

# Bigger on-farm grain storage capacity

**T**HE forecasts for winter crop yields this year are certainly much more encouraging than this time last year. Victoria and southern NSW should recover from the poor season and will achieve closer to normal yields. Northern NSW and Queensland are still suffering from drought and these areas will be about one third of a 'normal' year. Prices – while not at the levels achieved in 2018 – are still good. High protein wheat is expected to remain in tight supply and a major grain trader is forecasting Manildra will be importing this type of grain again due to local short falls.

As of mid-August a major grain trader is expecting the NSW crop to be 25 per cent of a 'normal year'. ABARES is forecasting Victoria to produce no more than the 10 year average while Queensland is likely to produce 1.5 million tonnes (mt) which is the lowest in the past 10 years. All this means the east coast winter crop volume will be around 10 mt and 40–50 per cent down on recent years.

Despite this, there will be opportunities for east coast grain growers. Given a reasonable spring, WA may have a record harvest but traditionally not much grain from that state finds its way to the eastern states. The opportunities for east coast growers will be in the domestic market.

## Higher prices post-harvest

In past years when prices have been high, growers sent their harvest straight to the local grain receival depot and took advantage of getting the cash sooner. But in the past five years or so, according to Bayer's K-Obiol EC Market Manager, Daryle Swarz, the volume of grain stored on-farm has increased rapidly.

"Growers can now manage the logistics at harvest time more easily and they are finding grain prices are better if the grain is sold later and not at harvest time," Daryle says.

"Higher prices favour the growers who have been prepared to make the investment in silos and to spend the time to understand correct storage of grain. They need to manage moisture levels and to be able to control insects".

In the past grain moisture levels were managed by the timing of harvest but silos set up with good aeration give the grower another tool to manage grain moisture.

According to Daryle control of insects has become more sophisticated. "Silos that are gas tight can use fumigants such as phosphine and get excellent results. But if silos are not sealed then fumigant levels cannot be maintained for long enough. The

result is less than total control of insects leading to reinfestation and the possible development of resistance."

"When silos are not gas tight the grower needs to use a grain protectant like K-Obiol EC. The use of grain protectants has changed in the past two to three years," says Daryle. "Previously a manufacturer would recommend its product be used on its own. Now reputable companies like Bayer recommend a mixture of products with different modes of action. The mixing partner product is usually from another supplier but the mix is recommended to manage insect resistance. To further manage insect resistance, suppliers are recommending rotation on an annual basis with products with a different mode of action – again often from another supplier."

"We know that continual use of products with the same mode of action can lead to the development of insect resistance, so rotation of products with different modes of action is good for the grower and means our product will have a longer effective life," Daryle added.

For more information on the use of K-Obiol EC, go to <https://www.environmentalscience.bayer.com.au/K-Obiol/Training>

## Broadacre cropper toppers

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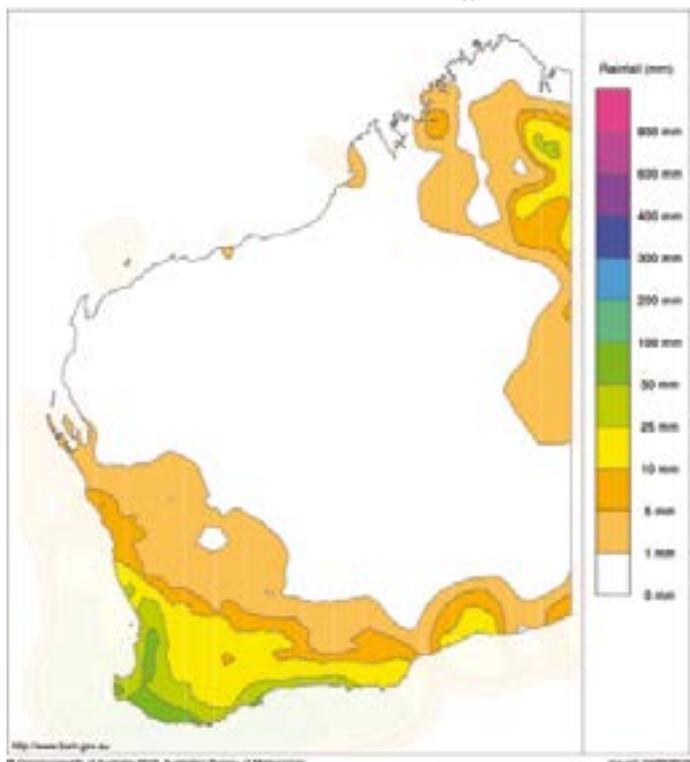
For further information visit [www.gason.com.au](http://www.gason.com.au) or the Gason Agriculture Facebook page.



# Western region

Western Australia rainfall totals (mm) September 1 to 24, 2019

Australian Bureau of Meteorology



**Low rainfall and frosts during September have dashed hopes of an above average season in WA.**

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA SUMMARY

Hopes of an average season for Western Australian grain growers following rain in late August have been dashed with continuing warm dry conditions in the northern half of the state and recent frost events in the southern half of the state. It is unclear exactly how much potential grain yield has been lost in the last two weeks, although no matter how the figures are formulated it is unlikely WA grain production will exceed 12.5 million tonnes for all crops.

Rainfall near the end of August could have pushed production for the state past the 15 million tonne mark if growing conditions in September were about average. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) climate specialists had been predicting a warmer and slightly drier September since June and the first half of the month has followed this trend.

Growers away from the southern regions were always factoring in the risk of below average grain yields from the late

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break and little subsoil moisture. The disappointing aspect is the cereal crops in general still looked like they could produce close to average grain yields as little as two weeks ago.

Crops in the southern regions were further advanced than the north as many had germinated prior to the general break to the season in the first week of June. Unfortunately, this contributed to the wide scale damage from the frost events near the end of the first week in September. Crops generally had more top on them and were running the moisture profile down when the very severe frosts occurred. These frost events were then followed by a blast of heat. The worst possible combination of susceptible growth stage; very cold temperatures for extended periods during the night, followed by extreme heat. This has resulted in unprecedented crop loss for some growers and a significant reduction in tonnage for most in the worst affected regions.

Whilst total grain production has been downgraded, the greatest effect on individual crop production will be for canola, lupins and pulses. These crops in the north have simply not had enough time to yield anywhere near average and have also taken the greatest hit in the south from frost. All crops have been badly affected in the worst frost impacted areas, although, as you move north where cereals have been less affected from frost, the canola and pulses particularly have had the top taken off their potential yield as they were in the middle of flowering.

**GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DPIRD, CBH, independent consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.**

**GIWA Crop Report – September 9, 2019**

## NORTHERN DISTRICT

What a season! After a couple of wet weeks in June, the season has dried up in most of the northern grainbelt of WA. Annual rainfall tallies are between 160 mm in the east and 270 mm in the west of the region. Most of this rain came in 16 days between June 7 and 23. Since then the rain in most areas has been well below average to the point where crops are dying in some locations. Most other parts of the landscape are losing significant potential with high temperatures coupled with rapidly depleting soil moisture.

There are two areas of the northern region that are notable exceptions. One is the northeast which had April or May thunderstorms and crops were seeded onto moisture at that time. Some of the crops in this area are already finished with good yield potential.

### 2019 GIWA Western Australia crop production September estimates (tonnes)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Pulses	State total
Kwinana	3,900,000	1,950,000	300,000	220,000	130,000	5,000	<b>6,505,000</b>
Albany	900,000	1,250,000	220,000	230,000	45,000	5,000	<b>2,650,000</b>
Esperance	750,000	600,000	150,000	10,000	15,000	8,000	<b>1,533,000</b>
Geraldton	1,240,000	83,000	122,000	15,000	171,000	4,000	<b>1,635,000</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6,790,000</b>	<b>3,883,000</b>	<b>792,000</b>	<b>475,000</b>	<b>361,000</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>12,323,000</b>
% change to August 2019	-8.9%	-11.6%	-19.2%	-4%	-7.4%	-60.7%	-10.4%

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.

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DPIRD, CBH, CSIRO and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.

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The second area is the southwest of the region which has had a little more rain and is currently remaining fresh. No more rain in the south will see yield potential drop off.

Generally, crop yield potential is mirroring soil types with the highest potential on the better medium soils. The heavy clay soils and lighter sand soils have run out of water or were washed out earlier and the crops are rapidly losing potential.

## A rare outbreak of budworms in cereals

Budworms have been a problem in all crops with unusually high numbers in cereal crops. Around 50 per cent of the wheat area would have been sprayed for budworm this season. This has not happened before in our region. Canola and lupins have also required a budworm spray.

Diamond Back Moth and aphid numbers are very low with, unusually, no crops requiring a spray for these insects.

The majority of the region had a late break on June 7 which means grain fill has just started in most wheat crops. Yield potential in the whole region is dropping dramatically with most areas enduring more than a week above 30° with some days over 35°. With this in mind, and no rain forecast for the next week or so, we are likely to have a well below average year with the couple of exceptions mentioned above.

It will be interesting to see how the various crop types cope with these conditions with barley filling grain earlier than wheat. This may give barley a big advantage this season. Lupins have variable pod set and many are very short so getting them into the harvester will be difficult.

Wider row spacings in canola and lupins are helping some crops cope with the dry finish.

There may also be some low laying areas of the landscape that have been frosted. Our thoughts are with growers in the many areas that have been severely damaged by the extreme cold.

Hopefully the current hot and dry conditions change. If not we will be in for very low crop yields and potential quality issues. I hope that things do change and we can somehow get at least break-even yields.

**Peter Norris**

**Agronomy For Profit and Synergy Consulting, Geraldton  
September 14, 2019**

## SOUTH COAST

To say the very least, seasonal conditions in the South Coast region of WA over the past two months have been dramatic.

July was extremely dry; mid to late August was quite good for rainfall which really turned the season's prospects around; and then came September which can only be described as an absolute shocker!

In early September there were three consecutive nights of frost with the worst on the night of September 5. Temperatures dropped below zero by 9.30 pm and were down as low as -3° to an extreme of -5.2° across a large portion of the northern mallee area. This was one of the worst frosts the region has ever experienced and has caused extensive damage and yield loss to all crop types.

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Scaddan district farmers Gavin and Brad Egan in a paddock recently clay delved to ameliorate non-wetting sand. Now the big (and very obvious) job is to level the paddock again!



Where two crops meet: Scepter wheat and Planet barley side by side on 'Lobethal', a Warakirri Cropping farm to the east of Condingup.



Stem frosted Scepter wheat being cut for hay at Schutz Grains at Grass Patch.

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