

Australian Oilseeds Federation

Crop Report



April 2009

Sunflower 2008/09

Sunflower estimates are unchanged from last month.

	2007/08	2008/09 Estimates	
	Production (tonnes)	Area Planted (hectares)	Production (tonnes)
QLD	31,950	23,700	31,900
NSW	41,050	30,200	47,300
Total	73,000	53,900	79,200

Source: Industry Estimates, 17/04/09

Central Queensland received some small and patchy rainfall in late March/early April (up to 20 mm) which has helped to sustain crops, but further rain will be required for yield predictions to be achieved. Harvesting has commenced on the **Darling Downs** for late planted mono and poly crops.

The early sunflower harvest is virtually complete on the **Liverpool Plains**. The early sunflower crops performed well, with high yields, good oils and favourable prices seeing the season finish on a positive note. Rain over the last weekend generally saw between 20-40mm across the sunflower area. This has aided the late planted sunflowers, many of which are in late grain fill or close to physiological maturity, although the latest of crops are only in early grain fill. Temperatures, especially night temperatures have fallen, slowing crop maturity.

In the **Moree** area, late plant sunflowers are at physiological maturity for the most part and in the dry down phase. Aside from 20-60mm last weekend which was too late for most crops, the last 2 months of the growing season have been dry. As a result, only average yields are expected.

Soybean 2008/09

Late March and early April saw much needed to excessive rainfall across the soybean growing areas. This has seen estimates fall by around 10% on last month.

	2007/08	2008/09 Estimates	
	Production (tonnes)	Area Planted (hectares)	Production (tonnes)
QLD	20,930	29,450	67,500
NSW	13,800	24,125	56,000
VIC	0	0	0
Total	34,730	53,575	123,500

Source: Industry Estimates 17/04/09

In **North Queensland**, excessive rain and flooding has continued in the last month, with some crops being ploughed in due to water logging. The rain has delayed harvest somewhat, but weather permitting harvesting should be well underway before the end of April. Harvesting has commenced in **Central Queensland** and yields are as good as if not better than predicted, with some crops reporting up to 4 tonnes per hectare. However, overall yields are expected to remain at predicted levels. On the coastal areas, particularly in the **Wide Bay** and **Burnett**, high rainfalls of 10-25 mm, are expected to have some detrimental effect on crop yield. At present there is no indication that there has been serious effect to quality. On the **Darling Downs** some harvesting has commenced for early sown crops. Patchy rainfall over the past few weeks has been beneficial to those crops still in vegetative stage, but many crops are exhibiting some degree of water stress. Despite this reports of good yields at predicted levels are coming in. Harvest should be well underway by end of April.

It has been a very wet start to the harvest on the **Northern Rivers** of NSW, with exceptionally high rainfalls causing water logging and flooding extensively across the area. This has caused some quality issues in the severely affected crops with reports of purple staining, some mould growth and rust infections. As a result yields have been revised down for this region. Estimates for the rest of the NSW/Victoria remain unchanged from last month.

Canola 2009/10

Formal canola estimates will commence next month, with most areas still waiting for opening rains to commence planting. In the eastern states, soil moisture and a good break to the autumn season are all critical to growers considering canola in their crop rotation plans for the 2009 season

The outlook for canola was very positive with favourable market signals compared to other crop options, however, most regions, and in particular the east coast, are dependent of sufficient rainfall before the sowing window closes.

Based on current seasonal outlook, it is expected that the area planted in NSW will be slightly lower in 2009 compared to the predictions at the same time in 2008. The central and southern regions are still very dry, with some areas reporting less than 13 mm of rainfall for the year. For most regions mid May is a seen as a critical point and without a good general autumn break prior to that date, planting intentions may begin to drift towards cereal options.

A similar scenario is facing Victoria and South Australia, with continuing dry conditions, poor subsoil moisture and the absence of an autumn break. Similarly, it is expected that there may be slight decrease in area planted for both States.

Western Australian grain producers are also waiting for rainfall that will signal the start of the 2009 cropping season. Preparations are now in full swing for seeding. There have been few rainfall events during February and March to build soil moisture, with growers hoping for a solid break to allow sowing with confidence. Area planted could be slightly below 2008.

Overall, it is expected that the canola area could be around 1 to 1.15 million hectares, but this will depend on the break occurring in the next few weeks. At average yields, this would see a crop of around 1.6-1.8 million tonnes.

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