

FROM a national perspective, a very promising winter crop harvest has kicked into full swing. Even with the devastating production losses due to wet weather many central and northern New South Wales growers have endured, Australia-wide winter crop deliveries should be in the top four or five on record. The very latest estimate from ABARES is due on December 6, but back in early September our official forecaster was tipping national winter crop production at 55.5 million tonnes – our fourth biggest crop – and this number already factored in some “ongoing wet conditions” in New South Wales and Queensland.



Unfortunately, there has been no real easing of the wet conditions across large swathes of NSW, and you can't help feeling for those growers watching hopes and inputs literally float down the river, but as is often the case in our country, “elsewhere” is doing OK.

After close to ideal growing season rainfall and a very soft finish, Western Australian growers are staring down the barrel of a best ever winter crop in excess of 24 million tonnes. This is more than 20 per cent higher than the early spring forecasts for WA. Amongst market analysts, there are similar expectations of record harvests in South Australia and parts of Victoria and Queensland – and most of these would be results better than expected in September.

At somewhere around 60 million tonnes, this winter crop will be our third bumper crop in a row and way above the previous 10-year average of 43 million. With wheat and canola prices well north of \$400 and \$700 per tonne respectively, it's a great year if you're lucky enough to have plenty of grain to sell.

Brazil starting to emerge as a major wheat player

High global grain prices, particularly for wheat, has been one of the reasons there is a large swing to wheat in the vast Brazilian interior. And as Peter McMeekin points out (see article page 27) the other reason is access to hybrid wheat varieties well-suited to this tropical savannah region called the Cerrado. A mixture of excellent hybrid varieties and good growing conditions has already resulted in a new world record wheat yield gain per day smashing the record previously held by a New Zealand grower.

But just five per cent – or about 200,000 hectares – of the possible four million hectares has been planted to wheat this season in the Cerrado. As is often the case with Brazilian agriculture, we need to watch this space closely.

One of *Greenmount Travel's* 2023 international farm study tours is heading to South America to check-out first hand the latest developments in the Brazilian interior and other regions of this intriguing continent (see www.greenmounttravel.com.au).

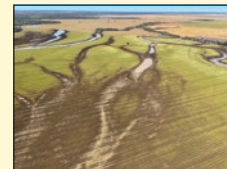
Here's hoping the sun shines in your area over a bountiful harvest. And from all at *Australian Grain*, a very merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



In this issue...

An update on a very wet harvest

Northern growers, particularly those farming in NSW, are feeling the pinch of widespread flooding and ongoing rain, with wet conditions downgrading grain quality, prolonging harvest and in worst cases, completely wiping out crops



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Soil acidity, stratification & liming

Research over the past 30 to 40 years has provided sound knowledge regarding processes associated with soil acidity. This has resulted in lime being applied by growers looking to maintain soil health, sustain productivity and maximise crop and pasture options.



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Is 'selling' soil carbon worth it?

Soil organic matter is the backbone of any sustainable farming system. In recent times, there has been significant interest in the role that soils can play in helping Australia meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets. Under the Australian Emissions Reduction Fund which financially rewards carbon offsets, there are two legislated methods which involve soil organic matter or more specifically increases in soil organic carbon.

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The Bulldog Pups

The farming landscape in the 1950s was in many ways quite different to what is evidenced now in the 21st century. Many of today's agricultural regions were largely pastoral grazing areas. In NSW for instance, the northern section of the Newell highway, stretching roughly from Narrabri, through Moree to Goondiwindi, served as a boundary between farming and grazing.



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Can collecting seed make me money?

WeedSmart is about 'more crop, less weeds', which extends to the harvest operation when growers implement any of the available harvest weed seed control tactics. Peter Broley says that a harvester set up to minimise grain losses will also maximise weed seed capture.



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