
The season 08/09 for sunflowers was one of the best for several years and despite a very dry finish to the later planted crops, results on yield and oil were very favourable. Overall oil percentages were the best for several years with most growing regions having some oil percentages into the high 40's. This led to an extra \$40 to \$50/mt in growers' pockets. Crushing prices for mono sunflowers ranged from a high of \$725 delivered Narrabri on a hectare basis in Oct 08 to a low of \$560 late in 2009. In total, Australia produced approximately 69,000mt of the mono type and 20,000mt of the poly type.

In contrast the 09/10 season is not shaping up as successful, due mostly to the consistent dry weather in all growing regions. The early plant sept/oct window has now closed and the only region that has planted any significant area is the Liverpool Plains and some small area in Northern NSW. Total area would be no more than 5,000Ha.

To meet the domestic demand, the late plant is going to be essential and unfortunately most areas require a significant amount of rain to fill moisture profiles to a level that growers would be comfortable in planting sunflowers.

In recent years, production of the monounsaturated sunflowers has met the domestic demand which is around 60,000mt of seed. Production of polyunsaturated sunflowers has been erratic with the majority of production being used in the local birdseed, horsefeed and de-hulling industries. The crush requirement for poly sunflowers is still around 50,000mt of seed. The majority of this demand has been met by the importation of poly oil.

On the marketing front, Cargill are continuing to offer growers hectare contracts. These contracts are popular with dryland growers in that they eliminate production risk. No grower wants production failure but at least these contracts allow growers to avoid expensive contract washouts which can happen when forward contracting.

At time of writing sunflower values have showed some upward movement with mono values on a hectare contract currently at \$583 delivered Newcastle crushing plant and \$553 delivered Narrabri crushing plant. Fixed tones contracts are offering a \$40 premium to Hectare contracts.

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