

Summary - The 2017 Season as at October

Grain crops across the state have benefitted from September rain and cooler conditions have been ideal for grain fill. Frost has not had the same impact on crops this year as it did last year except for some areas of the great southern region.

Production estimates across all crops have increased by more than 5 per cent from last month, overall estimates are up 12.4 per cent.

Grain size and weight is likely to be very good due to the mild conditions over spring and with minimal impact from frost.

Cereal grain protein is likely to be lower than normal due to the unexpected soft finish to the season.

Wheat and barley tonnages are now predicted to achieve closer to historical levels resulting in a significant turnaround from just a few months ago.

Canola tonnage is going to be close to historical levels, however average grain yields are likely to be lower than normal due mainly to the poor start carrying through to the end of the season. Oil percentages are likely to be good due to cooler temperatures during the grain fill period.

Lupin tonnages will be down and it is expected much of the production will be kept on farm.

Oat production for grain and hay will be down this year with much of the oats for grain expected to be retained on farm.

Field peas have not been impacted by frost as has been the case in the last few years and there is noticeably more alternative grain legumes being trialled across the state, although tonnages are low at present.

October 2017 GIWA WA Crop Production Estimates (tonnes)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
Kwinana	2,911,000	1,290,500	323,500	262,000	141,300	20,500	4,948,800
Albany	1,320,000	973,400	386,400	210,000	54,200	3,700	2,947,700
Esperance	1,210,000	722,100	445,000	10,200	26,200	20,300	2,433,800
Geraldton	873,000	53,300	108,300	3,000	162,700	600	1,200,900
Totals	6,314,000	3,039,300	1,263,200	485,200	384,400	45,100	11,531,200
% Change to Sept 2017	12.8%	14.2%	6.6%	10%	17%	5%	12.4%

Note: the grain totals reported are for whole farm production. This includes on-farm seed and feed requirements as well as trade outside of the CBH network.

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Geraldton Zone

The rains in September and cooler conditions over the last month in the north of the state have combined to improve the total grain production estimate for the Geraldton port zone by around 12 per cent. It is now clear that 2017 will not be as bad as 2006 and 2007 for the zone.

There are still areas of little or no crop but most growers will produce enough grain to deliver at harvest. Those growers who were organising seed from the higher rainfall areas closer to the coast for sowing next year, will now also produce enough grain for their own use.

The poorer areas are still in the far north around Binu and Yuna and the strip of country east from Coorow to Buntine, Maya and Latham. The areas in the north east of the zone around Morawa will now have wheat crops yielding up to 0.8t/ha.

The western areas of the zone have continued to improve and the increase in expected lupin tonnage will come from here. The lupin tonnage will be low for the zone and due to the amount of lupin feed out to stock this year it is unlikely any significant quantity of lupins will be available for sale at harvest from the zone.

Due to the late start to the season this year, most of the region will not be harvesting until November.

Kwinana Zone

The Midlands

Crops in the Midlands zone have benefited from the rain and cool conditions in the last month but grain yields for all grains will be below average except in the western strip close to the coast where grain yields could be average or just below average.

The western areas of the Midlands region have improved dramatically although the big areas of crop are further east and this is where most of the grain is produced in a normal year.

There are still large areas north of Wongan Hills and across to Miling and Watheroo where grain yields will be well below average. The areas east of here into the north east Kwinana zone around Kalannie and Beacon will have very low yields and has been one of the worst hit regions of the state with very low rainfall this year.

There has been no significant change in tonnage estimates for this region from last month.

Kwinana West

The crops in the western Kwinana zone have benefited from the rain and cooler conditions in the last month as have all crops across the state. The contribution to grain yield from later tillers will be significant this year as will grain size and grain weight. There have been no hot winds or significant frost events. There is likely to be a dilution in protein from the unexpected increase in yield.

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Barley crops have looked good all year and continue to be ahead of wheat in grain yield potential. The wheat crops have picked up as the season has progressed and both barley and wheat in the western parts of the zone will return above average grain yields. The only exception to this is a very dry patch south of Dowerin where grain yields for all crops will be well below average.

There are some good canola crops in the very western parts of the region that could go well over 2t/ha but most canola crops are still going to be just average or below average. Many growers have been caught out with the late build up in diamondback moth (DBM) that has required spraying.

Lupin crops have podded up well and are still green which is unusual for this time of the year.

Kwinana East

There has been little change in the crop grain yield estimates for the region from last month. The mild conditions and rainfall in the last month has benefited all crops, although total tonnage is still going to be down as has been predicted all year.

Grain deliveries are going to be very low north and east of Koorda and Bencubbin and below average for most of the region to the east of Merredin.

Cereal grain yield potential has picked up in the last month south of Merredin down to Bruce Rock and Narembeen and continues to be very good from Tammin and Kellerberrin down to Corrigin. Most of the increase in tonnage estimates for the Kwinana East zone is going to come from here and further west.

Canola and lupin grain yields are going to be low with many crops requiring spraying for budworm and DBM.

Albany Zone

Western Albany

The Western Albany zone is now on track for above average grain yields for all crops. The mild growing season, lack of significant waterlogging and cool finish are all contributing to crops filling well. It is clear that the region will produce significantly more grain than what was predicted a month or two ago.

There are going to be large ranges in crop grain yields as management decisions from the start of the year and through the growing season have resulted in a big difference from the very good crops to the poorer crops. Crops that had weeds sprayed out early, established well and continued to be managed for maximum yield as the season progressed are now a long way in front of those that received less inputs.

Most of the increase in tonnage from previous estimates will be from the Albany port zone west of the Albany Highway. The whole of the Albany port zone was on track for an above average year until the frosts in the middle of September damaged crops east and south east of the region.

Southern Albany

The season looked very good in the region with areas that had a poorer start improving over the last few months. However, a severe frost event on 13-14 September damaged low lying areas of crop south of Pingrup, the earlier crops around Nyabing and large areas around Ongerup and

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Jerramungup where temperatures were as low as minus three degrees Celsius for two nights in a row.

Whilst the very low temps during the frost event in September has completely taken out some early sown cereal crops, many of the later sown crops escaped without damage as they flowered after the 13-14 September.

These frost events were confined to the southern areas of the state with the remainder of the grain growing regions receiving very little crop damage from frosts. The major frost risk to crops has now passed except for in the far south of the state, as crops are well into grain fill.

Eastern Albany (Lakes Region)

Most of the Lakes Region is on track for above average grain yields. The areas around Pingaring and Kondinin where crops were later to emerge have now picked up to be just below average grain yield potential. The remainder of the region is looking as good or even better than last year before the frost events significantly reduced grain yield.

The frosts on 13-14 September this year have taken some yield potential off the crops south of Pingrup, although most of the damage was done further south and to the west closer to Nyabing.

Barley continues to look better than wheat as it has all year and crops look like they could yield up to 3t/ha in some cases. Wheat crops that have looked thin for most of the winter have now filled out and increased grain yield is expected to be made up from heads filling 4-5 wide and late tillers contributing more to grain yield than normal.

Lupin crops have podded up well and grain yields over 1.0t/ha are expected, although most is likely to be retained on farm for stock feed. Oat crops have not handled the dry season as well as the other cereals and grain yields are likely to be just average at best. Some oats for hay have been knocked down but the area is small.

Canola crop yields will only be average or below average as the patchy establishment in most cases has carried through to harvest. Budworm and DBM numbers have increased late in the season and many later finishing crops are being sprayed to limit the potential reduction on yield.

Esperance Zone

The Esperance port zone has continued to have an outstanding season. The light frost events in August have not taken too much off the crops and the large areas north of the coast are predicted to be above average in most cases. The waterlogged areas closer to the coast are drying out and are finishing well.

Leaf disease in cereals and blackleg in canola have been a problem all year for the region and could have some impact on grain quality.

Some early sown canola crops have been harvested but most are now being swathed or desiccated and harvest will get underway near the end of October. Cereals are a long way off harvesting, particularly wheat which will not be ready before the second week in November.

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Season Outlook

Ian Foster, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

September rainfall has been near average or wetter for much of the agricultural region. The last part of the growing season has been near average, in contrast to the start. Patterns of atmospheric pressure in the southern hemisphere have eased from the dominance of high pressure that characterised the first part of the growing season.

September has seen some frost events across central, southern and eastern agricultural areas; see Figure 1. This incidence is slightly below average for September. Daytime temperatures have been near-average.

Rainfall projections for October to November 2017 from climate models are showing either neutral probabilities or a weak preference towards drier than normal conditions. The probabilities for below average seasonal are not as strong as early in the growing season.

There is little agreement among the models for seasonal temperatures, as regional climate indicators such as El Nino / Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) are neutral. There is some chance of weak La Nina conditions developing late in 2017, but this is expected to be of short duration.

Potential wheat yield, based on observed and projected seasonal rainfall continues to show a similar pattern from last month. Yield potential remains low in the north-east and higher across southern parts and the South Coast. See Figure 2. Estimates for individual locations can be obtained from the DPIRD Potential Yield Tool (see link below).

Overview:

- Current climate conditions in the Pacific and Indian Oceans are neutral, the Pacific having relaxed back from earlier warming trends. Model projections indicate a chance of weak La Nina conditions developing late in 2017.
- Seasonal climate outlooks for rainfall over WA from Australian and international climate models are still indicating below average rainfall being more likely for October to December, though the strength of the probabilities has eased from earlier in the growing season.
- Frost incidence in September has been slightly below average.

Bureau of Meteorology - Seasonal rainfall outlook for October to December 2017

- While the overall three-monthly signal is neutral, October is likely to be wetter than average for central and eastern mainland Australia, and drier for western WA. This wet signal is likely to be driven by more localised weather events.
- Climate influences from the Indian and Pacific oceans are likely to be competing, with a slightly drying influence in the Indian Ocean likely cancelling out a slightly wetter influence from the Pacific Ocean.
- Historical outlook accuracy for October to December is moderate for most of Australia, but low in parts of the southern mainland, southern Queensland and parts of the tropical north.

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Additional information can be sourced from:

[DPIRD: Seasonal Climate Information](#)

[DPIRD: Potential Yield Tool](#)

[DPIRD Extreme Weather Events Tool](#)

[BoM: Seasonal Rainfall Outlook, next 3 months](#)

[BoM: Decile rainfall for April to September 2017](#)

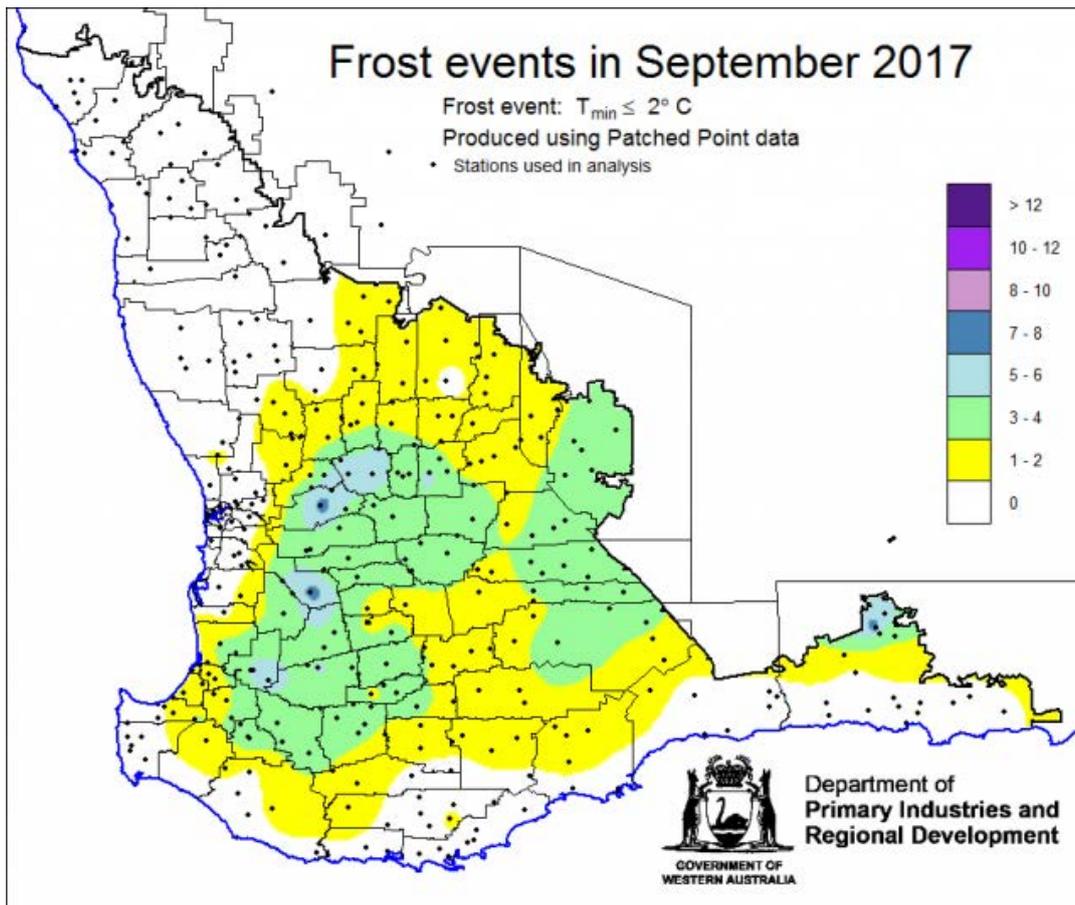


Figure 1. Number of days where minimum temperature was below 2°C in September 2017. This does not show duration of low temperatures; see DPIRD's Extreme Events Tool.

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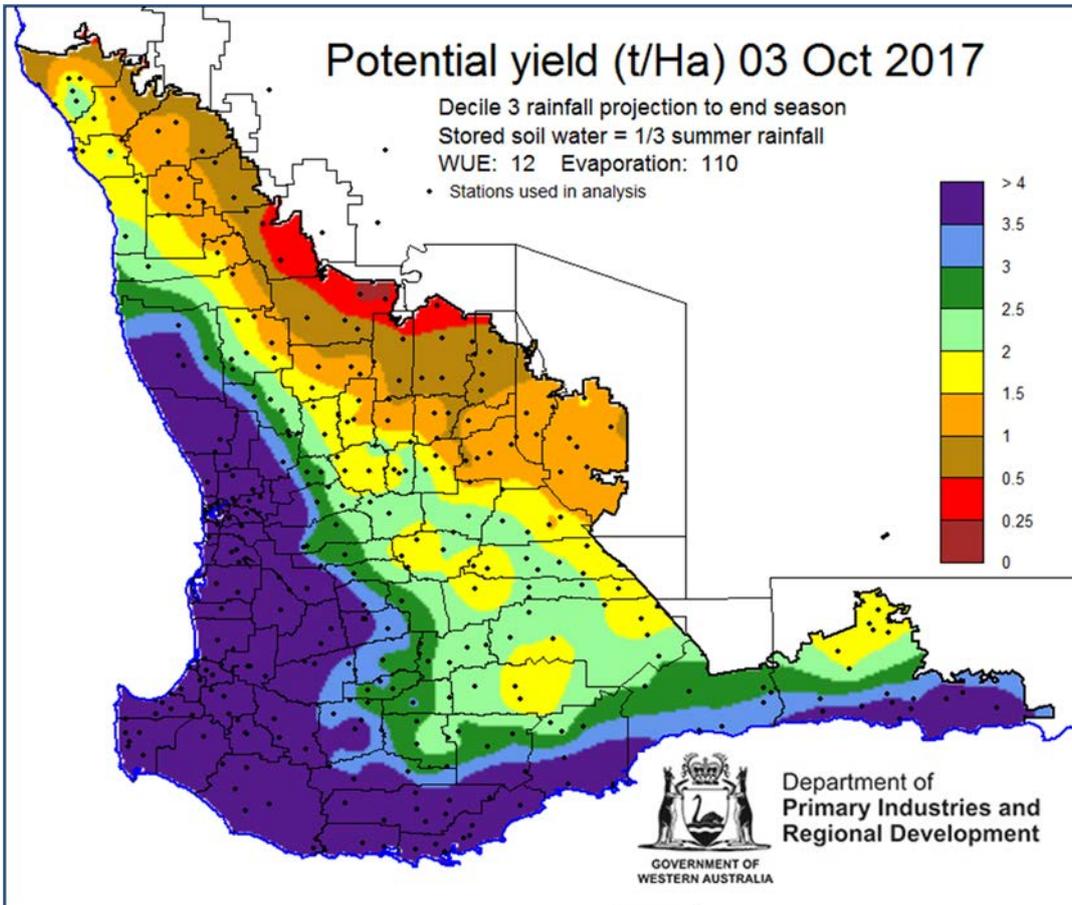


Figure 2. Potential wheat yield using French-Schutz relationship, with observed rain to date and decile 3 rainfall for the rest of the growing season.

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