

Australian Oilseeds Federation

Crop Report



January 2009

Canola 2008/09

The canola crop has finished up on last month's estimates. This is largely due to better than forecast estimates for WA due to an excellent finish, but also an improved position for NSW and Victoria where impacts of the frost damage were not as bad as expected and good yields in higher rainfall areas.

	2007/08	2008/09 Estimates	
	Production (tonnes)	Area Planted (hectares)	Production (tonnes)
NSW	44,000	195,000	225,000
VIC	200,000	185,000	225,000
SA	155,000	165,000	165,000
WA	670,000	620,000	1,000,000
Total	1,069,000	1,165,000	1,615,000

Source: Industry Estimates, 16/01/09

Harvest in **NSW** has finished with a somewhat better position than earlier forecast. The dry spring and finish to the crop has impacted yields and quality in all regions, but in particular the southern and central regions. The damage from the late frosts in October and November was not as severe as expected, particularly in the northern region. There is wide variation in seed quality, seed size and appearance, with a number of reports of small, pinched grain. Grain fill was poor in many areas. Oil contents have been disappointing, with the state average around 36-38%. Overall, production for the State has been revised up slightly on last month due to the combination of poorer crops turned off for hay and frost damage being less than estimated.

As for NSW, the **Victorian** crop experienced a disappointing end to the season. With virtually no rainfall and frosts during the spring finish, yields and quality have been well below expectations. A number of poorer performing crops were cut for hay. The Western District has seen better yields than previously predicted as frost damage was not as severe as expected. Overall average yield for the state has increased slightly.

There was big variation in crop quality across **South Australia**. Conditions and results were similar to those in NSW and Victoria, with a disappointing end to the 2008/09 season.

The late rain in the southern zones of **Western Australia** has capped an almost perfect growing season. As for eastern states, the late frosts were not as damaging as first expected. Generally yields are up across all zones. Seed quality is very good and oil yields are averaging 43-44%. The state crop is expected to pass the 1 million tonnes for a record year.

Sunflower 2008/09

Prospects for the sunflower crop have improved due to reasonable yields predicted for the early planted crops, and an increase in late planted sunflowers. This has been a result of recent improvement in prices, due to the declining Australian dollar and strength in crude oil values.

	2007/08	2008/09 Estimates	
	Production (tonnes)	Area Planted (hectares)	Production (tonnes)
QLD	31,950	18,500	22,300
NSW	41,050	22,500	40,500
Total	73,000	41,000	62,800

Source: Industry Estimates, 16/01/09

Crops in southern Queensland, northern NSW and Liverpool Plains are ranging from late grain fill to harvest commencing. Harvest is expected to commence in early February, although harvest has commenced on some early plant irrigated monounsaturated sunflowers in Central Queensland and is also expected to commence in northern NSW shortly for some of the early plant crops.

Hot, dry conditions have continued in northern NSW since late December, with only minimal and isolated storm rainfall events across the area. Minimal pest pressure is reported. Yield potential is expected to be in the 1.5-2.5 tonnes/hectare range.

The Liverpool Plains crop has had minimal Rutherglen Bug pressure, but heliothis incidence has been reasonably high. Yields in this area are expected to be 1.8 tonnes/ha or higher. The late plant is essentially sown, with crop stage varying from just planted to 8-10 leaf stage. Good subsoil moisture was available for these crops, but additional in crop rainfall from budding on will be needed to ensure good yields.

Soybean 2008/09

The soybean industry is forecast to see one of its largest crops for almost two decades. Favourable prices, improved seasonal conditions and continued recognition of the value of soybeans in farming systems is supporting interest in soybeans. There is some upside on the estimates as some area is still to be planted and yields may be increased if there are favourable conditions throughout the season.

	2007/08	2008/09 Estimates	
	Production (tonnes)	Area Planted (hectares)	Production (tonnes)
QLD	20,930	30,050	72,310
NSW	13,800	24,180	55,910
VIC	0	0	0
Total	34,730	54,230	128,220

Source: Industry Estimates 16/01/09

Production in **Queensland** is expected to recover significantly and will see the state re-establish its position as the largest producing state. All areas have increased area planted substantially and there may be some upside on this as some intended area is still to be planted in the north. Most crops across the State are looking good, however, crops in southern Queensland are experiencing some stress due to the drier conditions. This is expected to impact yields in these regions. Area planted to soybeans on the sugar coast continues to grow. With continued favourable conditions throughout the remainder of the season, crop prospects look generally positive across the State.

The north coast of **NSW** is expected to recover strongly from the flood impacted 2007/08 season. The early crops are looking good. The region is looking for some rain and area planted may have some upside if rain is received shortly.

The inland irrigated areas of NSW are also estimated to have significantly increased plantings on last year, however, the Riverina continues to be impacted by the very low water allocations. The inland dryland areas have also increased area planted, although as occurs each year, a proportion of this will be cut for hay. Overall, crop prospects are good at this stage.

The virtual soybean crop is featuring a crop in the Wide Bay area this year. Follow the crop at http://www.australianoilseeds.com/agronomy_centre/the_virtual_soybean_crop

Upcoming Events

Australian Grains Industry Conference, 27-29 July 2009, Melbourne – www.ausgrainsconf.com

World Congress on Oils & Fats and 28th ISF Congress, 27-30 September 2009, Sydney – www.isfsydney2009.com

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