



USDA predicts US wheat production in 2019–20 will total 51.6 mt. Though down somewhat from last year, that volume and increased beginning stocks push US exportable supplies up to 52 mt – the largest in the world.

Domestic grain production rebounds

By ABARES

THE start of the Australian 2019–20 winter crop season has been mixed. The above average rainfall in key cropping regions of South Australia, Victoria and southern New South Wales during May replenished soil moisture levels and created favourable planting and growing conditions. Western Australian growers also enjoyed good opening rains in early June.

But autumn rainfall in most cropping regions in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland was lower than average and soil moisture levels remained low. The below average rainfall and low soil moisture levels in these regions constrained planting and hampered early development of dry-sown crops. Low soil moisture levels also mean most crops in these regions will need sufficient and timely rainfall to develop over winter.

Winter crop production and area forecast to rise

Overall, the area planted to winter crops in Australia is forecast to rise by around 9 per cent to 19.6 million hectares in 2019–20. This increase reflects the significant area taken out of grains and oilseed production and cut for hay in 2018–19.

For the major winter crops, area planted to wheat is forecast to increase by 8 per cent to around 11 million hectares; barley by 12 per cent to 4.2 million hectares; and, the area planted to canola is expected to increase by 6 per cent to two million hectares.

Chickpea area is forecast to increase by around 22 per cent to 370,000 hectares, while the area planted to oats is forecast to rise by 17 per cent to 798,000 hectares.

Winter crop production is forecast to rise by around 20 per cent in 2019–20 to 36.4 million tonnes.

But this increase is from a crop last season that was adversely affected by frosts and drier than average seasonal conditions in many cropping regions, especially in the eastern states.

If realised, the forecast 2019–20 winter crop will be about 10 per cent below the 10 year average to 2018–19.

For the major winter crops, production is forecast to rise by:

- 23 per cent for wheat to 21.2 mt;
- 11 per cent for barley to 9.2 mt; and,
- 18 per cent for canola to 2.6 mt.

Summer crop numbers finalised

After a tough 2018–19 summer, production of our summer grain and oilseeds is estimated to have declined by 35 per cent on the previous season to 2.6 mt. This drop was driven largely by falls in the production and area of irrigated cotton and rice.

But the production of grain sorghum increased slightly to 1.3 mt, reflecting an increase in the planted area.

The 2018–19 cotton harvest is estimated to have decreased by 54 per cent to around 485,000 tonnes of lint (just over 2.1 million bales) and 685,000 tonnes of cottonseed.

Rice production plummeted by 91 per cent in 2018–19 to 59,000 tonnes. This reflects a 90 per cent decline in planted area due to reduced supplies of irrigation water.

Source: ABARES June 2019 *Australian Crop Report*.



A slight increase on the previous year in sorghum production was one bright spot in an otherwise lacklustre, moisture-challenged, 2018–19 Australian summer crop.