

GIWA Crop Report

February 1 2013

WA planting area estimates (hectares)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
Kwinana	2,268,000	397,000	309,000	117,000	82,000	15,000	
Albany	630,000	331,000	252,000	94,000	20,000	6,000	
Esperance	446,000	250,000	260,000	3,000	20,000	40,000	
Geraldton	932,000	40,000	143,000	5,000	180,000	1,000	
Totals	4,276,000	1,018,000	964,000	219,000	302,000	62,000	6,841,000
<i>2011</i>	<i>4,501,000</i>	<i>1,098,000</i>	<i>749,000</i>	<i>197,000</i>	<i>333,000</i>	<i>60,000</i>	<i>6,938,000</i>

WA grain production estimates (tonnes)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
Kwinana	2,844,000	704,000	405,000	199,000	75,000	10,000	4,237,000
Albany	1,056,000	690,000	390,000	228,000	17,000	5,000	2,386,000
Esperance	799,000	586,000	347,000	4,000	21,000	43,000	1,800,000
Geraldton	1,400,000	58,000	119,000	6,000	181,000	700	1,764,700
Totals	6,099,000	2,038,000	1,261,000	437,000	294,000	58,700	10,187,700
<i>2011</i>	<i>11,082,000</i>	<i>2,805,000</i>	<i>1,182,000</i>	<i>467,000</i>	<i>705,000</i>	<i>70,600</i>	<i>16,311,600</i>

●Note: WA grain production estimates are for total farm production, and includes grain retained on-farm for seed and stock feed, and direct private sales to end users and packers.

Summary

The 2012 season in Western Australia was a trying one for growers and the industry. Spasmodic summer rain, isolated rain in May, a general break in early June, followed by a dry winter lead to poor establishment and below average crop growth in all regions except for the Esperance Port zone. Control of summer weeds to preserve soil moisture proved to be a critical factor in achieving profitable yields.

CBH total receivals finished at around 9 million tonnes. This is a remarkable result when compared to the total rainfall received across the grainbelt. Of the grain commodities, Canola stands out with receivals 80,000 tonnes higher than 2011. All other commodities were lower in tonnages in line with the poor seasonal conditions.

Grain quality was good for all commodities, with the exception of crops in the Lakes region and districts from Meckering to Kellerberrin, which suffered from frost events in September. Wheat suffered some quality downgrades with the extensive and regular rain during harvest, but not to the extent seen in 2010 in the southern half of the state. Of the wheat varieties, Mace was a standout in being able to maintain quality through wet harvest conditions. This trait is likely to lead to Mace occupying a larger percentage of the area sown to wheat in 2013.

Barley yields were surprisingly good given the rainfall received in the growing season. The barley Malt/Feed ratio finished at close to the usual average split of 60/40. High protein was the main cause of deliveries of malt barley varieties being downgraded to Feed.

The increased area planted to Canola in 2012 saw the Canola harvest go over 1.2 million tonnes. On average, GM canola varieties recorded average oil content about 3% higher than non GM canola, which equates to around \$15 /tonne for the oil bonus. This factor, combined with easier weed control, is likely to see the area sown to GM canola increase further in 2013.

Kwinana: Cereals in the West Midlands region averaged about 1.9 t/ha, with a range from 3 t/ha in western districts to 1 t/ha in eastern districts.

Early sown canola with good establishment yielded over 1 t/ha. Canola with poor establishment was lower yielding. Growers will likely review sowing practices for canola for 2013.

Canola after fallow delivered higher yields of up to 1.2 t/ha but only 800 kg/ha after wheat, which combined with 2 years weed control, meant this strategy was very profitable and has set up those paddocks for several years of cheap weed control.

Frost effects in barley were worse than initially forecast along the Great Eastern Highway to Tammin and in the Brookton district, particularly where drizzle fell before dusk on the night of the frost. Crops with 2.5 t/ha potential ended up only returning 1 t/ha.

Widespread areas in the Eastern districts were simply droughted in 2012 and recorded very poor yields.

Albany: Wheat yield averages in the Lakes region were only 1.1 t/ha, less than the 1.3 t/ha which was forecast during harvest. Frost was widespread and was a major contributing factor to these lower yields, along with a resulting high percentage of screening in barley.

The Kukerin to Pingrup districts performed best with wheat yields up to 1.5 t/ha, on the back of one extra winter rainfall event. Generally protein and screening were very good. Hyden was worst affected district for grain quality after many rain events during harvest. Wheat on wheat crops performed worst by far. Fallow paddocks yielded 0.3 t/ha better although yield improvements after fallow of up to 0.5 t/ha have been observed in other seasons.

The southern Albany Port zone harvest suffered some weather damage for around 50% of harvest. Generally, canola and barley escaped any real losses. Wheat quality was affected with Falling Numbers being low.

Canola yields west of Albany highway were well above average, with little waterlogging recorded during winter. Barley was free of significant diseases throughout and also produced very good yields. A very high percentage of barley achieved Malt grade. However, barley harvested after the December rain was downgraded to Feed. The exception has been the variety Buloke which has shown some defects with colour even before the harvest rain.

Esperance: The Esperance Port zone recorded an average season with a dry spring cutting yield potential after an almost perfect autumn and winter rainfall pattern.

Yields and grain quality were still above average with harvest concluding in mid-December.

Temporary harvest bags were used extensively to store grain on-farm and to keep the header moving. Most of that grain has now been delivered.

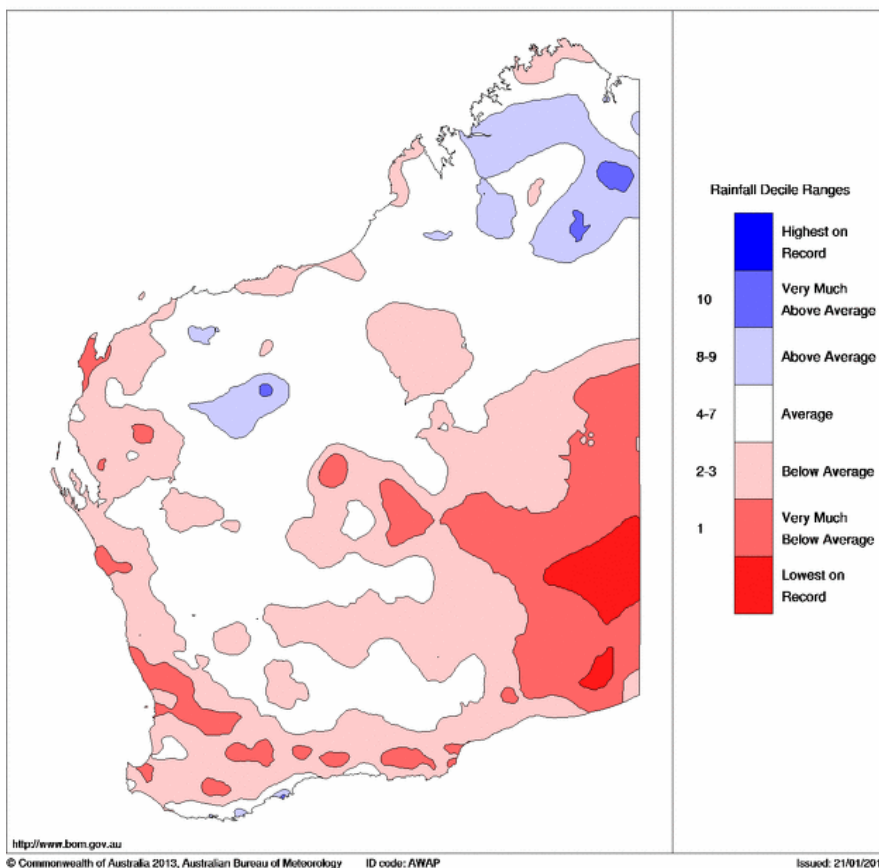
Barley yields were lower than expected, while wheat yields were slightly higher than expected. There were no significant issues for Falling Numbers, or sprouting in wheat or colour in barley.

Geraldton:

2012 saw the full range of yields in the Geraldton Port zone. A large area of the Geraldton zone was finished before the disruptive harvest rains started in earnest.

Canola yields were disappointing in the north and eastern districts and will be viewed as a more risky option in 2013. Radish resistance to Triazine herbicides is also an increasing concern. As a result, after a long absence from crop rotation strategies, lupins may return to the rotation on appropriate soil types.

Western Australian Rainfall Deciles 1 April to 31 December 2012
 Distribution Based on Gridded Data
 Product of the National Climate Centre



2012 rainfall for the cropping season, April to December, in Western Australia shows below average to very much below average rainfall in all regions apart from the south coast. While the totals should suggest a drought year, the number of rainfall days was less than in previous dry seasons, which provided for some sub soil moisture to accumulate.

The crop yields produced with this amount of rainfall shows that the ability of growers to utilise best management practice and cropping technology is exceptional.

Additional information can be sourced from:

- **[BoM rainfall deciles for WA December 2012](#)**
- **[BoM rainfall deciles for WA October to December 2012](#)**
- **[DAFWA Statistical Seasonal forecast](#)**
- **[BoM- WA Seasonal Rainfall Outlook: probabilities for February to April 2013](#)**
- **[BoM month to date rainfall for WA](#)**

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