CROPREPORT

GIWA
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June 2025

The West Australian grain crop is up and away, we now need to add water

A bit under half of the Western Australian grain crop had emerged prior to general rain in the last two weeks. The recent rain was mostly in the northern regions where there had been none at all since 2024. This rain has germinated the dry sown crops in the north and given a light top up to those that were already up and away in the south.

There looks to be a relatively large crop in the ground of about 9 million hectares. Most of the crops have geminated evenly except for some earlier sown crops in the drier fringes and dry holes in the south. The still days and light steady rain has meant there have been no problems with furrow fill which can occur when rainfall is heavy and the wind is stronger and results in reduced and staggered germination. In WA's characteristically short growing seasons, getting an even "strike" or emergence is critical in getting crops off to a good start. Timing of emergence this year is later than most would prefer, particularly in the north, but the warm days are pushing crops along very quickly as they did last year and they are making up ground in growth stages.

About the only thing missing is water. There are virtually no subsoil moisture reserves in most regions of the state. This is a concern and whilst the potential is there for a 20 plus million tonne crop, there is still a long way to go until harvest. The cold fronts that we have been having are going to need to push the high pressure systems out of the way fairly soon or we will slide into a low decile rainfall year that will be difficult to recover from in the spring.

The area of barley is up on previous years due in part to price, early rain in the southern regions where most of the barley is grown, and the potential yield differential over wheat from the early sowing opportunities. The wheat area is also higher than in recent years due to the later rains in the northern cropping zones seeing wheat being substituted at the expense of canola and lupins. The canola area is up in the southern regions and down in the northern and eastern regions resulting in approximately a similar area as in 2024, which was a five year low in planted area. The story for lupins is similar with less sown this year in the north and slightly more in the south. Oat area is up again with most of the increase in the lower rainfall regions driven by the early sowing opportunities, with the split being more to grain in the Kwinana East zone on the lighter acidic Wodgil soils, and to hay in the corridor from Corrigin to Hyden. There also looks to be a slight increase in oats for grain in the major oat grain growing region around Narrogin.

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2025 Season GIWA June 2025 Western Australia Crop Area Estimates (hectares)

Port Zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Pulses	State Total
Kwinana	2,150,000	841,000	620,000	231,000	260,000	35,000	4,137,000
Albany	530,000	787,000	520,000	155,000	90,000	15,000	2,097,000
Esperance	560,000	290,000	380,000	10,000	25,000	40,000	1,305,000
Geraldton	1,160,000	92,000	130,000	5,400	97,000	3,000	1,487,400
Totals	4,400,000	2,010,000	1,650,000	401,400	472,000	93,000	9,026,400

Geraldton Zone

The majority of plantings in the Geraldton port zone are wheat again due to the lateness of the opening rains. The cereal-heavy program has generally established well although it now depends on the rain to keep falling and favourable August–September conditions to reach full potential.

The rainfall in the past week has been a game changer, particularly west of Northampton through Geraldton and the North Midlands. The eastern areas around Mullewa only received 10 – 20 mm, just enough for emergence. Conditions have been ideal with no wind erosion which resulted in excellent emergence across most areas. Canola has emerged well in areas that received consistent rainfall with the first glyphosate sprays about to commence. Overall, the emergence this year is much better compared to 2023 (dry) and early 2024 (chemical damage from waterlogging).

The canola area has reduced by up to 40 per cent compared to last year due to the late start to the growing season, where land originally intended for canola or lupins has mostly shifted to wheat and some barley. The lupin area has slightly increased from last year but remains small in historical terms. The break crop area (canola and lupins) is below 10 per cent this year, reducing profit risk but also reducing long-term rotation benefits.

Some country that was too fragile for dry sowing has now been sown on the back of the recent rains.

There is a reasonable area of fallow again in the northeast areas where the traditional wheat/fallow rotations have been maintained.

Kwinana Zone

Kwinana North Midlands

The majority of crops in the region were sown dry and germinated on the rain that has fallen in the last few weeks. Crops that were up prior to the recent rain are growing quickly due to the warm conditions. Establishment across the board has been very good due to the rain being slow and steady and winds being generally light. The heavy rain and strong winds that are often associated with these early rain fronts and which cause seeding furrows to fill were absent this year.

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In comparison to 2024, the region is probably in a better position so far as the rainfall has been more effective and fell a week or so earlier. The only downside at this stage is the weed burden that is coming through with emerging crops as a result of their being little opportunity to apply a knockdown weed control operation before seeding.

If the rain picks up from now on, the region will be on track for a similar result to the very good 2024 growing season.

Kwinana South

Currently the region has highly variable crop prospects because of the patchy rainfall and limited subsoil moisture and it's hard to comment on the region as a whole because each farm has its own blend of good, bad, and average paddocks. While most growers received a germinating rain, it wasn't enough to fill the soil profile, and crops are currently relying on significant follow-up rain. Before the recent rain of 10-14 days ago, early-sown crops were already beginning to stress and dry out.

Many farms have split germinations due to uneven moisture and varying soil types within paddocks, complicating crop nutrition and spray timing. About 20 per cent of crops look strong, 50 per cent are average, and 30 per cent are struggling or have required re-seeding, particularly canola. The lack of weed burden in early crops is a plus, but newly emerging crops are seeing weed flushes, especially broadleaf species. Patchy emergence within paddocks complicates management and post-emergent spray timing.

Lupins are growing well in the warm late-May conditions, although overall plantings remain limited due to competition from canola. Canola crops are already approaching first flowering in eastern regions. This is acceptable timing in this region but slightly ahead of schedule closer to Perth which could impact yield if vegetative growth is cut short. A notable increase in oat plantings has also occurred in central and eastern areas, driven by early rain and their resilience in tough soils and low-frost-risk environments.

Crops that received a knockdown spray are very clean because the lack of follow-up rain has discouraged weed growth. But late-emerging crops are coinciding with a flush of weeds, especially capeweed, clover and ryegrass.

Lupins are progressing well vegetatively, though the area planted is limited. A warmer-than-usual May has helped crops develop, especially lupins and canola.

There is a noticeable increase in oat area, particularly from Merredin southward. This increase is attributed to strong early price signals for oats and the early rains received, coupled with oats having lower frost risk, good acid soil tolerance, and good resilience in dry conditions.

Kwinana North East

Crops are highly variable due to the seasonal conditions across this region, with rainfall disparities creating a landscape of extremes. Areas west of Koorda and north of Southern Cross are especially dry, with some locations recording only 15–20 mm of growing season rainfall to date. In contrast, Wongan Hills received up to 50 mm, supporting better crop progress. Some wheat is already at the 4–5 leaf stage, and early some canola varieties are already flowering, which is premature for this region. Patchy germination, particularly in canola, has led to widespread re-seeding. Fallow-sown canola rebounded well following recent rain and could still achieve >2 t/ha yields if further rainfall arrives. The "tree effect" is prevalent across regions and crops are stressed or delayed adjacent to tree lines due to the trees extracting soil moisture.

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On the fertiliser front, growers remain cautious with nitrogen. 50 units of nitrogen may be the ceiling for many due to both agronomic and financial concerns. Herbicide use is similarly restrained, with double-knock strategies having left many crops clean enough to delay or skip post-emergent spraying.

Around 20 per cent of canola has gone in on fallow and has good yield potential (possibly >2 t/ha), but more rain is needed to realise it.

There has been little lupin area established in recent years, limiting the opportunity of utilising a "double break" to improve the chances of profitable canola yields. Patchy canola germination is a concern across the region and many areas have required re-seeding following minimal rainfall events.

Despite the variability, most growers now have crops in, which offers a foundation to build on if follow-up rainfall arrives. However, financial pressures and limited subsoil moisture will temper risk-taking unless the season improves significantly.

Many areas along the northern boundary of this zone have received very little rainfall this growing season, often as low as 15–20 mm. Areas around Wyalki, west of Beacon and north of Koorda remain extremely dry. Crop growth is mixed around Bonnie Rock, Mukinbudin, and Kununoppin, with some areas thriving while others are still very dry.

Rainfall patterns have remained patchy with crops in dry strips continuing to miss out. The better areas that did receive the early starts still lack stored moisture.

Crops that received a double knockdown are very clean. Herbicide use is restrained; many paddocks don't warrant a post-emergent yet due to low weed pressure. Decisions on post-emergent spraying and nutrient top-ups will depend on rainfall in the coming weeks.

Despite the variability, most growers now have crops in the ground, which is a positive base to build from.

Albany Zone

Albany West

Crop growth in the region is variable with the western areas like Boyup Brook and Frankland receiving 50–60 mm of rain, while the eastern areas like Ongerup and Nyabing have struggled with minimal follow-up rain (just 8–10 mm). This has resulted in patchy crop emergence and inconsistent growth, with some paddocks being only semi-wet for weeks.

Soil types and sowing efficiency have made a notable difference this season. Early and efficient sowing led to better crop establishment, while any delay–especially due to machinery issues–has set growers back significantly. The situation in the east is particularly precarious due to a lack of surface moisture and slow crop growth, despite the cooler conditions and some moisture at depth.

In terms of crop management, logistics have been a common challenge. Many canola paddocks only received one glyphosate application, and barley crops are generally weedier than wheat or later-sown cereals. Despite this, growers largely stuck to their pre-planned rotation-based programs, having set them during the harvest-to-March period. While cropping conditions remain fragile in eastern and marginal zones, traditional livestock farmers are more upbeat, buoyed by rising sheep prices and improved seasonal feed conditions.

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Overall, the season is still in the balance and could improve significantly with timely rainfall in the coming weeks.

Albany South

Canola establishment is generally adequate to good, with most crop emerging from early April. Later sown crops or those sown into pasture are very patchy. The eastern/central Albany port zone is very patchy with some crops poorly established. Patchy rain in this area has been the main culprit particularly on the heaver soil types. In the lower rainfall regions, crops sown on fallow from last season have improved early growth.

Many canola crops are at big green bud stage with patches of early flowering occurring, especially where moisture stress has been significant. Weed control has been generally good and insect pressure is generally low, which is unusual for dry seasons. But Red Legged Earth Mites have been severe in small areas.

Barley seeding started in late April through to early May and enjoyed better conditions when sown slightly deeper on the sands. Heavy soils have struggled with establishment but are likely to still germinate with further rain in June. All varieties that got going early are well advanced due to higher-than-normal temperatures. This may cap top end yield potential if they continue to bolt ahead.

Wheat has had the most difficult start being sown later into drying soils and under higher-than-normal temperatures in late May. Many paddocks are very patchy and some reseeding is already taking place. Wheat on the heavy soils is in a similar situation to barley and is expected to emerge with rain. Some of the deeper sown crops on sandplain have struggled to emerge and will likely need to be resown. But generally, development stage of wheat crops that have emerged well is about normal for this time of the year.

Lupins are looking as good as they have for several years. Good establishment and warm weather have allowed great pre-winter growth. Faba beans have suffered a lot more being on heavy soils, where very slow emergence and growth is being seen in some areas

Generally weed control has been excellent as there has been little or no rain since establishment. Nitrogen uptake by crops is starting to reduce and moisture stress is apparent across much of the region.

Some pastures have completely died and may be sown to cereal, most likely barley, if sheep can be moved. Some of this may end up being used for grazing later.

Water availability is starting to get critical and may impact some spray operations through winter and stock carrying capacity over summer if some significant runoff doesn't occur.

Albany East (Lakes Region)

Crops in the Lakes district have evened up now that the recent rains have germinated the dry sown crops in the western areas that missed out on the early rain. Whilst there is limited subsoil moisture the region is potentially set up for a good year, particularly the early barley crops and early oaten hay crops in the eastern areas of the zone.

The warm growing conditions have benefited the break crops and both canola and lupins that came up on the early rains are ahead of where they would normally be in growth stages.

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Esperance Zone

The 2025 growing season began with promise but has since faced challenges due to inconsistent and insufficient rainfall through May and early June. While early sown crops emerged well, much of the region—particularly the coastal strips and eastern areas—have received only small follow-up falls, leading to uneven germination and a lack of subsoil moisture. Some eastern areas have recently received 15–25 mm of rain, which has helped improve crop conditions. However, the western parts are still generally better off in terms of moisture reserves.

Nitrogen management has been difficult across the board, with coated urea becoming a common strategy to combat the poor N uptake conditions.

The warm temperatures have accelerated crop growth, with some canola already flowering. Faba beans and lentils are thriving in the warmth. Most crops are clean and free from disease or major weed pressure, though barley has seen some issues with grasses as a lot was planted early with no knockdown.

The dry conditions and rapid crop growth has made nitrogen top-up difficult. Banded nitrogen is performing better than top-dressed urea due to challenging application conditions. Over 60 per cent of nitrogen applications this year appear to have been coated to reduce volatilisation loss risk.

The outlook for this zone hinges on receiving more rain soon, especially in the heavier mallee country and the areas that have received less rain to date. Rainfall and temperature trends in coming weeks will be critical in determining overall crop potential as yield potential will fall away with repeated moisture stress intervals.

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Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Season Outlook, June 2025

Ian Foster, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Climate summary

Seasonal Climate June 2025

Rainfall

Widespread rainfall over late May and early June provided a start to the growing season for most of the northern agricultural region. The South Coast has had lighter falls, and combined with higher temperatures generally, estimated root-zone soil water storage remains highly variable across agricultural area (see Figure 1). Encouragingly, follow-up rain is expected, although it is likely to be lighter away from the coast. This may limit opportunities to build soil water reserves.

Forecast

Climate conditions in the Pacific Ocean are expected to remain neutral. Waters over the eastern Indian Ocean are warmer than normal and are predicted to continue warming through winter. Climate models continue to predict the development of a negative Indian Ocean Dipole in spring, with predictive skill improving for forecasts made in winter.

The Bureau of Meteorology's monthly rainfall outlook for July indicates a weak preference for drier conditions. The seasonal outlook for July to September 2025 is for below-normal rain being more likely (see Figure 2), although rain chances improve in September.

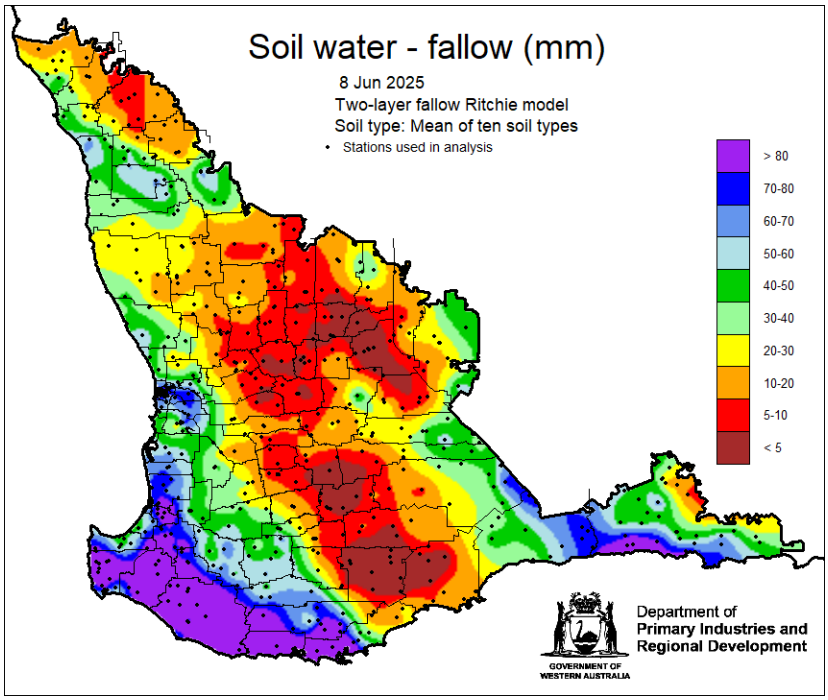

Figure 1: Estimated root-zone soil water storage 8 June 2025. Source: DPIRD (2025)

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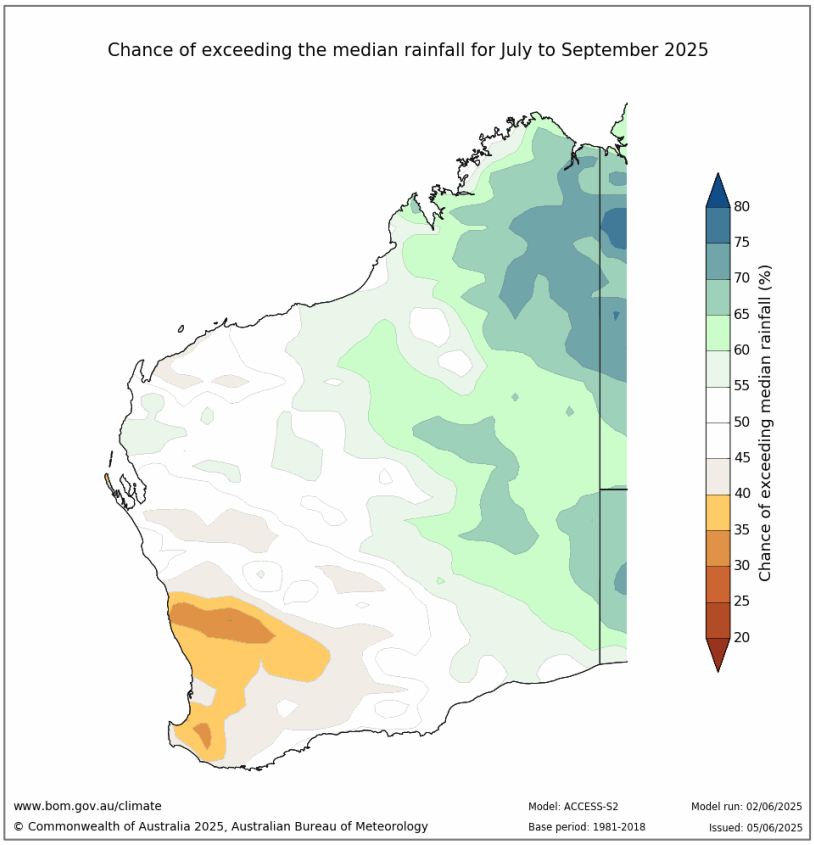

Figure 2: Rainfall outlook for July to September 2025. Source: Bureau of Meteorology (2025)

Temperature

Seasonal temperatures over summer have been very much above normal. Seasonal forecasts indicate warmer conditions will persist through winter.

Additional information is available from:

- DPIRD: Weather stations
- DPIRD: Soil Water Tool
- DPIRD Rainfall to Date Tool
- BoM: Rainfall totals for growing season 2025 to date
- BoM: Rainfall outlook for the next week
- BoM: Seasonal Rainfall Outlook
- BoM: Australian Water Outlook

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