

PIRSA Crop and Pasture Summary

Issue 6 Final Season Report – March 2019

2018–19 Season Summary

The 2018 growing season rainfall (April to October) was well below average with August being the only month experiencing near average falls. Severe frequent spring frosts combined with the dry growing season resulted in the smallest total grain harvest since the 2008–09 season. While most of the lower rainfall areas were well below average, some coastal districts including Lower Eyre Peninsula, South East and Kangaroo Island had above average crop production. Strong winds caused soil erosion events in the drought-affected districts. This will continue until sufficient rains stimulate new growth. However, despite the season, crops on Eyre Peninsula harvested much better than expected, contributing to an upward revision of the estimated State production.

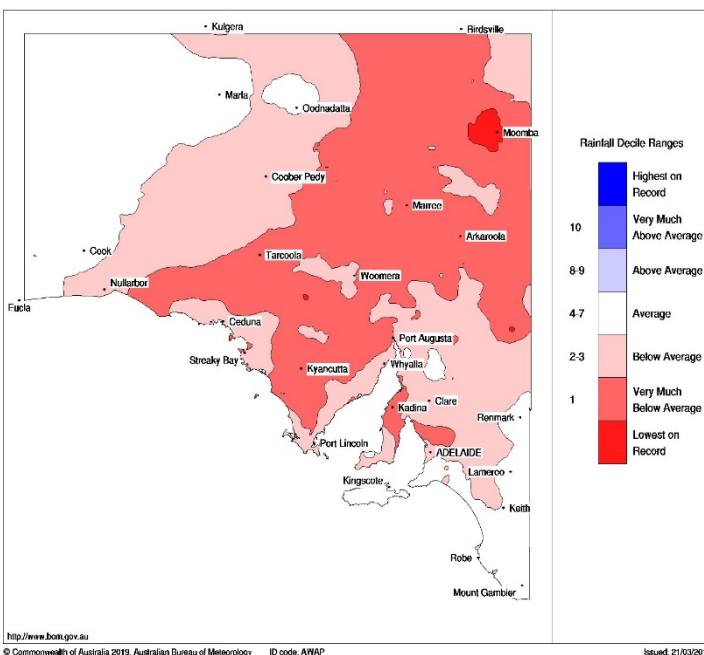
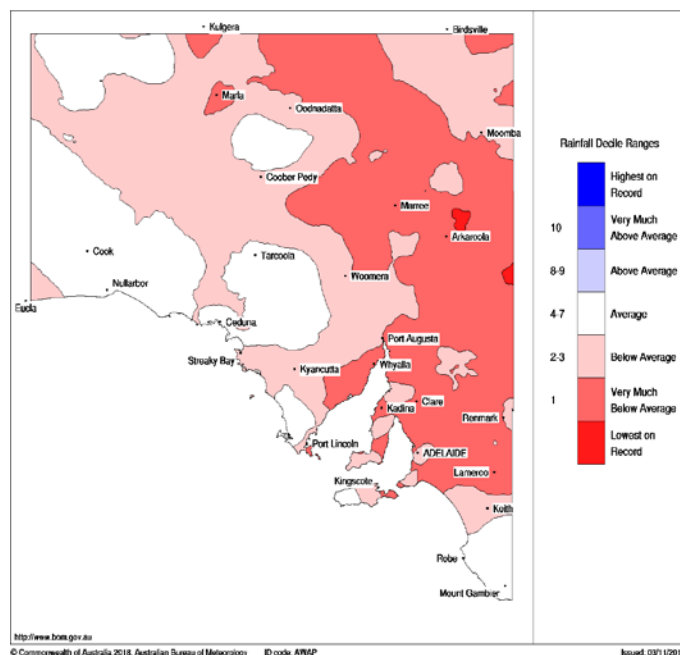
Harvest is now complete, with the last crops harvested in the South East and Kangaroo Island. Harvest took longer than expected due to rain interruptions and cool weather through October to December. Viterra's last harvest update reports the receipt of just over 4 million tonnes of grain, with much reduced weekly grain receipts now that harvest is finished.

South Australian Rainfall Deciles, 1 April to 31 October 2018 Season

South Australian Rainfall Deciles, 1 December 2018 to 28 February 2019

Distribution based on gridded data

Distribution based on gridded data



Crop area and production for previous five seasons and the new crop

Season	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19 (Final estimate)
Area sown (ha)	4,038,000	3,899,000	3,821,000	3,894,000	3,565,000	3,503,000
Production (t)	8,551,000	7,667,000	7,211,000	11,144,000	6,920,000	5,584,000
Farm Gate Value	\$2.0 billion	\$2.0 billion	\$1.6 billion	\$2.2 billion	\$1.7 billion	\$1.9 billion

Next update for release May 2019 – Seeding Intentions

Information accurate as at 21 March 2019.



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The season so far...



RAIN – Below average rainfall and above average maximum temperatures across the State during April to October growing season then a cool wet period during harvest followed by dry January with record heat, continuing dry through to March.

At the time of writing, floodwaters and recent rainfall in the north-east pastoral region were expected to improve feed and water availability.



SUBSOIL MOISTURE – Soils in most districts have low subsoil moisture.



CROP MIX – For the 2018–19 season, area sown of barley increased in most districts by an estimated 15%, mostly replacing area sown to pulses including lentils. Wheat area increased in 2017–18 to be near average. Crops damaged by spring frosts were cut for hay, totalling about 10% of the total crop grain area.



CROP GROWTH – Crop harvest was completed during January. Harvest was slower than normal with cool conditions and some rain interruptions in November and December. Remaining stubble has been good quality stockfeed.



LIVESTOCK CONDITION AND FEED – Paddock feed levels are extremely low. There are high levels of livestock supplementary feeding.

Outlook for the year

RAINFALL OUTLOOK – Bureau of Meteorology season outlook for April through June 2019 is for hotter than normal conditions but with normal rainfall for South Australia.

However, the Bureau has escalated the Pacific Ocean El Niño to “Alert”, as most models are now favouring its development during winter 2019. El Niño conditions in the Pacific is typically associated with below average rainfall for eastern and parts of southern Australia.

Challenges and opportunities

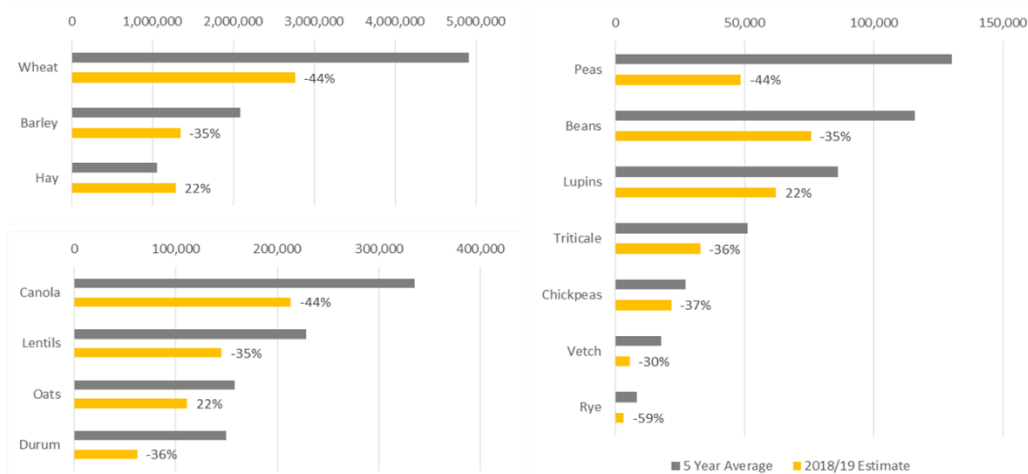
PESTS AND DISEASES – Snail numbers are generally low across the State, except for the some parts of the southern Yorke Peninsula. Unfavourable dry conditions last year limited snail breeding in most districts.

ADVERSE EVENTS – Strong winds continue to cause soil erosion in paddocks with dry soil surface and no cover.

MARKET DRIVERS – Global weather-related grain supply issues are supporting above average pricing. However, a larger northern hemisphere new season crop, expected to increase grain supply, may result in prices easing during 2019. Eastern State drought conditions continue to provide local demand for fodder and feed grains. Traders are positioning grain into domestic markets, significantly reducing grain traded for export. The eastern State sorghum crop is mostly in poor condition, also providing support for higher domestic feed grain prices.

REGIONAL ISSUES – Pasture availability and fodder shortages for animals in most districts. There is surface water shortages in a number of districts and both pastoral zones. Drought affected districts include eastern and western Eyre Peninsula, upper North, northern Yorke Peninsula, Murray Mallee, eastern Mid North region and the Pastoral zones.

2018-19 Final Crop Production Estimates and comparison with 5-year average (tonnes).



May	July	Sep	Nov	Jan 2019	Mar 2019
Seeding Intentions	Seeding and crop establishment	Winter Crop Performance	Spring Crop Performance	Harvest	THIS UPDATE
					FINAL SUMMARY AND ESTIMATES