

## Summary

The Western Australian 2014 crop continues to show average to above average yield potential in most Port Zones, despite the low rainfall received in June. The exception is the Esperance Port Zone which is showing below average yield potential.

Rainfall in June was well below average in all Zones, with a Decile 1 total most common and Decile 2/3 for west coastal and south coast districts.

The soil moisture map from AEGIC on page 4 shows the range of soil moisture profiles across the State.

In the southern half of the State and along the west coast, high levels of soil moisture from the above average May rains, has sustained crops. In the far north and north eastern districts of the Geraldton zone and the Kwinana East zone (north and east of Merredin), soil moisture is low and yield potential is declining.

Crop growth has slowed with the colder temperatures experienced recently. However, the early planting of most crops has enabled the growth stage to be well advanced and is ahead of that seen in 2013.

Weed control in all zones is very good. This is driven by the excellent pre-seeding control afforded by the early break to the season and the subsequent dry weather which has not promoted weed germination.

Disease incidence and insects have not required any significant control measures to date.

The dry and windy weather in June has caused substantial crop damage on ameliorated soils in the Geraldton zone and to a lesser extent in the west Kwinana zone. The practice of mouldboarding and spading soil to control non-wetting and resistant weed populations is very effective but leaves the soil exposed to wind erosion. This damage is amongst the most extensive seen since the droughts of 2006 and 2007.

The estimated area sown to crops in WA is unchanged from the June report. The August crop report will include the first Production estimates for the 2014 season.

## WA planting area estimates (hectares)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
Kwinana	2,463,000	432,000	437,000	108,000	82,000	10,000	
Albany	666,000	361,000	366,000	65,000	13,000	5,000	
Esperance	398,000	242,000	255,000	2,000	9,000	15,000	
Geraldton	965,000	28,000	189,000	5,000	176,000	1,000	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,492,000</b>	<b>1,063,000</b>	<b>1,247,000</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>280,000</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>7,291,000</b>
<b>% change from 2013</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>-6.5%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>-19.7%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>

### Kwinana Zone

Overall, crops across the whole Kwinana Zone are in good condition for this time of year, despite below average rainfall for June. There is reasonable soil moisture in most districts. The districts west of a line from Narembeen to Cunderdin to Wongan Hills are in good condition, with above average yield potential. East of this line, there is less soil moisture and plants will start to wilt next week without substantive rain. Consequently, yield potential is declining in eastern districts.

The central southern districts are in very good condition with excellent soil moisture. Yield potential remains well above average.

The cold weather in June has slowed crop growth. Weed control in all crops has been very good, although some recently emerged brome grass and radish on some farms needs attention.

Crop nutrition is adequate for average yields but nitrogen applications have been delayed due to the dry weather, except in the central southern districts. There is still time for nitrogen to be applied to increase yield potential if there are significant rainfall events in the next few weeks.

Disease incidence is low except for some consecutive cereal paddocks, particularly barley. Sclerotinia in canola may need controlling in July.

Wind erosion has affected some paddocks along Great Eastern Highway in the west Kwinana districts. In the Midlands region from Moora to the coast, wind erosion has caused significant damage to paddocks which have been mouldboarded or spaded recently.

### Albany Zone

Growers are very optimistic about the season in the Lakes region. Yield potential remains well above average despite the low rainfall in June.

- Cereals are 5 leaf to tillering with some late sown crops at the 3 leaf stage.
- Canola is starting to form flower buds. Canola establishment has been excellent, reflecting the warm moist soil conditions at sowing.
- Lupins are showing very good yield potential and are at the 10 to 12 leaf stage.

June rainfall was below average with the seasonal decile ranking for rainfall down from Decile 8/9 to Decile 6. However, with good levels of soil moisture, this is not causing any downgrading of yield forecasts at this stage.

The strong winds in June caused some localised wind erosion.

Weeds are mostly under control apart from some ryegrass surviving in very early sown crops.

Nitrogen has been applied to all crops to achieve an above average yield. If there is good July rain a further application may be warranted.

Disease incidence is low with some net blotch in barley. There are no insect issues of note.

In the Great Southern and Lower Great Southern districts, the season continues to be full of promise. In contrast to recent seasons, rainfall has fallen mostly during the day, decreasing the amount of solar radiation for crops, which is holding back crop growth.

Overall, conditions have not changed much during June. Rainfall this week of over 25mm, means paddocks are too wet to drive on. However, due to the windy conditions almost all waterlogged patches apparent in early June have disappeared.

The wet start has definitely slowed canola growth. Crops sown before the heaviest of the May rain events have slower growth and reduced establishment numbers, while those sown after the heaviest rain look in far better condition. Further east towards Gnowangerup, canola crops are more advanced and consequently in better condition.

Cereals crops are also in very good condition. Early sown crops are tillering. Later sown cereals range in growth from the 4 leaf stage to approaching tillering. A shortage of the herbicide Boxer Gold may mean more weeds in some cereal crops than normal will survive the season.

There is a consistent incidence of the disease yellow spot in wheat and net blotch in barley, mainly where cereal crops have been planted on ground which had a cereal crop in 2013. Control will likely be needed but it is being closely monitored for the moment.

There is some crop damage from RLEM and African beetles, while slugs are needing to be controlled in some canola and cereals.

## Esperance Zone

Rainfall continues to be well below average for the growing season in the Esperance zone. April rainfall was Decile 1, Decile 5/6 in May and then Decile 1 in June. Currently the region is tracking on a Decile 2/3. There is no deep soil moisture and a substantive general rain is needed to boost confidence in the season. The current outlook consensus is for a below average season.

It was also extremely windy in June and this has further dried out soils.

Almost all crops are looking dry and growth has slowed due to cold temperatures in the last week. The Grass Patch and Scaddan districts look worst in the region. Growers are very cautious about the season at the moment and are holding back on inputs. Very little post-seeding nitrogen has been applied as growers wait for substantial rain.

Fortunately crops are generally weed free with the inter-rows very dry. For growers, this is saving money in a year where crop expenditure needs to be low. It is expected that crops will compete well with any late germinated weeds. A single weed/nitrogen/fungicide spray may be enough in this year for crops in most districts of the Esperance zone.

Disease levels are very low, with a susceptible variety like Baudin barley showing low disease levels.

By contrast crops on the mallee soils have been able to access some deep soil moisture, and crops in the Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe districts generally look very good.

## Geraldton Zone

In the Geraldton Port Zone, some districts are very good and some are very poor. Rainfall to date is Decile 9 for some and Decile 1 elsewhere. Crops in the Yuna, Binnu and Mullewa districts looked good early but now desperately need rain. Most crops have not had more than 5mm in any single rainfall event since early May. Crops closer to the coast are in excellent condition. Further east, crops in the Tardun and Pindar districts are also very good, while crops in the Morawa district are average. The Carnamah/ Coorow districts started the season at Decile 8 and have now dropped to Decile 4.

Tissue tests in cereals for nitrogen for crops in the Moora to Carnamah districts are low confirming that soil Nitrogen was very low at the start of the season. Some nitrogen is going out this week ahead of expected rainfall events. Weed control has been very good and crops are very clean. The very cold and windy weather has slowed crop growth. Lupin crops are showing stress to cold and low moisture. Wheat crops are running up into head at Mullewa.

Canola crops are in excellent condition near the coast. Sclerotinia spraying has commenced at Walkaway.

Overall, the districts experiencing a poor season constitute a smaller area than last year, and the Geraldton Zone generally has much more potential than last year. Crop development is a month ahead of 2013.

The dry and windy weather caused probably the worst wind damage seen for 10 years in the last 2 weeks of June. The wind has destroyed crops on ameliorated soils (mouldboard and spading). The damage could exceed 20,000 ha and extends down the coast to Dongara and Badgingarra. Wheat at the 3 leaf stage suffered most, with north/south sown crops suffering more with the strong northerly winds.

If rainfall is average for the remainder of the season then crop yield potential should improve to be average to above average in most of the Geraldton Port Zone.

## Weather ahead - courtesy Dr Ian Foster, DAFWA

The weather pattern experienced in June is likely to continue into July. Cold fronts are expected to be accompanied by strong northerly winds which reduces the rainfall potential for inland districts and the Esperance region. While rainfall events in July in west coastal regions may reach 10mm, inland totals will decline to 1 to 5mm.

The Bureau's July forecast is for below average rainfall at Decile 2/3. But the forecast improves to at least average rainfall for August and September.

The Indian Ocean dipole is neither indicating good nor bad for rainfall at the moment.

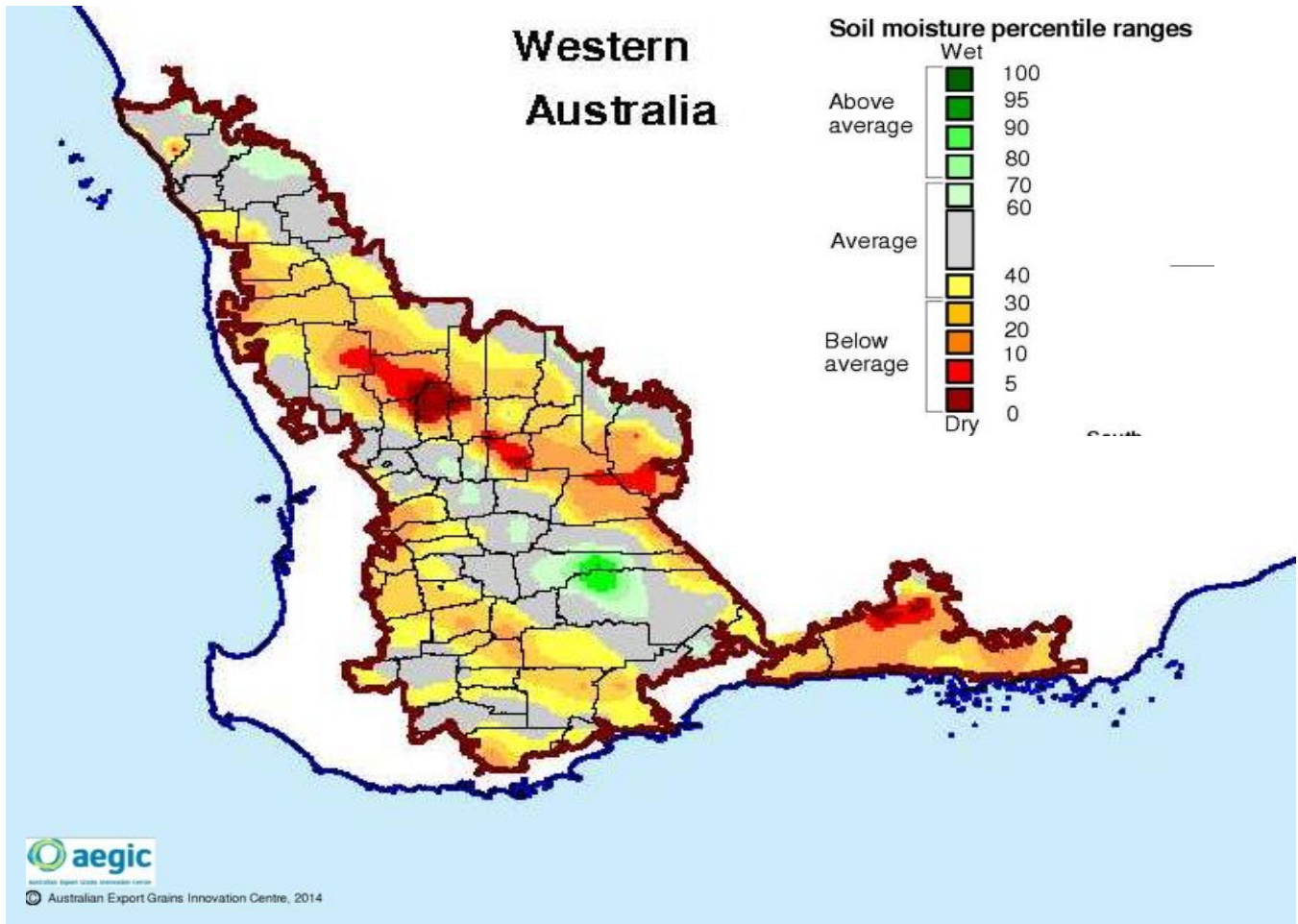
## The Bureau of Meteorology

The chances of receiving above median rainfall for July to September are about 50% over most of WA. This means odds of above or below median rainfall are about equal in these areas.

- Equal chance of drier or wetter season for most of WA
- Climate influences include warm Indian and Pacific oceans
- Outlook accuracy is moderate over western and far northern WA

Source: extract from AEGIC Soil moisture national map

## Western Australian Soil Moisture Ranking 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014 compared to years 1915-2013



Additional information can be sourced from:

- [AEGIC: Yield and Seasonal Forecasting](#)
- [DAFWA: Statistical Seasonal forecast](#)
- [BoM: WA Seasonal Rainfall Outlook July to September 2014](#)
- [BoM: Month to date rainfall for WA](#)
- [16 day rainfall outlook \(WX maps\)](#)
- [BoM: Decile rainfall for June 2014](#)

## Crop Condition report

July 1 2014

weighted by the production average for each zone

Port zone	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Kwinana	0	1	43	38	19
Albany	0	5	20	46	29
Esperance	0	0	63	38	0
Geraldton	0	9	21	35	35
<b>State Totals</b>	0	4	34	39	22

Kwinana regions	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
East	0	5	60	35	0
North	0	0	40	40	20
Central	0	0	40	40	20
Southern	0	0	30	35	35
<b>Total</b>	0	1	43	38	19

Albany regions	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Northern	0	0	25	50	25
West	0	5	15	50	30
Eastern	0	5	30	45	20
Coastal	0	10	10	40	40
<b>Total</b>	0	5	20	46	29

Esperance regions	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Mallee	0	0	80	20	0
East coastal	0	0	65	35	0
North western	0	0	75	25	0
West coastal	0	0	30	70	0
<b>Total</b>	0	0	63	38	0

Geraldton regions	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Northern	0	25	45	30	0
Eastern	0	10	40	30	20
Southern	0	0	0	40	60
South eastern	0	0	0	40	60
<b>Total</b>	0	9	21	35	35

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