

## GIWA Crop Report

### April 12 2013

#### WA planting area estimates (hectares)\*

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
<b>Kwinana</b>	2,495,000	405,000	325,000	119,000	66,000	13,000	
<b>Albany</b>	693,000	337,000	265,000	95,000	16,000	6,000	
<b>Esperance</b>	491,000	255,000	273,000	3,000	16,000	30,000	
<b>Geraldton</b>	1,025,000	41,000	150,000	5,000	171,000	1,000	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,704,000</b>	<b>1,038,000</b>	<b>1,013,000</b>	<b>222,000</b>	<b>269,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>7,296,000</b>
2012	4,276,000	1,018,000	964,000	219,000	302,000	62,000	6,841,000

\*This data is indicative only of grower intentions and will change as seeding progresses

#### Summary

Summer rainfall across the Western Australian wheatbelt has been widespread though sporadic. Above average rain in December in the central wheatbelt and southern regions was followed by a dry summer. March rainfall was significant in many districts but patchy across the whole grainbelt. It was most substantial in Esperance and the eastern wheatbelt, centred on Merredin. The Geraldton zone received less rain than other zones and is mostly dry at the surface with limited moisture at depth.

As a consequence of widespread summer rains growers have incurred very high costs to control summer weeds with spraying being required up to 3 times in some districts.

The current amount of soil moisture provides growers, on average, with a smaller production risk for the 2013 crop, and provides some confidence that the summer weed control cost will be recovered in higher crop yields.

In response, grower sentiment indicates a swing generally to planting more wheat, barley and canola than last year, and less area planted to lupins and field peas. There is also a significant area that was fallowed in 2012 that will be planted in 2013. This land will mostly be sown to wheat and canola.

The current financial state of farm businesses in some districts is also influencing this trend as growers look to the less risky option of planting cereals. There are also areas in some districts that may not be sown due to the inability to obtain finance to complete planting programs. The area not sown this year will not be known until seeding is completed in June.

Seeding of canola has commenced in Esperance zone into ground with very good soil moisture profiles. Canola sowing should be finished by April 25 and move to cereals. There has been less early sowing activity in other zones. Dry seeding in all zones is commencing with lupins and canola being the first crops to be sown. In the Geraldton zone, dry seeding is the principal strategy for timely establishment and growers are aiming for 50% of the crop area to be sown before the break to the season.

#### **Albany and Esperance Zones**

The crop mix for 2013 is expected to be similar in both the Esperance and Albany port zones. Grower interest in canola remains high and the area sown this year may increase further on the area planted in 2012.

Yield potential for the Albany zone ranges from average in the south and west, to above average for the east and north east districts. The proportion of TT canola in the Albany zone is expected to increase as growers look to lower cost of production options. The area sown to barley in the southern Albany zone is expected to decline in favour of

wheat because of inferior profit margins in the last few years. In the north east part of the zone, the area sown to barley may increase in area. In the southern Albany zone, the total crop area may decline slightly as some growers are holding stock due to disappointing markets over summer. This stock will require additional land for grazing.

Yield potential for the Esperance zone is high with very good soil moisture in all districts.

### **Geraldton Zone**

Yield potential for the Geraldton zone is average for most districts and slightly below average for the eastern districts. The area sown to wheat is expected to rise with less lupins sown. The fallow area from 2012 will be largely sown to wheat and increase the area of wheat in the zone. While the lupin area in the zone is expected to decline overall, west coastal districts with deep sands will increase their lupin area in response to the improved pricing outlook.

### **Kwinana zone**

Yield potential in the Kwinana West zone is average, but is likely to be above average for the central and south east parts of zone.

In the Kwinana East zone the area sown to wheat is likely to be 2-5% larger. Canola will occupy about the same area as last year but more may be planted if the break is early and significant. The area sown to lupins is expected to continue to decline. Barley plantings will focus on Hindmarsh and Scope varieties, with additional area planted coming at the expense of lupin plantings.

In the Kwinana West zone, the Canola area will be similar to 2012, and the total area sown to wheat and barley combined should also be similar to 2012. However, the mix may change with barley plantings favoured to increase in proportion to wheat plantings. Barley is favoured in some areas especially with pricing as it currently stands. Baudin will continue to be the dominant variety with Hindmarsh, Scope and Bass increasing in area. The hay area may increase this year and this will come at the expense of the area sown to wheat.

### **Weather ahead- courtesy Dr David Stephens, AEGIC**

The current outlook is for average rainfall to June 30. Two conditions which are vital for promoting winter rainfall are slowly strengthening in the Indian Ocean. The first is warm water to the north of the Pilbara and Kimberley coast, the second is cool water off the west coast. This enhanced sea surface temperature gradient is normally favourable for moisture inflow from the tropics into frontal systems. What will be critical in winter is the likely positioning of the long wave trough system in the westerly flow southwest of Australia. At this stage the DAFWA Statistical Seasonal Forecasting (SSF) model is mainly predicting average growing season rainfall for the south west land division.

Additional information can be sourced from:

- **[BoM rainfall for WA October 2012 to March 2013](#)**
- **[BoM rainfall deciles for WA October 2012 to March 2013](#)**
- **[DAFWA Statistical Seasonal forecast](#)**
- **[BoM- WA Seasonal Rainfall Outlook: probabilities to June 30 2013](#)**
- **[BoM month to date rainfall for WA](#)**

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