

## Summary

Widespread rainfall events at the end of July has set the 2015 WA grain harvest up for an above average result. After disappointing low winter rainfall conditions, particularly in the Kwinana port zone, soil moisture levels across the entire WA grain belt are now generally very good.

For April and early May sown crops, the rains in July arrived a little too late to markedly improve yield potential. However, for crops sown after early May, crop yield potential has risen significantly. Crops that in June looked to have only average yield potential now look to have well above average potential.

The northern and eastern districts of the Geraldton zone are in excellent condition. The west coast districts are in generally above average condition, while the central districts of Mingenew south to Carnamah are below average. Conditions in the west Kwinana zone have improved markedly and expected crop yields are now rated as slightly above average. Crops in the east Kwinana zone are in above average condition.

Rainfall in the Albany zone has been average which has produced generally good crop conditions with very little waterlogging.

The Esperance zone has been in excellent condition throughout winter and looks set to produce a very large harvest.

While current conditions are excellent, the production forecasts below are based on average rainfall and generally favourable temperatures, without significant frost events, continuing through spring to mid-October.

The area sown to Lupins in all port zones has been adjusted upwards, except in the Esperance zone, by a total of 18,000 hectares compared to the July estimate based on a slightly larger than anticipated plantings of lupins.

## WA Production estimates (tonnes)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
Kwinana	3,937,000	948,000	486,000	322,000	145,000	7,000	5,845,000
Albany	1,550,000	1,061,000	420,000	230,000	50,000	7,000	3,318,000
Esperance	1,392,000	858,000	366,000	17,000	18,000	21,000	2,672,000
Geraldton	1,918,000	57,000	174,000	19,000	272,000	1,000	2,441,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,797,000</b>	<b>2,924,000</b>	<b>1,446,000</b>	<b>588,000</b>	<b>485,000</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>14,276,000</b>

## WA planting area estimates (hectares)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
Kwinana	2,413,000	493,000	418,000	136,000	104,000	6,000	3,570,000
Albany	717,000	445,000	316,000	86,000	35,000	4,000	1,603,000
Esperance	500,000	288,000	270,000	6,000	9,000	12,000	1,085,000
Geraldton	894,000	26,000	139,000	8,000	167,000	1,000	1,235,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,524,000</b>	<b>1,252,000</b>	<b>1,143,000</b>	<b>236,000</b>	<b>315,000</b>	<b>23,000</b>	<b>7,493,000</b>

## **Kwinana Zone**

### **The Midlands**

Good widespread late July rains were experienced in the Midlands region of the Kwinana zone, with around 80 mm recorded in western districts and up to 150 mm in eastern districts. West of the Goomalling to Dalwallinu road, only 100 to 120 mm rain had been recorded for the year but the total has now doubled in one month.

Overall, the rain fell slowly creating full soil moisture profiles with little damage, other than temporary excess surface water. Most paddocks are currently not trafficable, but waterlogging is unlikely to be a concern at this stage.

Barley crops had been in good condition prior to the July rain and now look to have above average yield potential.

Later sown wheat crops have above average yield potential, while early crops have advanced development to the flag leaf to ear emerged, and can't improve much beyond average yield potential. Some late tillers in these early sown crops may improve yields by around 10%.

Nitrogen applications up to date look to be adequate for the current yield potential.

Powdery Mildew is apparent in some wheat crops, and is being controlled in conjunction with late radish germinations.

Sclerotinia now needs control in canola, even in well-developed crops. Very high numbers of aphids in canola are also requiring control in the Moora to Mingenew districts.

### **Kwinana east**

July rainfall events averaged around 100 mm across the low rainfall north eastern and eastern districts in the zone.

Early sown wheat is at the flowering to grain fill stage and yield potential won't improve a lot, despite the high soil moisture levels. Later sown crops are at 5 leaf stage and have higher yield potential, at around 2 tonnes per hectare (t/ha).

Canola crops generally have the potential to average 0.5 to 0.7 t/ha after a suffering loss of biomass during the dry June.

Some Powdery Mildew in wheat is apparent but only being controlled where radish also needs spraying.

### **Kwinana west**

The West Kwinana zone has recorded below average rainfall with very little summer rain for the season. The recent rainfall events yielded less rain than on most other regions at around just 25 to 30 mm in most districts.

Yield potential is slightly below average due the early dry conditions, but later sown crops now have potential to yield above average if the remainder of the season is favourable.

The variability of crop development between farms is high making it difficult to assess the yield potential of crops across the districts.

Canola crops are at mixed maturity stages. Extra Nitrogen is being applied which will boost yield potential, and prolong flowering.

Barley crops have average yield potential, which has improved from the well below average yields predicted prior to the recent rain.

Wheat crops are also in a range of development stages. No further nitrogen applications are being made with growers attending to late radish control and some control of Powdery Mildew.

## **Albany Zone**

Despite less rain in the Great Southern/Lakes regions than northern regions during late July, at 40 to 80 mm, soil moisture levels are high in most districts. Crops in the south Newdegate to Mt Madden districts are in excellent condition, while crop conditions south of Lake Grace are average. There is average to above average potential in the Kulin/ Kondinin districts.

Most crops are at the 'normal' development stage with very few running up early. Extra tillers are now expected in cereals and given favourable conditions for the rest of the growing season, yield potential can improve markedly. Mid-season and later sown crops have the better yield potential compared to early sown crops.

Barley crops look in particularly good condition and in the main look better than wheat crops. Nitrogen levels are adequate up to date and probably don't need topping up to match current yield potential of around 2 t/ha.

Some leaf rust and Powdery Mildew is apparent in wheat crops. Some crops are being sprayed with fungicide and there are concerns about the availability of fungicides if further spraying is required through August.

Sclerotinia isn't causing major concern in canola crops in the northern districts in the zone.

In the south west districts of the Albany zone, rainfall events for July were around 80 mm in all districts. The rain was just in time as some early wheat crops were about to drop tillers. For most of these districts the season is running at around decile 5 season so far, which whilst adequate for cropping, is not so good for pasture growth. Growers are still feeding sheep, but the lambing percentage looks to be 10% higher than anticipated, due to the excellent 2014 season and sheep maintaining good condition throughout summer.

Cereal crops are developing at a normal pace and mostly at the 2nd to 3rd node stage, with late crops at 1st node. Canola is starting to flower, mostly at 10% flowering, while some early sown crops are at full flower. Sclerotinia looks to be an ongoing problem and is being controlled, with Diamond Back Moth larvae also at threshold levels for economic control.

Powdery Mildew requires controlling in wheat, with Spot type net blotch causing problems in barley.

Yields should average around 3 t/ha in wheat and 1.5 t/ha for canola crops. To date Nitrogen efficiency looks to be ideal, with further applications needed in the coming weeks.

Slugs and snails have been a problem in the Kojonup and Kendenup districts.

### Esperance Zone

The season in Esperance is exceptional with crops in all districts of the Esperance zone in very good condition. Soil moisture levels are excellent in the Mallee areas, and along the south coast where waterlogging potential is always a high risk.

Crop development is running about two weeks in advance of 'normal'. The almost perfect soil moisture levels during winter with above average temperatures has accelerated development, but not at the expense of yield potential.

Cereals are at the Z32 to 33 stage, ie late elongation with the flag leaf about to emerge.

Yields could rival 2013 with the overall zone at potentially record levels.

Powdery Mildew is apparent in wheat and needing control. Turnip and cabbage aphids are widespread in canola. Barley leaf rust also needs controlling.

### Geraldton Zone

North of Geraldton to Mullewa, good rainfall events in July have could see crops return higher than average yields. However, expected crop yields are extremely variable across the zone. For example, the Walkaway district is experiencing only a decile 2 season, while the East Chapman district has had 150 mm more rain so far and is tracking on a decile 5 season.

Crops on poor sands did not perform well during the dry June, and currently have low potential. Crops in the Mingenew, Three Springs and west Carnamah districts are in poor condition after no summer rain and low rainfall totals for May and June. Some growers are saying it is their toughest season for many years. In these districts, yield potential is low for wheat and lupins. Crops in the west coast and inland districts are in very good condition. There are potentially very high yielding crops in the Warradarge to Latham districts.

Wheat is mostly flowering with early crops setting grain. Powdery Mildew is widespread in low rainfall areas, especially in the Pindar, Yuna and Tardun districts. Corack, Mace and Wyalkatchem wheat varieties are all susceptible.

Lupins have improved markedly and look to have good yield potential.

Later sown crops now look to have the best yield potential. Early sown crops were stressed by heat in May, suffered from accelerated development and have set up low yield potential.

In the southern districts, further applications of nitrogen are being made to take advantage of the high soil moisture levels.

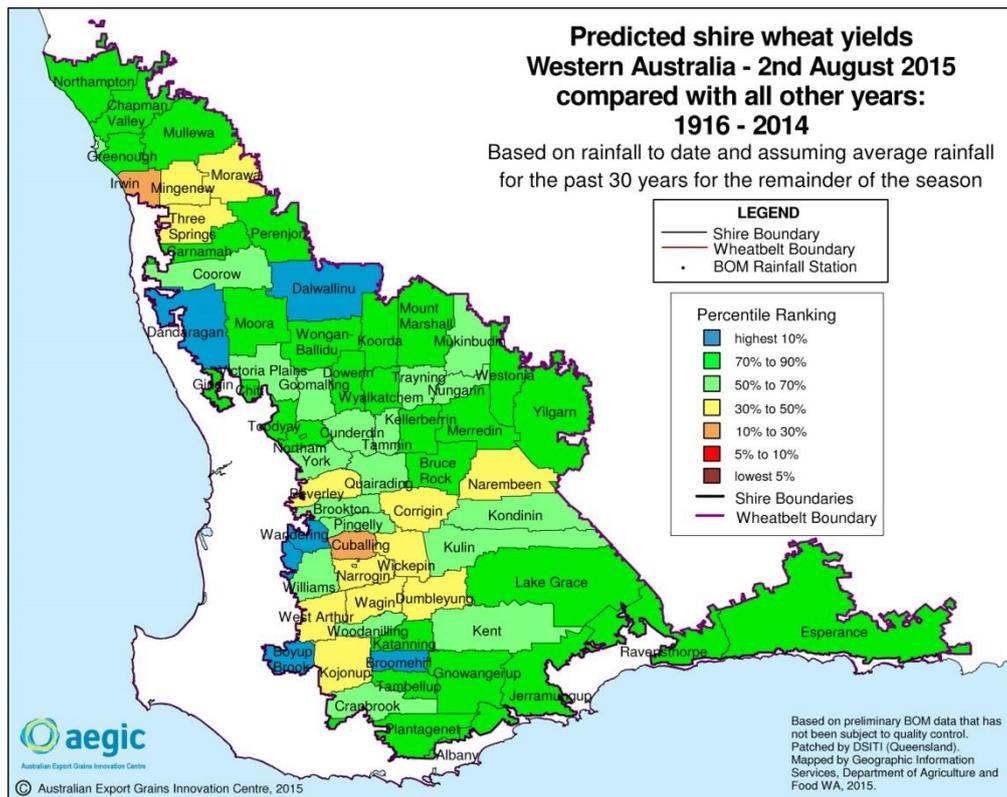
Green peach aphids are in high numbers and needing control in canola, along with Sclerotinia.

There are shortages of fungicides for cereals and canola which is causing concern and a scramble for alternatives.



**Wheat yield predictions- Dr David Stephens  
Australian Grains Export Innovation Centre**

- The current conditions support an above average wheat yield in most of the south west grain belt of WA. The Midlands region, the Upper Great Southern and the west Kwinana zone are ranked below average compared to all years, 1916 to 2014. All other regions are above average in comparison.
- Soil moisture across WA has improved markedly on the July report, with yield potential above average across the state. The model for yield prediction relies on 'normal' crop development during the season. Early sown crops in the northern and eastern regions have accelerated development with reduced potential, and this anomaly is not accounted for in the yield forecast.



**Bureau of Meteorology outlook - wetter for west Australia BoM**

- There is an increased chance of a wetter three months over central and southern WA, as well as adjacent areas over the WA border. Most of eastern Australia has a roughly equal chance of a wetter or drier August to October.
- The current outlook reflects considerably warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean and El Niño in the Pacific.
- Historical outlook accuracy for August to October is moderate to high over most of Australia, except in central and southwest parts of WA, parts of southern Queensland, and eastern NSW, where accuracy is low.

**Additional information can be sourced from:**

- [AEGIC: Crop Prospects Report](#)
- [AEGIC: ENSO Summary webpage](#)
- [DAFWA: Statistical Seasonal forecast](#)
- [BoM: WA Seasonal Rainfall Outlook, next 3 months](#)
- [BoM: Month to date rainfall for WA](#)
- [16 day rainfall outlook \(WX maps\)](#)
- [BoM: Decile rainfall for May to July 2015](#)



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