

Record high temperatures in November resulted in growers with green crops seeing the quality of their grain disappear. It seems spring rains were exchanged for hot 35 degree days and bulky green crops struggled with the heat. Early sown crops have again been the answer for growers as most of the early crops within the Wimmera had already flowered and almost filled prior to the heat wave. However, crops within the Western District West were made to flower and fill in less than ideal weather conditions and thus small grains became an issue. It has been another heartbreaking year for some growers who, prior to the November heat wave, were very excited about this year's crop.

Growers within the Western Districts had Wheat crops that were looking to make H1 and H2 but downgraded to HPS1 and Fed1 as screenings percentages were too high. Test weights were also a problem within the Western District's of Victoria and have been put down to the hot spell seen during spring.

Protein levels also become an issue in areas such as the Mallee and Northern Wimmera. Good rainfall during the growing season made the protein levels for both wheat and barley lower than most growers expected. Where in the past growers were missing out on malting grades in their barley as the protein was too high, this year they were missing out on malting grades due to the protein testing being too low and screenings too high. Wheat protein also tested lower than it has in past years with ASW1 and APW1 being grown in country that has shown H1 and H2 quality grades in recent years.

There has been a turn to using new grain varieties this season throughout the Wimmera-Mallee due to growers wanting the best fit for their given enterprises. The use of early maturing wheat and barley varieties have been very popular this year due to poor falls of rain being the norm in the spring months of recent years. High yielding feed barley varieties are also very popular among growers as they have become "fed up" with missing out on malting specs due to dry finishes.

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