

Australian Oilseeds Federation

Crop Report



September 2017

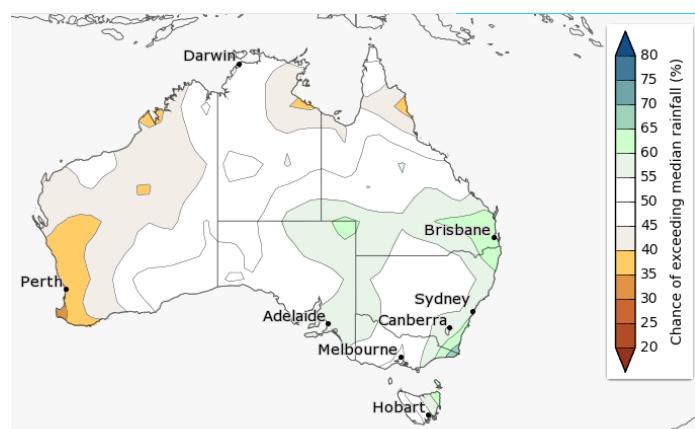
Canola 2017/18

	2016/17		2017/18	
	Final	September Estimate	Harvested Area (hectares)	Production (tonnes)
('000t)				
NSW	525	890	560	621
VIC	360	720	400	640
SA	210	390	235	294
WA	1,240	2,200	1,125	1,300
TOTAL	2,335	4,200	2,320	2,855

Source: Industry Estimates

Generally good to perfect crop conditions in VIC and parts of SA have not been able to offset the very dry and frost affected conditions in northern NSW and the impacts of the dry start in WA. Consequently, this month we have reduced our 2017 production estimate by 260,000 tonnes or 9 percent to 2.86 mmt. At less than 3 million tonnes, this would be the smallest canola crop in Australia since the 2010 harvest.

The BOM forecast for the remainder of the season is for a drier September in the already dry and frost affected areas of NSW, with better conditions forecast for October most likely being too late in the season to improve the yield outlook. In WA, the BOM forecast for average to slightly above average rain may enable a final boost to crops in the more southern cropping districts.



Source: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/rainfall/median/seasonal/>

In **NSW**, rainfall across the grain regions has been minimal for the 3 months of winter, decile 1-2 (lowest 10-20% of historical records), except in the most southern parts of NSW (Henty-Albury) and the Murray valley (decile 2-3 for winter). The dry winter has resulted in most crops having lower biomass than usual, so crops are less bulky with lower yield potential overall.

Soil moisture is now almost non-existent in central west and northern NSW. Crops are in reasonable condition in the southern parts of the South West Slopes and along the Murray River. Soil moisture in these areas will be exhausted towards mid-late September, so currently these areas have average yield potential but need rain in the next 2 weeks.

Severe frosts have occurred over the winter months with a frost on 20 August (-2 to -5°C) causing major crop loss to late flowering-podding crops in northern NSW in particular, but also in central west and southwest NSW. Further severe frosts on 28, 29 and 30 August, ranging -3 to -6°C has caused damage to crops in central and southern NSW. The extent of the frosts can be seen [here](#). How these crops might recover will depend on rainfall in the next 2-3 weeks, and will also require mild temperatures. There is potential further downside for the NSW crop. Some frost affected crops will be cut for hay, but most will be maintained through to harvest for some grain recovery (100-500 kg/ha), as well as weed control and early fallow commencement for 2018. Many crops do not have sufficient biomass to be economic for hay production.

Disease levels (blackleg and sclerotinia) have been low this season due to the very conditions. Despite this, fungicide has been applied for sclerotinia as a preventative measure. Aphids have required control in many central and northern NSW crops.

In **Victoria**, crop conditions are near perfect, with close to full profiles across the state and most crops now in full flower. While there have been reports of mice eating flower buds off, causing some issues in the Mallee and Wimmera, this is unlikely to have a significant impact on yield.

There are no frost issues visible, despite generally cold conditions during August. With average rainfall, as forecast, there may be more upside in yield, particularly in the north west and central areas of the state.

In 2017, the **SA canola crop** is extremely variable with crops on Eyre Peninsula, parts of the Mid North Yorke Peninsula only emerging after rain in very late June and early July. Many crops in these areas had been sown dry and establishment has been variable. These crops will flower much later than normal and for a shorter time so and will be relying on a very good spring to produce acceptable grain yields.

Other areas of South Australia had crops established at about the normal time and these are at the early to mid flowering stage and generally have at least average yield potential.

Rainfall in July, August and early September has generally been good and most areas have good levels of subsoil moisture.

The overall average yield for SA has been adjusted down to 1.25 t/ha based on the effectively late sowing date on Eyre Peninsula in particular.

In some areas, there has also been some significant mouse damage to emerging crops and some crops have been sprayed out and sown to alternatives.

While blackleg would be expected to be prevalent in the crops that emerged at the normal time it is unlikely that blackleg will have much impact on Eyre Peninsula due to late emergence.

In **WA**, August has been kind to canola in the southern half with rain and some warmth, however the north is never going to improve now, following a very tough start. However, a kind spring will still be needed as generally, outside of the Esperance zone, canola is a few weeks behind the 2016 crop.

The crop is now in full flower except for crops in the Esperance zone. Esperance is at early pod fill as there was no set back to the crop after another April sowing.

In terms of risks, diamond back moth is starting to be seen in the Esperance area and the presence of aphids in all southern and central districts is requiring spraying. Late weed control through swathing and desiccation may also be a risk to oil content as the weed numbers are higher than usual. The late development of the crop is also likely to drive oil content lower.

Soil moisture across the southern half is generally very good, however temperatures need to remain mild for forecast yields to be reached. The frost risk seems to be low compared to the weather pattern of last year.

Upcoming Events

AOF Forum 2017: 26 October 2017
Sydney, NSW

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