# South Australian Crop and Pasture Report

# 2025-26 Crop Performance Summary

January 2026

Government of South Australia
Department of Primary Industries and Regions

# Crop and Pasture Report South Australia

Information current as of 14 January 2026


This is a report prepared by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA).

**Disclaimer**



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## Key link to Weather information

Bureau of Meteorology - Weather and rainfall observations

## Notes on the calculation of crop estimates

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 to PIRSA and 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.

# State Crops and Pastures – 2025/26 Crop Performance

## Summary

The 2025 season was characterised by a late break and very low starting subsoil moisture that created early challenges. Total rainfall for the year was below to very much below average for many areas across the state (figure 1). Winter rainfall and timely October–November rains (figure 2) after a dry early spring stabilised crop performance.

November rainfall caused frustrating delays to early harvest progress, with some cereal crops reshooting and summer broadleaf weeds germinating in standing crops. Many growers carried out crop desiccation to enable commencement of harvest. Harvest delays enabled early summer weed spraying, which is ahead of schedule compared to previous years.

The late break delayed crop maturity by several weeks allowing some crops to benefit from late rainfall, improving grain and pod fill and slowing grain maturation. Despite below average rainfall, crop performances benefitted from spring heat events being less severe than forecast. Frost damage was minimal statewide apart from isolated pockets in the Mid North. Overall, yield was near average but variable across regions, despite a challenging start to the season.

Wheat and barley grain quality was mixed, with screenings and test weight often varying within and between paddocks. Durum was notably poor in some areas, with pinched grain resulting from the dry seasonal finish. Canola performed relatively well, with crops in a number of regions benefiting from late season rainfall. Lentils were variable, performing favourably in some districts but suffered crop failures and pinched grain in drier zones. Beans were disappointing when compared to other crops.

With uncertainty over grain yield potential due to dry spring conditions and a strong outlook for hay prices, many growers took the opportunity to cut cereal crops for hay. Hay quality was variable depending on whether hay was cut and baled before or after the October rain.

Estimated grain production for 2025/26 has increased due to better-than-expected yields in most districts to 8.9 million tonnes, close to the five-year average. Despite this, farm incomes will be impacted due to grain prices being significantly lower than in recent years. The estimated farm gate value of grain is estimated to be $3.1 billion.

In 2025 early mid-season feed shortages led to supplementary feeding and destocking but late-season improvements eased pressure. Summer pasture and stubble cover are significantly better than in 2024, improving feed availability and reducing erosion risk.

Livestock condition is generally better than expected, supported by the improved stubble and pasture growth. Although soil cover is better than last summer it will be important for producers to align stocking rates with feed availability and avoid overgrazing to protect soils, particularly in the Mallee where erosion risk remains. In areas with abundant dry standing feed (e.g. the South East) fire risk will need to be managed.

**Sown crop area and production for previous five seasons**

| Seasons | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | *2025-26 Estimated* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Area sown (ha) | 4,003,000 | 3,942,000 | 3,942,000 | 4,011,000 | 3,860,000 | *4,068,790* |
| Production (t) | 9,135,000 | 8,445,000 | 12,788,000 | 8,703,000 | 5,170,000 | *8,863,172* |
| Farm gate value | $2.5 billion | $3.3 billion | $4.8 billion | $3.3 billion | $2.1 billion | *$3.1 billion* |

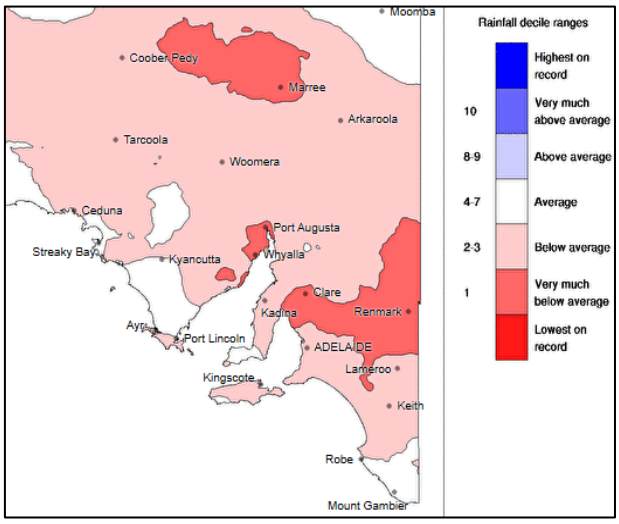



Figure 1: Rainfall deciles for January to December 2025 (issued 31/12/2025).



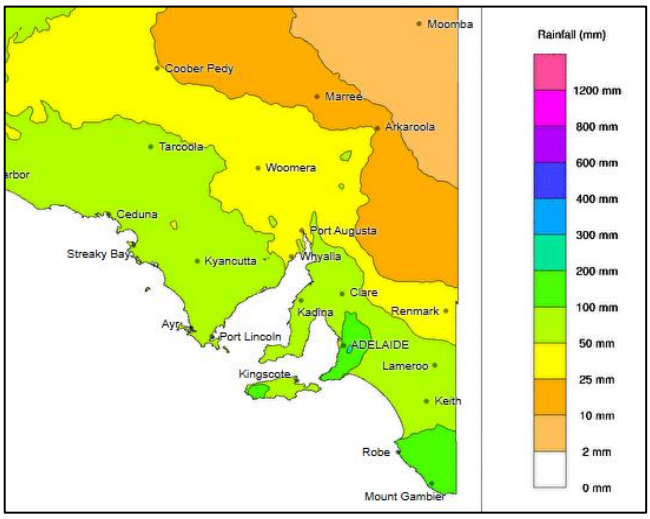



Figure 2: Rainfall totals for October - November 2025 (issued 30/11/2025)



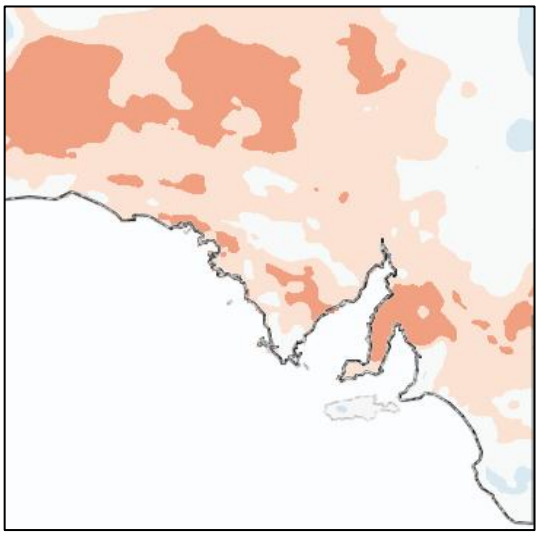



Figure 3: Lower layer soil moisture (issued 12/01/2026)



# Season 2025/26

### Weather

Rainfall patterns during the 2025 growing season (April–October) in South Australia were marked by a late seasonal break, followed by average to above average rainfall through winter, and a below average early spring. Late-season rain in October and early November supported yield, particularly in later areas and with longer season crops. For other crops and districts, the benefits from the late spring rainfall were more limited with crop maturity being more advanced when the rain events occurred. The Northern Mallee remained an exception with persistently dry conditions.

Although significant heat events were forecast in October, these events were less severe than expected, tempering potential impacts on crops. November rainfall caused frustrating delays to early harvest progress, but conditions improved during December with minimal weather interruptions for the remainder of harvest.

Overall, the absence of frost and heat shocks during the spring flowering and grain fill period together with mild conditions and timely late rain, contributed to better-than-anticipated harvest outcomes across most regions.

### Season outlook

The February to April rainfall outlook is neutral, and indicates equal chances of above, near average or below average rainfall. In southern parts of South Australia below average rainfall is likely. Climate drivers including the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and the Southern Annular Mode (SAM) are largely neutral with minimal influence on rainfall patterns. Warmer-than-average maximum and minimum temperatures are expected during this period.

### Subsoil moisture

Subsoil moisture was low entering the 2025 cropping season due to drought conditions in 2024 followed by an exceptionally dry summer and autumn. Late opening rains compounded challenges to crop establishment and performance. Winter rains improved soil moisture levels in most areas assisting crop establishment and progress.

Current soil moisture conditions are varied across the state from very much below average to above average (figure 3).

### Crop mix

Overall, yield was near average but highly variable across regions, despite a challenging start to the season and below average rainfall.

Cereal yields were highly variable being above average in some paddocks in some districts and soil types, to failed crops in other situations. Grain quality in cereals was mixed with high screenings and low test weight issues arising in some areas. Proactive growers used on-farm blending strategies to meet delivery standards. Durum yields and quality were particularly poor in the dry season.

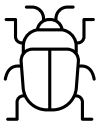
Canola performed well in some regions particularly where crops benefited from late-season rains, delivering relatively strong yields and high oil content and achieving favourable gross margins. Significant price penalties for GM compared to non-GM canola, will likely influence grower variety decision making going forward. Lentils performed well in favourable areas but struggled in drier zones with poorer yields and pinched grain. Bean yields were disappointing with the late start and dry season and were mostly below average except for the South East where conditions and crops were more favourable.

Significant areas of cereal crops were cut for hay driven by uncertainty over grain yield potential during the dry spring period, good dry matter potential and favourable hay prices. Quality was mixed, with late spring rainfall after cutting reducing quality in a number of areas. In higher rainfall zones of the Adelaide Hills, South East and Fleurieu a second cut of hay was achieved in some paddocks due to crop/pasture regrowth after the first cut.

### Cropping progress

Harvest commenced several weeks later than usual, and was mostly completed by mid January, with the Lower South East the exception. The early harvest period was frustrating for growers, with delays due to wet weather. Conditions improved for the latter part of harvest with minimal weather interruptions. There were no significant grain quality issues that resulted from the rain.

# Challenges and opportunities



### Pests and diseases

Disease levels remained low throughout the 2025 growing season, with progression and impact limited by timely fungicide applications and generally dry conditions.

Insect pests were effectively managed, with growers applying insecticides when populations exceeded economic thresholds. Native budworm infestations were higher than in previous years with pulses requiring multiple insecticide applications and canola requiring widespread treatment.

Late spring rains stimulated germinations of summer weeds. As a result, early summer weed spraying has been a major focus for many growers. The stop-start nature of harvest in November provided an opportunity for early commencement of summer weed control. By mid-December, some growers had nearly completed summer spraying programs.

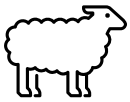
A focus on managing grass weed populations, especially barley grass and ryegrass, will be required following the 2025 season. These weeds were more prevalent due to limited early knock down herbicide opportunities associated with the late break and dry sowing. In addition to ryegrass and barley grass, fleabane is becoming problematic in several regions.

### Regional issues and adverse events

Late season rains promoted crop regrowth and stimulated the germination of late broadleaf weeds in many unharvested cereal crops. The result was growers carrying out crop desiccation, to enable harvest to commence.

A frost event in November affected parts of the Mid-North, causing damage to late crops. Damage was isolated, and compared to recent years, frost damage was minimal statewide.

# Pastures and livestock condition



### Pasture cover

Pasture cover across the state is generally good and significantly better than last year, which should reduce erosion risk if paddocks are appropriately managed (figure 4). The Upper and Lower South East have excellent standing cover, with perennial pastures responding to late-season rainfall.

Stubble cover is also improved compared to 2024. The exception is the northern Mallee where cover remains highly variable and bare sandy hills continue to pose a risk of soil erosion.

### Seasonal Conditions

Early in the 2025 season, livestock producers faced challenging conditions due to the late break. Limited pasture growth and poor ground cover increased reliance on supplementary feeding. Late-season rainfall has significantly improved pasture growth and feed availability across most regions, easing earlier feed deficits and supporting livestock condition heading into summer.

### Supplementary Feeding and Containment

Limited pasture cover and early season pasture growth in 2025 saw some producers rely on supplementary feeding and containment feeding to maintain livestock. With low hay and grain reserves following the poor 2024 season, this represented a significant cost for many.

Later season pasture growth and the availability of crop stubbles have now eased feed pressures across most regions, although some areas in the Mallee will continue to face challenges.

Hay availability is good, but quality is mixed with some hay being rain-affected.

### Proactive early management of stock numbers

Along with supplementary feeding and containment, early to mid-season feed deficits also saw producers destocking to maintain livestock health and protect soil condition. Breeding animals were prioritised, with surplus or non-productive stock sold.

As conditions improved some regions began increasing stock numbers to utilise pasture growth. For others, the need to continue reducing stock numbers remained.

These measures reflect adaptive responses to seasonal variability and feed shortages across South Australia.

### Livestock Condition

Livestock condition across the state is generally better than expected, supported by improved stubble cover and adequate feed availability. Sheep and lambs have been turned onto barley and wheat stubbles, which are far superior to last year, providing good nutrition and reducing the need for supplementary feeding in most regions.

In the South East and higher rainfall zones, abundant late season pasture growth has further bolstered livestock performance. While medic pastures in the Mallee responded well to late rain, bare sandy hills remain a concern for erosion and feed limitations. Overall, livestock are in good condition heading into summer, with only isolated areas likely to require additional feeding.

### Management Responses

Stocking rates are being actively managed to align with feed availability. In the Upper and Lower South East, abundant dry standing feed is increasing fire danger, so grazing and strategic management will be important.

Avoiding overgrazing is critical to prevent soil erosion, especially in sandy Mallee areas where vigilance is needed.

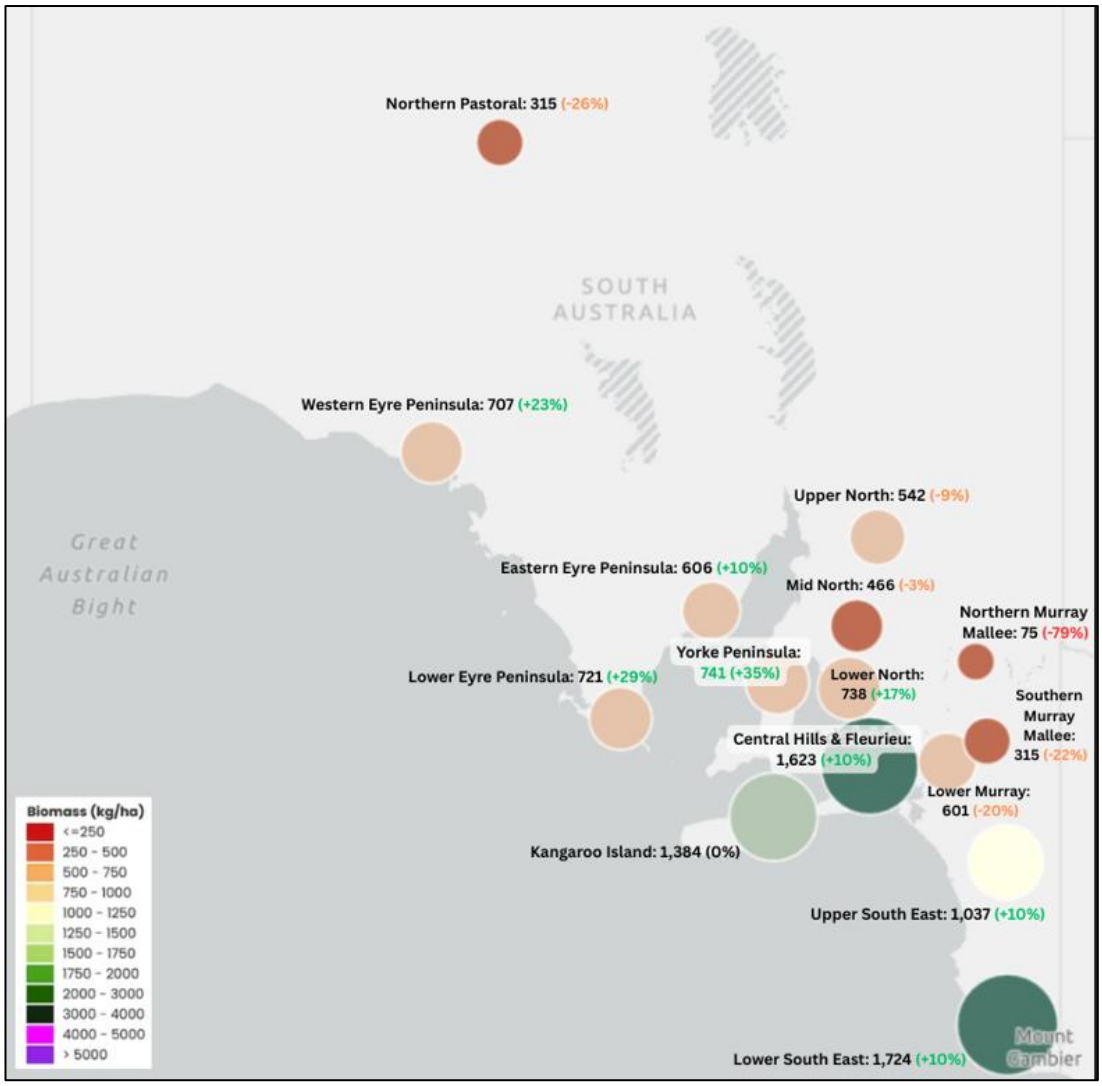



Figure 4: Total Standing Dry Matter (TSDM) for December across South Australian regions, shown against the 10-year average.

# 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* | 380,000 | 145,000 | 370,000 | 170,000 | 234,000 | 247,000 | 65,000 | 4,200 |
| | *t* | 532,000 | 551,000 | 740,000 | 663,000 | 561,600 | 642,200 | 208,000 | 14,700 |
| Durum | *ha* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12,500 | 1,000 | 3,000 | 3,800 | 0 |
| | *t* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 45,000 | 2,200 | 6,600 | 11,400 | 0 |
| Barley | *ha* | 70,000 | 50,000 | 70,000 | 140,000 | 102,000 | 93,000 | 19,140 | 3,200 |
| | *t* | 112,000 | 200,000 | 168,000 | 546,000 | 255,000 | 260,400 | 65,076 | 12,800 |
| Oats | *ha* | 12,000 | 0 | 3,000 | 4,200 | 7,000 | 4,000 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| | *t* | 14,400 | 0 | 5,400 | 12,600 | 12,600 | 8,000 | 5,600 | 6,000 |
| Rye | *ha* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | *t* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Triticale | *ha* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 500 | 1,700 | 400 | 100 |
| | *t* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,300 | 1,000 | 3,400 | 1,200 | 300 |
| Peas | *ha* | 2,500 | 1,500 | 2,500 | 8,500 | 10,000 | 9,000 | 3,600 | 400 |
| | *t* | 2,250 | 3,000 | 2,375 | 18,700 | 17,000 | 12,600 | 6,480 | 600 |
| Lupins | *ha* | 1,500 | 8,500 | 5,000 | 1,000 | 2,900 | 1,800 | 500 | 1,000 |
| | *t* | 1,375 | 17,000 | 6,000 | 1,800 | 3,770 | 2,160 | 900 | 1,700 |
| Beans | *ha* | 0 | 8,000 | 400 | 9,000 | 11,000 | 12,500 | 3,200 | 3,000 |
| | *t* | 0 | 19,200 | 400 | 19,800 | 18,700 | 22,500 | 6,720 | 6,000 |
| Chickpeas | *ha* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,000 | 2,500 | 2,200 | 400 | 0 |
| | *t* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6,000 | 3,250 | 2,640 | 560 | 0 |
| Lentils | *ha* | 75,000 | 55,000 | 80,000 | 162,000 | 23,000 | 28,000 | 16,000 | 0 |
| | *t* | 67,500 | 137,500 | 96,000 | 340,200 | 43,700 | 33,600 | 25,600 | 0 |
| Vetch | *ha* | 2,000 | 4,000 | 0 | 1,800 | 5,600 | 4,000 | 300 | 0 |
| | *t* | 1,083 | 8,000 | 0 | 2,700 | 3,920 | 3,200 | 300 | 0 |
| Canola | *ha* | 4,000 | 80,000 | 9,000 | 11,500 | 15,000 | 23,000 | 4,000 | 3,200 |
| | *t* | 3,200 | 208,000 | 11,250 | 24,150 | 25,500 | 39,100 | 8,000 | 8,320 |
| Hay | *ha* | 15,500 | 10,400 | 21,000 | 13,700 | 23,500 | 42,000 | 14,500 | 7,600 |
| (not in total) | *t* | 37,151 | 46,057 | 52,394 | 64,390 | 98,700 | 176,400 | 72,500 | 31,920 |
| Total | *ha* | 547,000 | 352,000 | 539,900 | 524,500 | 414,500 | 429,200 | 118,340 | 17,100 |
| | *t* | 733,808 | 1,143,700 | 1,029,425 | 1,683,250 | 948,240 | 1,036,400 | 339,836 | 50,420 |

## 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* | 6,400 | 56,000 | 220,000 | 120,000 | 77,000 | 26,000 | 2,120,600 |
| | *t* | 21,760 | 100,800 | 176,000 | 180,000 | 219,450 | 128,700 | 4,739,210 |
| Durum | *ha* | 0 | 400 | 0 | 0 | 7,300 | 0 | 28,000 |
| | *t* | 0 | 600 | 0 | 0 | 18,980 | 0 | 84,780 |
| Barley | *ha* | 7,200 | 58,000 | 85,000 | 100,000 | 39,000 | 7,000 | 843,540 |
| | *t* | 23,040 | 113,100 | 59,500 | 170,000 | 111,150 | 36,400 | 2,132,466 |
| Oats | *ha* | 500 | 3,000 | 3,200 | 3,300 | 24,000 | 5,700 | 73,900 |
| | *t* | 1,250 | 4,200 | 2,240 | 4,950 | 60,720 | 23,940 | 161,900 |
| Rye | *ha* | 0 | 1,500 | 3,000 | 3,500 | 1,600 | 0 | 9,600 |
| | *t* | 0 | 1,800 | 2,400 | 4,200 | 1,760 | 0 | 10,160 |
| Triticale | *ha* | 500 | 2,400 | 1,500 | 7,000 | 1,000 | 500 | 16,600 |
| | *t* | 1,300 | 3,600 | 1,200 | 8,400 | 2,200 | 2,500 | 28,400 |
| Peas | *ha* | 500 | 2,800 | 2,500 | 1,800 | 2,900 | 400 | 48,900 |
| | *t* | 950 | 3,360 | 500 | 900 | 3,700 | 900 | 73,315 |
| Lupins | *ha* | 1,000 | 1,700 | 6,200 | 12,000 | 11,000 | 2,700 | 56,800 |
| | *t* | 1,800 | 2,040 | 3,100 | 9,600 | 14,850 | 5,014 | 71,109 |
| Beans | *ha* | 1,000 | 800 | 0 | 1,500 | 33,700 | 16,000 | 100,100 |
| | *t* | 2,300 | 960 | 0 | 600 | 82,565 | 44,800 | 224,545 |
| Chickpeas | *ha* | 200 | 2,600 | 6,000 | 0 | 600 | 1,000 | 18,500 |
| | *t* | 200 | 2,600 | 1,800 | 0 | 900 | 1,333 | 19,283 |
| Lentils | *ha* | 500 | 5,000 | 15,000 | 23,000 | 2,900 | 200 | 485,600 |
| | *t* | 650 | 5,000 | 4,500 | 18,400 | 3,799 | 400 | 776,849 |
| Vetch | *ha* | 100 | 3,500 | 12,000 | 6,000 | 1,200 | 0 | 40,500 |
| | *t* | 200 | 3,150 | 6,000 | 4,200 | 1,200 | 0 | 33,953 |
| Canola | *ha* | 3,800 | 4,000 | 5,500 | 6,000 | 35,550 | 21,600 | 226,150 |
| | *t* | 6,080 | 4,400 | 1,650 | 4,800 | 82,832 | 79,920 | 507,202 |
| Hay | *ha* | 33,400 | 23,000 | 4,000 | 33,000 | 33,100 | 27,100 | 301,800 |
| (not in total) | *t* | 143,620 | 80,500 | 7,000 | 111,888 | 168,810 | 138,210 | 1,229,540 |
| Total | *ha* | 21,700 | 141,700 | 359,900 | 284,100 | 237,750 | 81,100 | **4,068,790** |
| | *t* | 59,530 | 245,610 | 258,890 | 406,050 | 604,106 | 323,908 | **8,863,172** |

## TABLE 2 CROP ESTIMATES AGAINST FIVE YEAR AVERAGE

| | | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 5-year average | 2025/26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat | *ha* | 2,201,600 | 2,195,400 | 2,185,955 | 2,230,600 | 2,014,500 | 2,165,600 | 2,120,600 |
| | *t* | 4,923,000 | 4,705,500 | 7,330,250 | 4,866,005 | 2,736,700 | 4,912,300 | 4,739,210 |
| Durum | *ha* | 37,800 | 35,800 | 37,200 | 36,600 | 34,400 | 36,400 | 28,000 |
| | *t* | 114,870 | 108,350 | 142,200 | 101,470 | 61,280 | 105,600 | 84,780 |
| Barley | *ha* | 953,500 | 917,400 | 858,600 | 842,700 | 798,140 | 874,100 | 843,540 |
| | *t* | 2,560,000 | 2,151,700 | 3,080,500 | 2,232,310 | 1,241,664 | 2,253,200 | 2,132,466 |
| Oats | *ha* | 77,700 | 75,300 | 75,700 | 72,600 | 73,900 | 75,000 | 73,900 |
| | *t* | 173,700 | 162,400 | 230,950 | 143,410 | 84,270 | 158,900 | 161,900 |
| Rye | *ha* | 8,600 | 6,600 | 9,100 | 9,000 | 6,700 | 8,000 | 9,600 |
| | *t* | 11,100 | 4,600 | 16,250 | 8,240 | 2,630 | 8,600 | 10,160 |
| Triticale | *ha* | 28,800 | 21,400 | 18,300 | 17,600 | 14,800 | 20,200 | 16,600 |
| | *t* | 70,750 | 30,150 | 49,600 | 32,480 | 13,640 | 39,300 | 28,400 |
| Peas | *ha* | 70,000 | 66,800 | 69,700 | 62,700 | 50,800 | 64,000 | 48,900 |
| | *t* | 113,700 | 92,500 | 137,550 | 90,050 | 39,620 | 94,700 | 73,315 |
| Lupins | *ha* | 50,600 | 45,900 | 54,200 | 52,900 | 55,200 | 51,800 | 56,800 |
| | *t* | 75,650 | 63,400 | 124,650 | 73,510 | 45,280 | 76,500 | 71,109 |
| Beans | *ha* | 100,600 | 107,300 | 102,100 | 105,700 | 105,400 | 104,200 | 100,100 |
| | *t* | 212,700 | 247,280 | 318,800 | 217,425 | 116,320 | 222,500 | 224,545 |
| Chickpeas | *ha* | 29,500 | 13,500 | 43,500 | 38,400 | 20,800 | 29,100 | 18,500 |
| | *t* | 44,050 | 15,450 | 81,650 | 33,900 | 10,680 | 37,100 | 19,283 |
| Lentils | *ha* | 186,700 | 197,200 | 191,600 | 240,200 | 408,600 | 244,900 | 485,600 |
| | *t* | 345,950 | 339,180 | 527,250 | 362,260 | 447,955 | 404,500 | 776,849 |
| Vetch | *ha* | 36,400 | 34,400 | 37,900 | 34,400 | 35,100 | 35,600 | 40,500 |
| | *t* | 27,750 | 15,050 | 63,950 | 24,405 | 17,839 | 29,800 | 33,953 |
| Canola | *ha* | 220,800 | 224,700 | 258,400 | 267,200 | 241,300 | 242,500 | 226,150 |
| | *t* | 461,800 | 509,750 | 684,000 | 518,000 | 351,810 | 505,100 | 507,202 |
| Hay | *ha* | 263,500 | 220,800 | 210,600 | 218,300 | 296,760 | 242,000 | 301,800 |
| (not in total) | *t* | 1,195,000 | 852,000 | 989,950 | 910,940 | 741,272 | 937,800 | 1,229,540 |
| Total | *ha* | 4,002,600 | 3,941,700 | 3,942,255 | 4,010,600 | 3,859,640 | 3,951,400 | **4,068,790** |
| | *t* | 9,135,020 | 8,445,310 | 12,787,600 | 8,703,465 | 5,169,688 | 8,848,100 | **8,863,172** |