



The Victorian Wimmera cropping region has found itself in a great position so far this season. Good fallow rainfall allowed all crops to be planted on time and into a good moisture profile. However it has the follow up rainfall that has the Wimmera looking healthy so far this year. Crop growth has been a little slow over the past 6 to 8 weeks as it has been cold and frosty, however the next couple of weeks should see some good plant growth as the days start to lengthen and the temperature starts to rise. Canola crops should start to cabbage up and even throw the odd flower in the coming weeks. It is really spring that is going to be the deciding factor for the Wimmera this season as the past few have not been all that kind to growers.

Plagues of mice and locusts have kept growers on their toes so far this season. Mice plagues forced a lot of growers to re-sow eaten seed as low emergence counts were evident within wheat and barley crops. This has forced growers to start baiting entire farms to try and control the pests. Locusts did a small amount of damage throughout the Wimmera compared to the Mallee, however it is the spring hatchings that are of concern.. There is a lot of speculation about the timing of hatching as it is estimated if the eggs hatch early when plants are green and actively growing that they could eat entire crops leaving nothing in their wake.

In the markets it has been Canola that has shown some real movement in the past few weeks. This has been due to several factors, the main being extreme wet weather conditions in Canada. Wheat has also moved in a positive way in the past few weeks as dry conditions throughout Europe have seen world wheat yields drop considerable.

The rise in wheat prices has seen old crop tonnage being sold however it seems that growers are still happy to wait and see what the next few weeks bring before parting with their new seasons grain. Feed barley has seen a rise in the past few weeks as feed lot demand and a lower dollar have helped growers move grain out of silos and sausage bags. Growers who were happy to hold onto stock into the next season are seeing these prices as a great way as to get some cash flow.

Andrew Brown, AGA Field Merchant Horsham (03) 5382 6484