



South Australian growers continue to enjoy a good start to the season following widespread rain of 15-30mm in the last few days of June. Most regions have recorded close to average rainfall for the growing season so far with only the south east a little below, often a good thing for crop establishment during winter in this area. Seeding is largely complete with most cereals up and out of the ground and looking good at this early stage. Whilst there is still a long way to go, current conditions give growers cause for cautious optimism.

Early estimates put area sown to wheat up by between 5-15% across the state in response to current prices. A large percentage of this increase has come at the expense of feed barley which growers have deserted in droves due to poor current and forward price outlook. Across Yorke Peninsula and the mid and lower north, lentils have also seen an increase in area sown. In general, growers in higher rainfall areas have replaced barley with lentils, hay, and canola or kept an extra mob of sheep. Low rainfall regions such as northern and western Eyre Peninsula, the Mallee and upper north have simply increased wheat area. Prospects for the canola crop look extremely good with most sown at the optimal time of late April/early May into good soil moisture, establishing well and now up to the cabbage stage in early districts. The possibility exists for another harvest with high oil content although this is still a long way away.

Mice in plague proportions have been causing problems across Eyre Peninsula and the mid north with growers carrying out extensive baiting campaigns as well as re-sowing of some crops. It's hoped the recent cold and wet conditions will have a major effect on the population. Just as significant and with potentially very serious implications for croppers is the locust issue. Locust eggs laid in autumn across the north and east of South Australia are due to hatch in the spring. Timing is uncertain and damage will depend on what stage crops are at but in a worst case scenario, total destruction of everything still green is possible as occurred with sown feed crops earlier in the year. Mallee Locust action groups have put together a spray proposal and are now seeking 100 % compliance from all properties within the region to be ready to spray quickly if and when the time comes.

On the marketing front, most growers have their forward sales programs largely completed and are happy to sit back, watch the crop develop and wait for any opportunities that may arise as a result of any northern hemisphere production issues in the spring. Recent forward prices of up to \$480mt for new crop canola saw some sales made but bids of \$200-210 for APW multigrade wheat and \$150-\$155mt for F1 barley have not attracted huge enquiry. Old crop markets remain quiet with most domestic end users covered out until close to next harvest.

For further details please contact your local Australian Grain Accumulation  
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