

Crop and Pasture Summary

Issue 6 Season 2020-21: Final Outcome – March 2021

Summary

The overall cropping season started with ideal seeding conditions. A dry mid-winter slowed crop and pasture growth. Apart from an early September burst of hot, dry conditions, spring was ideal for finishing the crop with timely rains and mild temperatures allowing crops to reach full production potential.

Crop yields in many areas were average to above average, with well-above average yields in some districts. Parts of Eyre Peninsula, Northern Yorke Peninsula and parts of the Mid North were below average. Despite strong winds in several districts causing grain losses, total crop production for 2020-21, estimated at 9.13 million tonnes from a crop area of 4.0 million hectares is well-above the long-term average, with a second highest farm gate value of \$2.5 billion.

Grain harvest proceeded with few interruptions from rain or high fire risk days. Harvest was completed across the State by end of January except for rain delayed harvest in the lower South East. Grain quality was average to above average in all districts with high test weights, low screenings, and average to above average grain protein.

Annual and perennial pasture production was insufficient to maintain stock over summer in most of the low and medium rainfall districts. Livestock were moved onto abundant stubbles available post-harvest. Cut hay and kept grain will provide enough feed reserves for livestock, with good supplies of hay available in most districts.

Figure 2 Rainfall Deciles 1 January to 31 March 2021

Based on gridded data from BOM

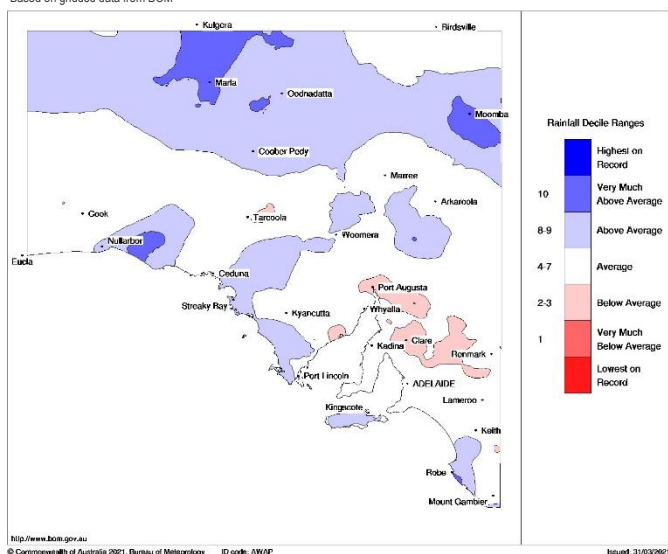
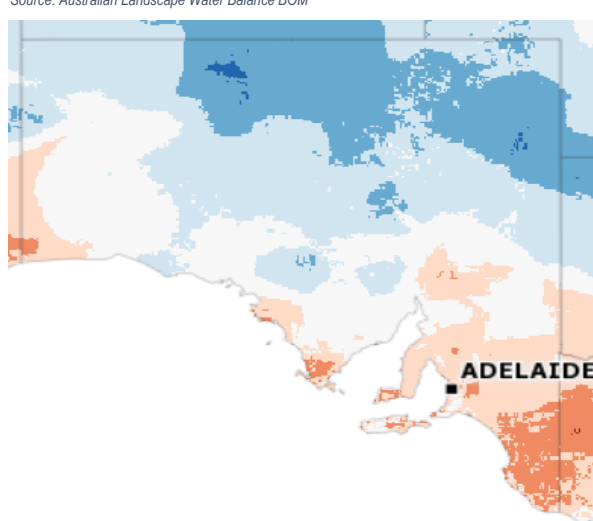


Figure 1 Root Zone Soil Moisture (Actual) as at 8 April 2021

Source: Australian Landscape Water Balance BOM



Sown crop area and production for 2020-21 and previous five seasons

Seasons	2015-6	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 estimate
Area sown (ha)	3,821,000	3,894,000	3,565,000	3,572,000	3,898,000	4,003,000
Production (t)	7,211,000	11,145,000	6,921,000	5,795,000	6,467,000	9,135,000
Farm gate value	\$1.6 billion	\$2.2 billion	\$1.7 billion	\$1.7 billion	\$2.0 billion	\$2.5 billion

Next update for release May 2021 – New season 2021-22 Crop
Information accurate as at 9 April 2021.



Government of South Australia
Department of Primary Industries
and Regions

The season so far...



RAIN – Good opening rains, with a dry mid-winter setback followed by spring rains provided near ideal conditions for grain production. Little rain during harvest allowed most districts to finish by the end of December, except for several later finishing districts finishing late January. Heavy rain in late January and early February delayed harvest completion in the Lower South East until late February.



SUBSOIL MOISTURE – A large 2020 crop depleted soil moisture. Rain for most of the cereal zone for the first quarter of 2021 (Figure 1) has limited replenishment of subsoil moisture (Figure 2).



CROP MIX – Canola, lentil and bean crop areas increased significantly on last year while the wheat and barley area increased slightly on recent season crops. Changes to the area sown to domestic and export hay varies between districts, but overall, the area is smaller than last season.



CROP GROWTH – The 2020-21 crop was mostly sown by end of May and established well, except late sown crops. Frost damage in late September was more severe than expected in a few districts. Due to late rains, more than normal cereal and pulse crops were sprayed prior to harvest for late weed control. Crop yields overall were above average, with well-above average yields in some districts, but some parts of the Eyre and Yorke Peninsulas had below average production. Total crop production for 2020-21 was

above the long-term average, with the final estimate landing at 9.14 million tonnes from a crop area of 4.00 million hectares. Grain quality was average to above average in all districts with high test weights, low screenings and average to above average grain protein. Harvest composition largely reflected that of previous seasons, with wheat being by far the largest crop, followed by barley, pulses (combined) and oilseeds. However, oilseed production was up on the past five seasons.

LIVESTOCK CONDITION AND FEED – Rain during spring promoted pasture to recommence growing, but production remained insufficient for summer stock feed in most of the low and medium rainfall districts. Crop stubbles are now providing reasonable to excellent amounts of high-quality feed for stock. There are good supplies of hay available in most districts. The late winter and spring wet conditions in the pastoral zone has improved feed and refilled water sources, allowing restocking.

Outlook for the year

RAINFALL OUTLOOK – The Bureau of Meteorology's most recent update of the season outlook (issued 8 April 2021) for the three-month April to June is for equal probability of wetter or drier than average rainfall, but signals a high probability of being warmer than average.

Challenges and opportunities

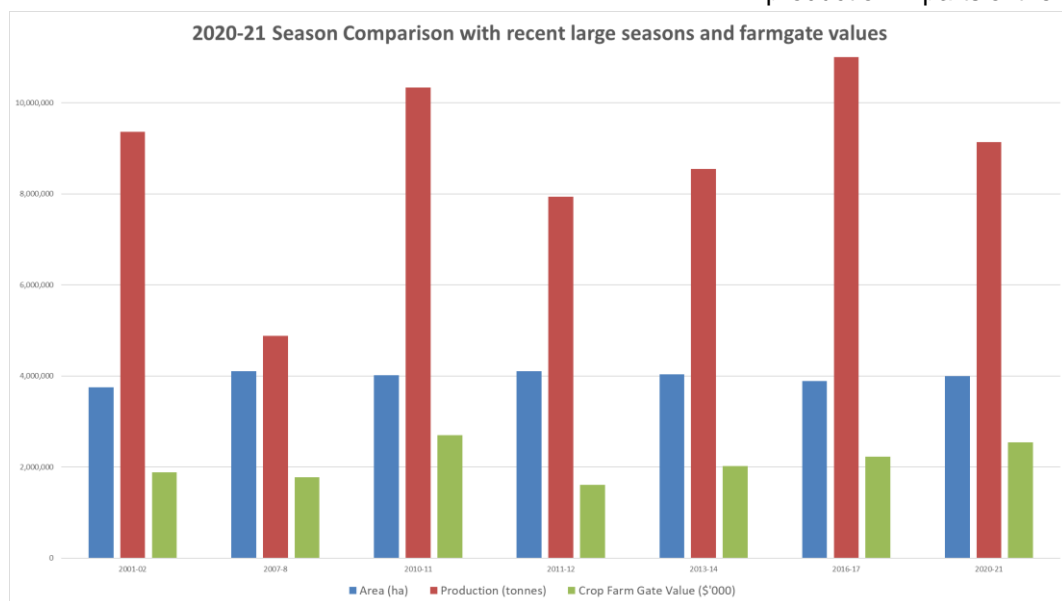
PESTS AND DISEASES – Crop disease and pest problems were minimal this season.

ADVERSE EVENTS – The December 2020 Blackford fire affected farm enterprises in the lower South East. Around 14,000 ha was burnt, with significant losses to livestock and fencing.

MARKET DRIVERS – Buoyant demand for wheat and coarse grains, combined with lower than usual grain production in parts of the northern hemisphere have driven

strong demand for Australian grains supporting above average prices. China's activity in purchasing feed grains is likely to continue to indirectly flow on creating stronger price outlooks for Australian grains.

REGIONAL ISSUES – Areas recovering from several years of drought and those affected by severe bushfires over both this and last summer remain an important focus of recovery efforts in support of affected communities.



May	July	Sept	Nov	Jan 2021	Apr 2021
					This Update
Seeding intentions	Seeding and crop establishment	Winter crop performance	Spring crop early harvest	Harvest	Final summary and estimates