over in the wind were difficult to harvest, although there was minimal yield loss.
- Pea crops generally performed well with low disease levels in those crops which had effective fungicide application.
- No summer weed control has been necessary, due to the dry soil and hot weather.
- Medic harvest commenced a few weeks earlier than normal with reports of at least average yields.
- Mice numbers are currently low.
- There has been a rapid increase in the demand for straw to meet RSPCA requirements for chicken meat production. This is likely to make chicken litter (manure) uneconomic as a fertiliser, due to the lower nutrient content and high cost of spreading.
- The increased demand for straw could also impact soil cover as the area baled for straw increases.

PASTURES

- There is adequate pasture and stubble feed available.
- The few livestock in the district are in excellent condition.

Yorke Peninsula

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average to slightly below average during November and December.
- Maximum temperatures were average in November and above average during December.

CROPS

- Harvest has been long and drawn out, due to cool days, frequent showers and southerly winds reducing harvesting hours per day.
- Harvest is 95% complete on the Yorke Peninsula, with northern areas slightly more advanced.
- Wheat has been the best performing crop across all areas with above average yields.
- Wheat quality has generally been good with low screenings; however grain protein has been low.
- Barley has disappointed most farmers due to excessive crop lodging (falling over). This has produced yield losses of 10-50%.
- Most barley was highest F1 quality but about one third of deliveries were F2/F3 due to screenings and snails.
- Peas were disappointing due to snail contamination and blackspot disease.
- Canola yields were average with excellent oil content.
- Oaten hay quality was generally poor.
- Lentil quality was generally good, but some insect damage (*Etiella*) was evident. Early sown crops performed the best.
- Fires started while harvesting lentils causing the Country Fire Service to record an average of 5 call-outs a day through the first half of November.
- Milk thistles and prickly lettuce were still present at harvest, particularly in lentils.
- Early germinations of potato weed, caltrop and melons have been observed after the rain in December.
- Mice numbers are increasing and could pose a problem in autumn. There is a lot of grain on the ground at the moment, mainly in barley crops.
- Snails have been a problem in a number of crops, but particularly peas. Conical snails along both coasts have presented a problem as they are very hard to clean out. Snail control over the summer will be essential to reduce numbers and risk for the coming season.
- Millipedes caused some farmers to stop harvesting on cooler days, as they were getting into the grain sample.

PASTURES

- The excellent pastures have disappeared quickly during spring in the NYP, further south will follow soon. Summer weed / volunteer cereal germinations may present some feed value to the stock.
- Stock condition is excellent, although some blowfly strike has occurred due to rains and follow-up warm temperatures.

Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula & Kangaroo Island

WEATHER

- Rainfall has been average to above average on KI and average to slightly below for the remainder of the region.
- Temperatures were average to slightly below average for November and above average during December.

CROPS

Central Hills/Fleurieu Peninsula

- Harvest has been slowed due to cool showery weather in mid to late December.
- Grain quality has been variable with screenings above average, protein levels low in higher yielding crops and conversely higher in low yielding crops.
- Some grain has been slightly stained with the cool, moist weather.
- Strong winds have caused some loss of flowers on pulse crops particularly beans.
- Yields are average but highly variable within and between paddocks mainly due to soil type variation which influences waterlogging and water storage characteristics.
- Summer weeds are emerging and spraying for weed control has commenced.

Kangaroo Island

- Harvest progress has been slowed by cool to mild conditions with rain followed by lingering showers.
- High screenings and high protein for some wheat has been reported. Test weights are good.
- No sprouted wheat has been reported, despite the rain.
- Canola yields were below average, mainly due to winter waterlogging.
- There has been some hail damage on canola but oil content is about average.
- Summer weeds (mainly melons, wild radish and blackberry nightshade) have germinated with the spring rains.
- Grasshoppers have been noted on green feed.

PASTURES

Central Hills/Fleurieu Peninsula

- The quantity of pasture and stubble feed is above average due to heavy crop stubbles and waste grain.
- Hay yields are average but variable due to soil type.
- Pasture quality is above average but variable due to soil type.
- Livestock condition is average to above average.

Kangaroo Island

- Pasture feed is drying off from mid to eastern areas of the Island but are still green in the western areas.
- Stubble feed is fresh.
- Livestock condition is average to above average.

Lower Murray

WEATHER

- The Lower Murray generally had below average rainfall in November and December.
- Maximum temperatures were average during November and above average in December.

CROPS

- Harvest was generally completed across the Lower Murray by the end of December with yields varying with soil type, patchy rainfall and farming systems. Early sown crops fared the best in 2013.
- Yields were generally average to slightly above average across the region, although areas in the north eastern part of the district had lower yields.
- Wheat yields were generally slightly above average and of varying quality, with wheat sown on last year's cereal land generally low in protein.
- Barley yields were slightly above average, with a reasonable proportion of malt quality.
- Peas generally yielded well, lupins were variable, and many canola crops suffered frost damage.
- A few areas have received some summer rainfall but generally summer weed control has been confined to spraying patches of skeleton weed.

PASTURES

- Feed levels are reported to be reasonable at this stage in the Lower Murray with livestock grazing stubbles.
- There is currently not a great deal of summer weed growth.

Northern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall across the region was patchy and well below average in November and December.
- Annual rainfall was well below average across the district.
- Maximum temperatures were average during November and above average during December.

CROPS

- Harvest was generally completed by mid to late December.
- Yields were generally average, despite the low rainfall year, with considerable variation based on soil type and farming systems.
- Early sown crops following good summer weed control were clearly better than where summer weeds were not controlled as summer weed growth uses soil moisture. Numerous crops yielded well above average.
- Wheat quality was quite variable and generally low in protein, particularly where sown on last year's cereal paddocks.
- A reasonable proportion of barley crops achieved malt quality.
- Some summer weed control has commenced where sufficient rain has caused germination.

PASTURES

- Farmers have placed livestock onto stubbles.
- There is generally little summer weed growth to provide feed for livestock.

Southern Murray Mallee

WEATHER

- Rainfall was well below average across the region, with few significant rainfall events that were not widespread during this period.
- Maximum temperatures were average during November and above average during December.

CROPS

- Harvest was generally completed by Christmas.
- Frost was quite severe for many farmers around Karoonda, Pinnaroo and Geranium with some farmers reporting crop losses of 50%. Crop loss across the region might have been 10-20%.
- Yields of crops unaffected by frost were generally average to above average, despite the low rainfall year, with considerable variation due to soil type and farming system.
- Early sown crops following good summer weed control yielded much better than where summer moisture was not well conserved.
- Wheat quality was quite variable, and generally low in protein, particularly where it was sown on last year's cereal land.
- A reasonable proportion of barley was classified as malt quality.
- Peas generally yielded well, lupins were variable, and many canola crops were affected by frost.
- Some farmers have commenced summer weed control where rain has caused germination.

PASTURES

- Livestock are grazing stubbles.
- Generally stubble and pasture feed levels are lower than usual at this time of year.

Upper South East

WEATHER

- Rainfall was below average across most of the district during both November and December.
- Maximum temperatures were near average during November and average to slightly above average during December.

CROPS

- Harvest progressed rapidly in November and early December before delays due to cool wet conditions in mid to late December.
- Late germinating weeds caused problems with harvest and many canola and bean crops were desiccated prior to harvest.
- By the end of December harvest was almost complete throughout the district.
- Wheat yields were generally well above average. The variety Scout yielded very well, however high levels of black tip resulted in significant down grading.
- Barley yields were generally average to slightly above average with most growers targeting high yielding feed varieties so very little malt quality grain was produced.
- Milling oats have yielded well with yields above average and of good quality.
- Although canola yields were near average, it was well below expectations. The earlier well above average yield potential was reduced by hot conditions during flowering which shortened the flowering period and podding height.
- Canola oil content was above average.
- Beans tolerated the wet winter conditions better than other pulses and yielded above average, while most other pulse yields were average.

PASTURES

- Rain in late December will be beneficial for lucerne pastures, although further follow up rain will be required.
- Hay has been sitting on the ground for up to 3-4 weeks due to wet weather and the quality of this hay will be poor.
- Livestock is in good condition but feed quality is an issue with most feed suitable only for maintenance of stock condition rather than growth.

Lower South East

WEATHER

- Rainfall was average in both November and December.
- Maximum temperatures were below average in November and near average during December.

CROPS

- Cool weather with reasonable rainfall during November enabled crops to ripen slowly and increased yields.
- Harvest was delayed due to the slow ripening of crops and canola crops were only windrowed in early December.
- Rain and cool conditions in the last two weeks of December further delayed harvest.
- By the end of December harvest was only 25% complete with mainly canola, pulses, barley and oats harvested.
- Bean crops have all been desiccated due to high amounts of green weeds due to poor earlier weed control in waterlogged paddocks.
- Canola oil has been of good quality but test weight has been below average. Yields are expected to be average to below average because of waterlogging earlier in the season.
- Black point has been widespread in wheat crops throughout the district due to wet conditions and high humidity after flowering.
- There is a high weed burden in many crops, particularly lesser loose strife, ox tongue, milk thistle and prickly lettuce, making harvest slow and difficult.

PASTURES

- Rain in late December will benefit perennial pastures, although further rain will be required to maintain pasture growth.
- Unbaled hay has sat in paddocks for up to 6-7 weeks due to weather, and therefore is of poorer quality.
- Pastures that have been cut for hay are showing good regrowth and are being grazed.
- Livestock is in good condition but feed quality is an issue with most feed suitable only for maintenance of stock condition rather than growth.