



May 2012 newsletter

Newsletter contains information on:

- ◆ Diuron suspension
- ◆ New Oat Variety update
- ◆ Agriculture in the Naracoorte Herald
- ◆ SEPLA committee profile – Jason Clothier
- ◆ Irrigation Management – important dates for your calendar
- ◆ Evaluating drop tube and sprinkler irrigation
- ◆ Article from “The Conversation” by John Kirkegaard
- ◆ 2011 – 12 PIRSA Crop and Pasture Report



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PIRSA Crop and Pasture Report

2011 – 12 Crop Summary

Released March 2012

State Summary

WEATHER

- Temperatures during January were average to slightly above average across most of the State with average to below average temperatures during February.
- Rainfall in the northern agricultural districts (Upper North, Western and Eastern Eyre Peninsula and Northern Mallee) was above average; but below average in the rest of the State.
- Most of the State received heavy falls on the last day of February.

CROPS

- Harvest was completed in all districts by mid January.
- The final crop estimate has been revised upward from 7.74 to 7.94 million metric tonnes, which makes 2011-12 the third largest crop on record.
- Wheat production was well above the long term average, while barley production was near the long term average.
- There were some areas with grain quality issues where low protein, fungal staining and sprouting resulting in down-grading.
- Both canola area and yields were well above average, resulting in a record canola production.
- A significant tonnage of grain, particularly wheat, is being warehoused by growers who are not prepared to sell at current prices.
- Wheat area in the coming season is likely to remain relatively stable with a reduction in area sown to pulse crops.
- Canola area is likely to increase further in most districts throughout the State.
- Snails are becoming an increasing problem in most districts and growers will need to manage numbers through stubble management and baiting to avoid crop losses.
- Mice populations have started to increase in many areas and numbers will need to be carefully monitored to avoid crop damage.
- Locusts hatched in the Upper and Mid North in early January and have caused severe damage to Lucerne and other summer feed in isolated areas.
- The rains in late February will now provide locusts with sufficient green feed to mature and lay eggs.
- Farmers have been busy controlling summer weeds in the Upper North, Yorke Peninsula, Upper Eyre Peninsula and the Mallee to conserve stored soil moisture.
- Heavy stubble loads in the high rainfall districts could make crop establishment difficult with some growers opting to harvest straw, while others may need to burn.
- Widespread rainfall in late February has increased stored soil moisture across a large part of the State, and should provide a base yield potential for the coming season

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Upper South East

WEATHER

- Temperatures were above average for January and near average during February.
- Rainfall during January and February was well below average.

CROPS

- The extremely dry conditions have meant that summer weed levels were not a significant issue.
- Snail numbers are beginning to build-up in some areas of the district and growers have been rolling and churning stubbles to reduce numbers.
- Baiting for snails will be needed to avoid damage to emerging crops.
- Mice numbers are relatively low.
- There is likely to be a reduction in the area sown to cereals and an increase in the area of break crops, due to the build-up of grassy weeds.
- There is likely to be an increase in canola, beans and peas on the heavier soils and lupins on the lighter soils.

PASTURES

- There is very little pasture feed remaining and very little pasture growth even from perennial pastures, due to the dry conditions.
- Most producers are supplementary feeding livestock across the district.
- Livestock have started to lose condition and most are now only moderate to poor condition.
- Most producers currently have good supplies of hay and grain on-hand.
- ◆ Lucerne seed yields are average to above average, although production will be well down as many growers have grazed or cut stands for hay.



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Lower South East

WEATHER

- Temperatures were above average during January and near average for February
- Rainfall for January and February were well below average across the district with only light showers recorded.

CROPS

- Harvest was completed in early to mid January with slightly above average yields.
- Summer weed levels have been low due to the dry conditions.
- Field crickets and wingless grasshoppers are in high numbers.

PASTURES

- The dry spring limited pasture growth and fodder conservation opportunities.
- Limited standing feed remaining and producers are feeding hay and grain to maintain stock condition.
- Feed supplies are the lowest since 2006 with very little pasture growth even from perennial pastures.
- Stock are still in good condition, but could drop rapidly over the next few months.
- Important for producers to feed grain to supplement the low energy levels of the dry pasture feed.
- ♦ Field crickets have caused some damage to dry pasture feed.

Complete report available at:

[http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/168829/
Crop_and_Pasture_Report_Crop_Summary_March_2012.pdf](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/168829/Crop_and_Pasture_Report_Crop_Summary_March_2012.pdf)



Diuron suspension to continue pending final decision

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has extended the suspension of diuron for certain registered products until 30 November 2012. The APVMA has also finalised its review of diuron for a number of products that are not subject to further outcomes of the environmental assessment.

Diuron is used to control broadleaf and grass weeds in agriculture, and weeds and algae in and around water bodies.

The announcement continues an initial suspension announced on 28 November 2011, which prohibited diuron use during the no spray window on a range of tropical crops such as sugarcane, tea, bananas, pineapples, coffee and paw paw.

The suspension also prohibited use in a range of situations such as irrigation channels and drains in agricultural and industrial situations.

Instructions for the use of suspended products will be re-issued. They will not differ to those issued in November 2011 except for use in tropical situations, which will be allowed because it is outside the no spray window defined in the original suspension.

The APVMA will finalise its review of diuron after receiving a final environmental assessment report from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC).

One hundred and thirteen submissions were received in response to the environmental assessment that was published in July 2011.

Submissions were received from registrants, diuron chemical users, user groups, state governments and environmental groups.

Some of the material - which included data from the Reef Monitoring Program - is quite substantial and contains new studies and information in relation to the use and impacts of diuron, so it will require careful consideration.

In the absence of a final environmental assessment the APVMA is not making a regulatory decision at this time.

Once this final assessment is received, the authority will take at least 12 weeks to develop regulatory outcomes for the future of diuron, before the review is finalised.

In addition to the continuing suspensions the APVMA has finalised the diuron review for:

- active constituent approvals (approval of suppliers of diuron to product manufacturers)
- antifouling paints (continued registration with variations to two label instructions)
- pond and aquarium products (continued registration)

cotton defoliation products (registration after variations to label instructions).

The environmental assessment report published in July 2011 indicated no concerns with these uses and they will continue to be approved.

Full details about the diuron suspension and review are available at www.apvma.gov.au.