

Summary - The 2017 Season as at November

The resilience of Western Australia's grain production capacity is evident as late season grain fill moves the 2017 harvest from ordinary to average, with a 6.9 per cent increase in estimated total state production from October to 12,326,060 tonnes. The exception to this is in the east and north east wheat belt where some growers who were facing total crop failure in July may now achieve a "below cost recovery" season.

Given the late start to harvest continues due to the late break to the growing season, there could be more upside to these estimates over the next six weeks. Late rains in September and mild temperatures in October enhanced favourable finishing conditions resulting in many crops harvested to date yielding "better than they look".

So far, early deliveries of barley from around the state have tested low for protein, have good grain size and some germ end stain. The indications are that this trend of low protein grain will continue as growers were generally sparing with nitrogen applications as the season improved to a far greater extent than was expected.

Early canola grain yields have been varied with some good yields and some low yields in the same region. Oil percentages have been in the high 40's in most cases.

Very little wheat has been harvested across the state so far, although judging by the deliveries of other crops it is likely grain yields will be higher than they look and grain protein low.

Lupin grain yields have been low in the north of the state with most likely to be retained on farm for livestock feed. The lupin crops improve as you go south and lupins from these regions will make up a greater percentage of the lupin crop tonnage than normal.

Oats for grain harvested so far has been good quality though down in yield. Oats for hay are mostly baled up now in the central and north of the state, following a very drawn out process from light rainfall events.

November 2017 GIWA WA Crop Production Estimates (tonnes)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
Kwinana	3,430,000	1,425,000	411,000	280,000	160,000	22,000	5,728,000
Albany	1,320,000	973,000	386,400	215,000	54,180	4,000	2,952,580
Esperance	1,250,000	722,100	445,000	10,230	21,200	20,300	2,468,830
Geraldton	895,000	54,000	86,550	3,000	137,500	600	1,176,650
Totals	6,895,000	3,174,100	1,328,950	508,230	372,880	46,900	12,326,060
% Change to Oct 2017	9.2%	4.4%	5.2%	4.7%	-3.0%	4.0%	6.9%

Note: the grain totals reported are for whole farm production. This includes on-farm seed and feed requirements as well as trade outside of the CBH network.

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Geraldton Zone

The zone continued to have mild conditions in October which has resulted in a slight increase in wheat tonnage estimates for this report. Wheat in the zone will yield slightly more than previous estimates with the reduction in area planted holding back expected tonnages.

Lupin and canola tonnage estimates have been reduced this month due to early indications from paddocks that have been harvested yielding lower than expected. The mild spring has benefited these crops but the variability across paddocks is resulting in lower grain yields.

It is clear now that more lupin and canola crops should have been sprayed out and fallowed in the eastern areas, as yields are not high enough to return a profit for some paddocks. It is expected most lupins harvested will be retained on farm. There is a general observation that the Roundup Ready and Triazine Tolerant hybrid canola varieties handled the difficult start and growing conditions this year better than open pollinated canola varieties.

Kwinana Zone

The Midlands

Crop tonnage estimates have not changed significantly from last month for all crops. There has been a slight increase in expected tonnages for wheat, barley and canola from the western regions of the zone, although there is no change in the eastern areas where most of the wheat is grown in an average year.

Harvest has been later starting than normal due to the rains in September and cool temperatures in October. Indications from grain deliveries so far are that grain protein is low, even in low yielding cereal crops, and canola yields are not as high as expected.

Noodle wheat tonnage will be down this year and will struggle to be 200,000 tonnes for the region.

Kwinana West

The western areas of the zone are just starting to harvest barley and canola with grain yields so far very good. The grain yields are as expected, or higher than expected. The barley is low in protein and most paddocks with a good yield will struggle to make malt. Canola oil percentage quality is in the high 40's and grain yields are as expected. It appears so far there has been little frost affected area.

The wheat tonnage estimates have been increased this month based on the early deliveries of barley and canola, as in most cases the yields are better than they look. Wheat tonnage estimates have been conservative in the last two GIWA Crop Reports as it was uncertain how much yield could be made up from late tillers and grain size.

Kwinana East

The wheat tonnage estimates for the eastern regions of the zone close to and south of the Great Eastern Highway have increased in this report based on early deliveries. Grain yields are better than expected and even though below average in most cases, the large areas contribute a lot of tonnes to the region.

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Most of the increase in wheat tonnage estimates for the state has come from the West and South East Kwinana zones.

Albany Zone

Western Albany

Tonnage estimates for the Western Albany port zone have been left unchanged this month for all crops as there has been little or no harvest activity so far.

There is likely to be more frost affected crop than first thought based on early reports from further east and south. The impact from frost on total tonnage for the region is not expected to be high, although the range in potential yield from one paddock to another is making it difficult to predict total tonnages. The better crops look very promising, however there are a significant number of paddocks that are not going to yield near their potential due to a range of management factors during the growing season.

The general sentiment is that there is some upside to tonnage estimates for the region.

Southern Albany

There are some early barley crops being harvested in the northern parts of the zone and these have generally tested low or right on the edge for protein acceptable for malt. In the frosted areas, the combination of screenings and low protein have reduced the potential tonnage that will make malt standards. Grain yields have been very good so far. Frost looks to have been more widespread than first thought and will impact on tonnages of all grains in the region.

Very little canola has been harvested to date in the area.

Tonnage estimates have been left unchanged from last month as it is too early to estimate the effect on grain yield from the frost from what has been a generally above average season for the region.

Eastern Albany (Lakes Region)

Tonnage estimates for the region have increased slightly for wheat and barley, and reduced slightly for canola.

Frost affected crops for the region appear to be confined to the low areas where frost can usually be a problem. The lack of frost combined with an above average growing season has contributed to many growers looking forward to an above average harvest.

The cereals look to have come through the difficult start to the season better than canola as was the case for most of the state.

Lupin crops have podded up well and should yield above average for the region.

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Esperance Zone

Harvest of canola and barley has been underway for a couple of weeks in the regions away from the coast. Canola grain yields have been variable and generally lower than expected. Late sclerotinia and blackleg leaf infection may have contributed to this. Some of the lower yielding canola paddocks may also be due to frost. Oil percentages have been excellent and mostly in the high 40's.

Barley has yielded well with good grain size, although germ end stain and low protein are limiting how many tonnes are being accepted as malt. Grain yields of the newer feed varieties have been well above the malt varieties in most cases.

As little or no wheat has been harvested yet, there are questions on how the yields will go, the estimated tonnages have been left only slightly changed from last month.

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Season Outlook, November 2017

Ian Foster, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

October rainfall has been below average for much of the agricultural region, apart from parts of the central region where heavy rain mid-month brought above average monthly totals. Rainfall for August to October has been above average, see Figure 1. This has confirmed the pattern of the 2017 growing season being composed of two very different halves. The start of the growing season saw very dry conditions, especially for the northern agricultural region, while the second half experienced a significant improvement in rainfall.

Some frost events occurred during early and mid-October, but these were not of the major extent seen in 2016. They were mostly in the central and southern agricultural regions.

Most climate model rainfall projections for November 2017 to January 2018 are showing neutral probabilities, that is, no preference for either wetter or drier conditions. Global climate indicators, such as El Niño / Southern Oscillation, Indian Ocean Dipole, or sea surface temperatures are providing conflicting guidance to the models.

A La Niña event is expected to develop in the Pacific Ocean from November, but is likely to be a weak event and of short duration. Its influence on Australian summer rainfall is expected to be quite weak.

Potential wheat yield, based on observed and projected seasonal rainfall continues to show a similar pattern from last month. Yield potential remains low in the north-east and higher across southern parts and the South Coast. Estimates for individual locations can be obtained from the DPIRD Potential Yield Tool (see link below).

Overview:

- The latter part of the 2017 growing season has seen a marked improvement in seasonal rainfall, compared with the start of the season.
- Current climate conditions in the Pacific are consistent with a developing La Niña event, though it is expected to be weak.
- Seasonal climate outlooks for rainfall over WA from climate models are neutral.
- Frost incidence in October has been slightly below average.

Bureau of Meteorology - Seasonal climate outlook for November 2017 to January 2018

- The November to January rainfall outlook, issued on 26 October 2017, shows most of the country has around a 50% chance of above average rainfall.
- November is likely to be drier than usual for most of WA, SA and Victoria. The chance of getting above normal rainfall is below 30% in the southern half of WA.
- November to January temperatures are likely to be warmer than average for most of the country, most likely over Tasmania, Victoria and northern Australia. Elsewhere, the chance of a warmer three months is close to 50%.

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- The Pacific Ocean is likely to continue cooling towards La Niña levels over coming months. However, the ocean warmth that typically appears to the north of Australia and in the eastern Indian Ocean is unlikely to develop. This means that Australia is unlikely to receive widespread heavy rainfall that is typical of many previous La Niña events.

Additional information can be sourced from:

[DPIRD: Seasonal Climate Information](#)

[DPIRD: Potential Yield Tool](#)

[DPIRD Extreme Weather Events Tool](#)

[BoM: Seasonal Rainfall Outlook, next 3 months](#)

[BoM: Decile rainfall for April to October 2017](#)

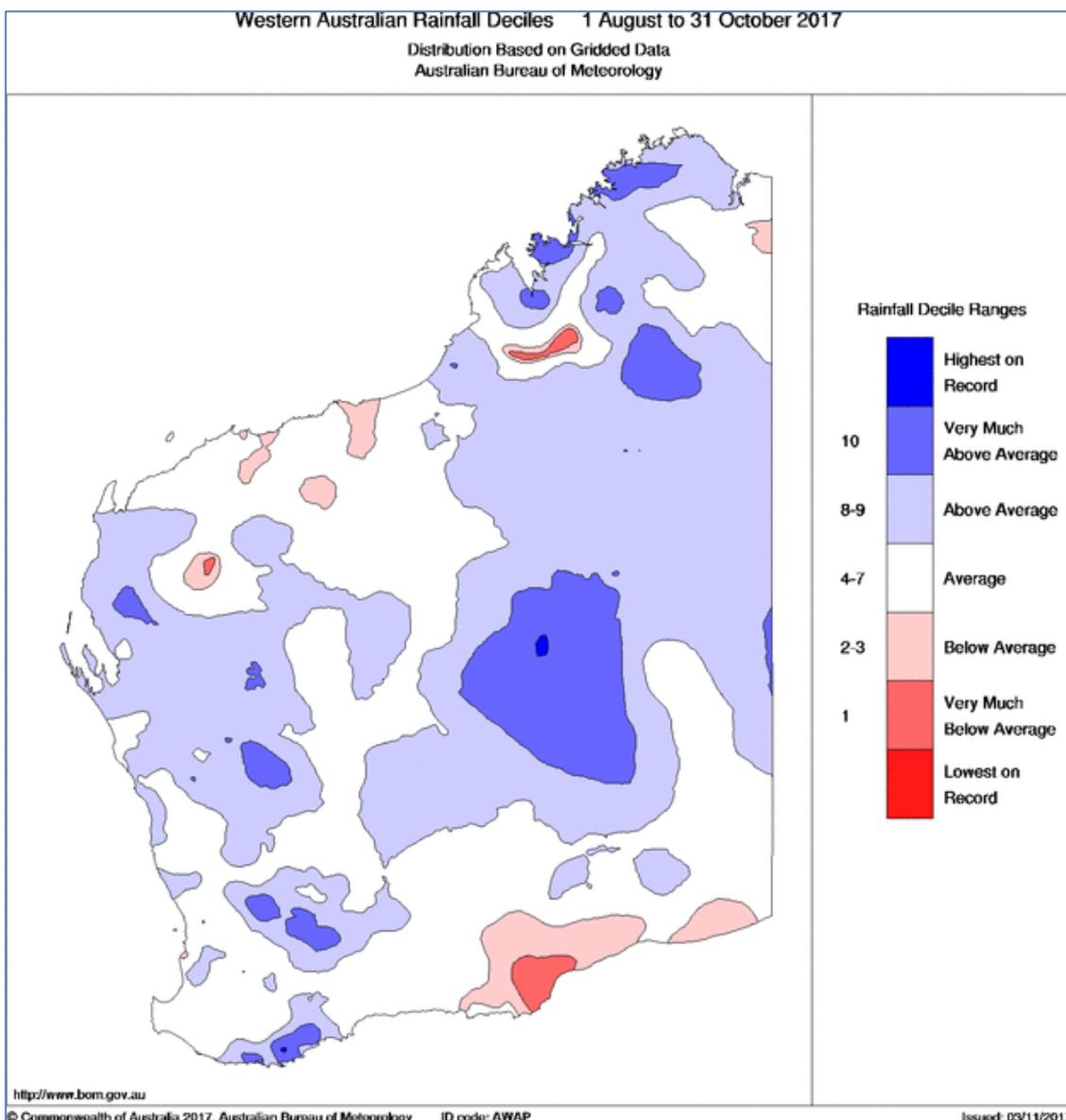


Figure 1. Rainfall deciles for August to October 2017. From Bureau of Meteorology.

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