



GIWA

Grain Industry Association
of Western Australia

Crop Report

6th November, 2014

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GIWA is currently estimating the total WA grain crop at 13.8 million tonnes.

This estimate has declined by 230,000 tonnes since the last estimate made by GIWA at the beginning of October 2014, due to a combination of the losses from storms in October, and lower estimated yields for the districts from Dalwallinu north to Mullewa and east of Merredin. The hot weather in August combined with limited spring rainfall, appears to have been more damaging to yield potential than previously realised.

Storms producing heavy rain and hail in the Kwinana, Albany and Esperance port zones in October delivered localised damage ranging from total destruction of individual crops to widespread lodging of crops. For individual farmers the losses will be high, but from a State harvest perspective the losses are small. In total, GIWA estimates these storms have only reduced the expected WA grain harvest by an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 tonnes.

Of more significance is the risk of quality downgrades from sprouting and low falling numbers in wheat, poor colour in barley and sprouting and yield loss in canola.

Regions at risk of weather damaged grain include the Moora district, the central grainbelt, the Lakes region and the wider Esperance region. The Geraldton port zone did not receive significant rainfall while the lower Albany port zone crops were mostly green enough to not suffer quality problems, although, some hail damage and lodging is apparent in crops in the Frankland district. In the Esperance port zone, despite the rainfall events in October, barley deliveries are currently meeting the colour grade specifications to the relief of local growers.

Receivals during November will provide a good picture of the extent of the impact of rainfall on grain quality, including the level of protein from the predicted very high yields of cereals in the Albany zone.

Early grain quality reports indicate that, for most of the crops in the grainbelt, wheat protein levels and screenings are meeting expectations, while canola crops are averaging 46 to 48% oil.

The harvest is well advanced in the Geraldton and east Kwinana zones, and well ahead of previous years, due to the early end to the season in the north of the grainbelt, below average yields and continuing fine weather.

WA Production Estimates (tonnes)

| Port zone | Wheat | Barley | Canola | Oats | Lupins | Field pea | State total |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Kwinana | 4,091,000 | 1,084,000 | 555,000 | 277,000 | 139,000 | 6,200 | 6,152,200 |
| Albany | 1,751,000 | 1,225,000 | 581,000 | 226,000 | 18,000 | 5,700 | 3,806,700 |
| Esperance | 857,000 | 588,000 | 416,000 | 4,000 | 18,000 | 19,100 | 1,902,100 |
| Geraldton | 1,469,000 | 48,000 | 190,000 | 6,000 | 209,000 | 1,700 | 1,923,700 |
| Totals | 8,168,000 | 2,945,000 | 1,742,000 | 513,000 | 384,000 | 32,700 | 13,784,700 |
| % change October | -1.9% | -0.9% | -1.4% | 0.0% | -4.0% | -17.6% | -1.6% |

Kwinana Zone

Harvest has commenced and to date has concentrated on canola and barley and is about 20% complete.

Water and hail damage from the October storms was patchy with localised heavy losses. There was hail damage to some crops in the Bencubbin district but the most damage was in the area from Yorkrakine to North Tammin, and Dowerin to Wyalkatchem.

In eastern districts of the Kwinana zone barley crops are generally too high in protein and screenings to achieve the Malt grade. However, the majority of barley deliveries in the Kwinana zone are meeting the protein requirements for Malt grade.

Crop yields are well below average in the east Kwinana zone. Barley crops at Bencubbin east to Mukinbudin and Nungarin have yielded 1.2 tonnes/ha on the better soils. Further east, on heavier soil types, yields decline to only 400 kg/ha. Most deliveries are only making the Feed grade as protein levels are too high to make Malt grade.

Early harvested wheat crops in the eastern districts are yielding 1 to 1.4 tonnes/ha, but generally the best crops are harvested first, so average yields averages are expected to decline as the harvest progresses. Protein content of the early harvested wheat is 10.5% or better.

Canola crops suffered in the dry and hot August and are yielding less than anticipated at only 400 to 700 kg/ha.

Field pea crops at Bonnie Rock are yielding 800 kg/ha.

Growers in the Western districts are concentrating on canola and barley before harvesting of wheat commences later this month. Canola yields are higher in western districts with yields ranging from 0.8 to 1.4 tonnes/ha in the Kellerberrin district, 1.2 to 1.8 tonnes/ha in the Meckering/Cunderdin districts, and 1.7 to 2.2 tonnes/ha in the Northam/Toodyay districts. The oil yield percentage is averaging at 44%, and it is not unusual to hear of crops with an oil percentage yield of 50%+.

Canola crops in areas between Dalwallinu and Wubin and to the east on red soils are only yielding 200 to 300 kg/ha, and 500 to 800 kg/ha on the sands. From Piawanning to Bindi Bindi to Miling east, canola crops are yielding at least 300 kg/ha less than expected. West of this line, canola crops are yielding 1 to 1.5 tonnes/ha. At Calingiri canola crops are yielding 2 tonnes/ha.

Barley crops in the areas between Miling to Wongan Hills are yielding between 1.8 to 2.4 tonnes/ha and generally making Malt grade, with Bass the standout variety. Barley crops at Moora are showing poor colour but yielding 4 to 5 tonnes/ha on good quality soil types.

Albany Zone

Heavy rainfall events throughout the Albany zone in October have had little impact, except on individual farms and paddocks with lodged and hail damaged crops.

In the Lakes region, paddocks are mostly still too wet for harvest traffic. This is especially the case at Kukerin and Tarin Rock after 140 mm of rain fell during October. The heavy rain caused some damage and lodging in wheat but careful harvesting should recover all the yield potential of the crops. There was a narrow band of hail damage to crops in the Kulin district and from Kondinin to Lake Grace. Canola crops are yielding to 1.5 to 1.6 tonnes/ha with 47% oil content and better, however yields will decline as lower quality paddocks are harvested. Barley crops are yielding around 3 tonnes/ha with good colour and mostly making Malt grade.

Canola crops have started to be harvested in the Borden to South Stirlings districts, which have been generally drier than average all winter. East of Broomehill and into Gnowangerup, the canola harvest has just started. In these areas barley colour may be an issue for making Malt grade.

In the southern parts of the Albany zone, there has been no harvest action to date as crops have not matured. The recent rainfall events will not have any impact other than to delay maturity further. Hail caused some crop damage in the Frankland to Boyup Brook areas. The main effect was on some swathed canola and lodging in barley. Harvesting in these districts is not expected to commence until early December.

Esperance Zone

Harvest is progressing in the Esperance port zone, despite the 60 to 140 mm of rain two weeks ago. There doesn't appear to be much damage, other than hail damage to some crops in the Condingup to Beaumont districts.

Harvesting of canola is close to being finished with yields of 800kg/ha in the mallee districts (with oil percentages of 40 to 44%) and 1.5 to 1.7 tonnes/ha in the coastal districts (with oil percentages of oil at 46 to 48%). Sand levels are causing some delivery issues, even in direct headed crops.

Barley and wheat crop yields are around 3.6 tonnes/ha in coastal districts and 1.8 to 2.1 tonnes/ha in the mallee districts. Barley quality looks to be good, contrary to fears about the impact of the October rains.

The Zone production forecast remains at 1.9 million tonnes. If the weather remains fine and warm harvest will be close to complete by early December.

Geraldton Zone

Crops in the Geraldton zone are generally below average with a lot of very poor crops.

The districts north and east of Geraldton are 60% through harvest and will finish in 2 weeks. South of Geraldton, harvest is about half complete.

Yields of canola crops on heavy soil types have been poor compared to crops on good sand soils where yields have been 1 to 1.5 tonnes/ha. Along the coast in districts from Dongara to Badgingarra canola crop yields are around 2 tonnes/ha or better. In other districts in the Geraldton zone, the hot week in August had a major impact on canola and lupin crops. Canola is now expected to yield just 400kg/ha where it could have been 1.5 tonnes/ha prior to the dry August. As in the past few years, soil type and rooting depth has proven essential to achieving a good yield. Lupins suffered badly from the heat and drought and will yield below average in these districts. Additionally, lupins have reshot and are being left to dry off, or being desiccated.

The area of Roundup ready and open pollinated canola varieties may increase in 2015 following substantial yield and quality advantages over TT canola. RR canola is reported to be producing 4% more oil than TT, and 300 to 600 kg/ha more yield.

The quality of the wheat crops is mixed with poor yields leading to 20% screenings and protein levels of between 13 and 14%. In better yielding wheat crops, grain quality has been good with above average protein. Some of the better wheat crops are in the districts north and west of Morawa, and from Dongara to Badgingarra.

Weather Ahead: courtesy David Stephens AEGIC

The combination of below normal pressure over the Indian Ocean and a low pressure system over much of the South West Land Division is conducive to the formation of convective storms. The October storms followed a pattern in the last decade of dry winters resulting in damp harvests.

The current conditions indicate that the prospect of rain in the next 6 weeks is average to slightly above average.

Additional information can be sourced from:

- [**AEGIC: Yield and Seasonal Forecasting**](#)
- [**DAFWA: Statistical Seasonal forecast**](#)
- [**BoM: WA Seasonal Rainfall Outlook November 2014 to January 2015**](#)
- [**BoM: Month to date rainfall for WA**](#)
- [**16 day rainfall outlook \(WX maps\)**](#)
- [**BoM: Decile rainfall for October 2014**](#)

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