



## 2008 GRAIN CO-PRODUCTION PROJECT POST SEEDING SEASON UPDATE – AUGUST 2008

This report has been prepared by AACL as the Project Manager of the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Grain Co-Production Projects.

### AACL CONTRACTED CROPS

**Table 1: 2008 Season Production Estimate**

<b>Contracted Wheat Area</b>	208,000 hectares
<b>Contracted Barley Area</b>	20,000 hectares
<b>Contracted Wheat Production</b>	341,000 tonnes
<b>Contracted Barley Production</b>	37,000 tonnes

In 2008, AACL has contracted farmers nationally for the first time. Approximately 90 percent of the contracted tonnage is located in Western Australia (WA) and the balance in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC) and South Australia (SA).

The range of contracted farmer locations is aimed at achieving a reduction in production risks by ensuring a geographical spread across rainfall and production zones.

### SEASONAL OUTLOOK

#### Western Australia

WA experienced excellent pre-season rainfall across most of the WA Grain-belt. Conditions in June were mixed with parts of the central, eastern and south coastal region experiencing lower than average rainfall. However, good rainfall on 27 June and throughout July has dramatically improved the prospects of crops in these areas.

After the rain in July, yield estimates for each region have been adjusted upwards. In the north the regions closer to the coast are now showing signs of good potential but the ultimate result will depend on the finish to the season. Areas of the state which have had good yield potential from the start of the season now have exceptional yield potential given an average or better finish to the season.

The eastern WA grain-belt should achieve average yields based on the season to date. Within this region, parts of the central area through to Merredin may have some production issues, however, barring the incidence of frosts the region overall will see satisfactory production results.

The southern grain-belt is having a good year with above average yields being achievable. The Esperance zone has experienced good rains recently and recent crop inspections indicate average yield potential given a good finish to the season.

Overall, with good subsoil moisture, average to above average yields should be achieved across most regions. Over the next few months the rainfall outlook shows no trend to being drier or wetter than normal indicating that the likelihood of achieving the expected results are favourable at this stage.

### **Eastern and Southern Australia**

Conditions in areas of NSW, SA and VIC where AACL contracted crops are located have been reasonably favourable during the seeding period.

The latest Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for August to October is for above average rain in northern NSW. There is a 30 to 40 per cent chance of above median rainfall in SA and a 50 per cent chance of above average rainfall in the other cropping areas of NSW and VIC.

After above average summer rainfall, significant soil moisture reserves are available in most areas. Whilst adequate winter and spring rainfall is still required to achieve good yield, conditions are promising at this point of the season.

## **PRICING OUTLOOK**

While the current indicative Free on Board (FOB) price of wheat is in the \$340 to \$360/t range, we expect prices to generally ease over the balance of the season. Specifically, we are anticipating wheat prices to be in the range of \$300/t to \$350/t FOB closer to harvest. The pricing outlook for malt barley is similar to that of wheat and our expectation for feed barley is \$270/t to \$320/t FOB.

There are a number of key swing factors that should play out over the next three months. The outcome of these factors will largely determine where this year's crop prices finish.

### **Bearish**

- Large global year-on-year increases in production should see a rebuilding of global and US stocks - barring significant issues with the southern hemisphere crop.

### **Bullish**

- Late and wet planting of the US soybean and corn crops was positive for grain prices in general.
- However, this factor has largely been priced in and the market is now closely monitoring weather conditions as the US corn and soybean crops begin to mature.

### **Uncertain**

- The size of the Australian wheat crop. Current estimates are for a 19 to 25mmt harvest which has slipped below early estimates (circa 22 to 27mmt). However, larger than expected yields out of the northern hemisphere appear to be at least offsetting any issues with the Australian crop.
- Northern hemisphere spring crops - At this stage, most of these crops are in good condition, but there is still time for poor weather to pose problems.

Figure 2 : Predicted Wheat Yields as at August 3, 2008 - WA

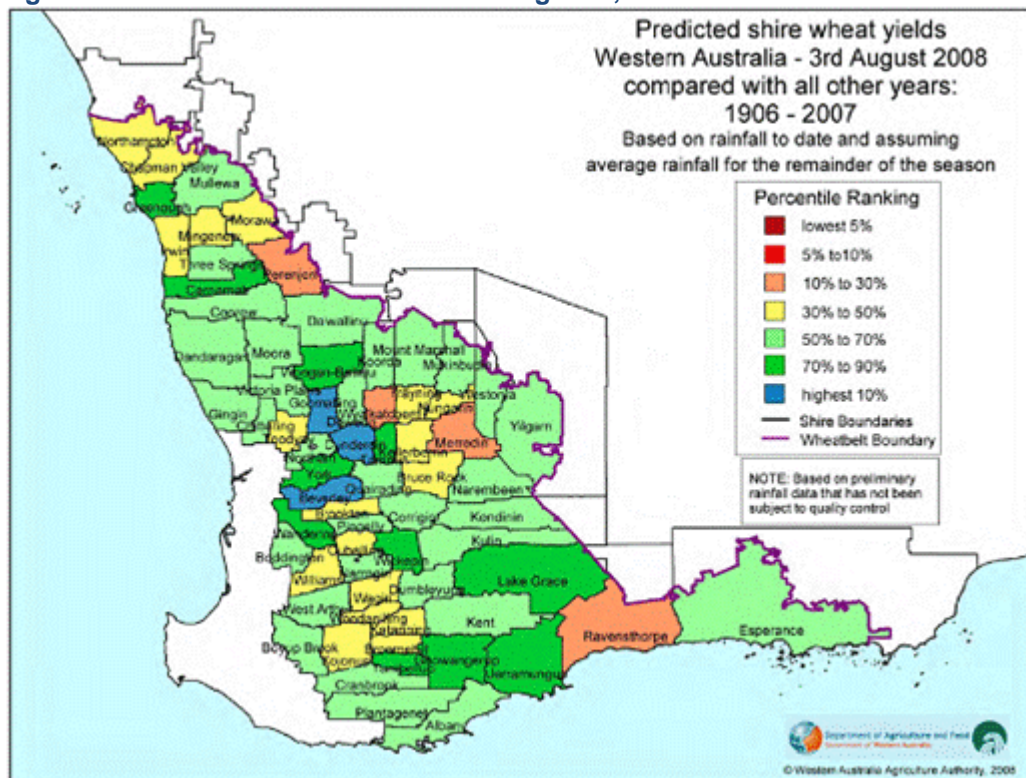


Figure 3 : July 2008 Rainfall - WA

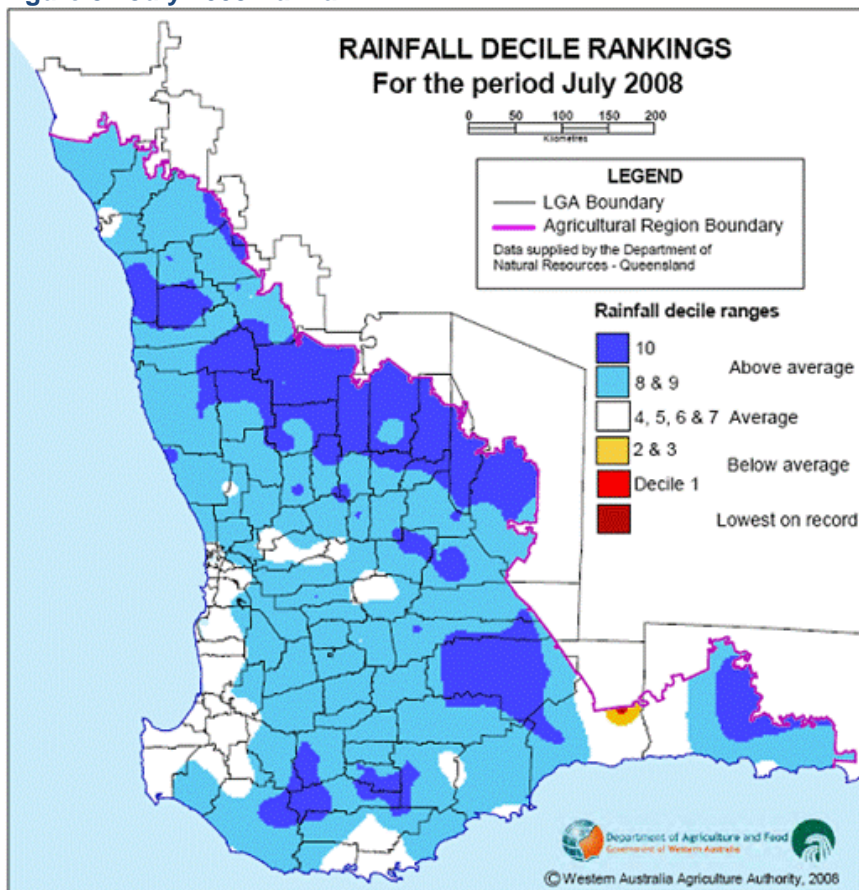
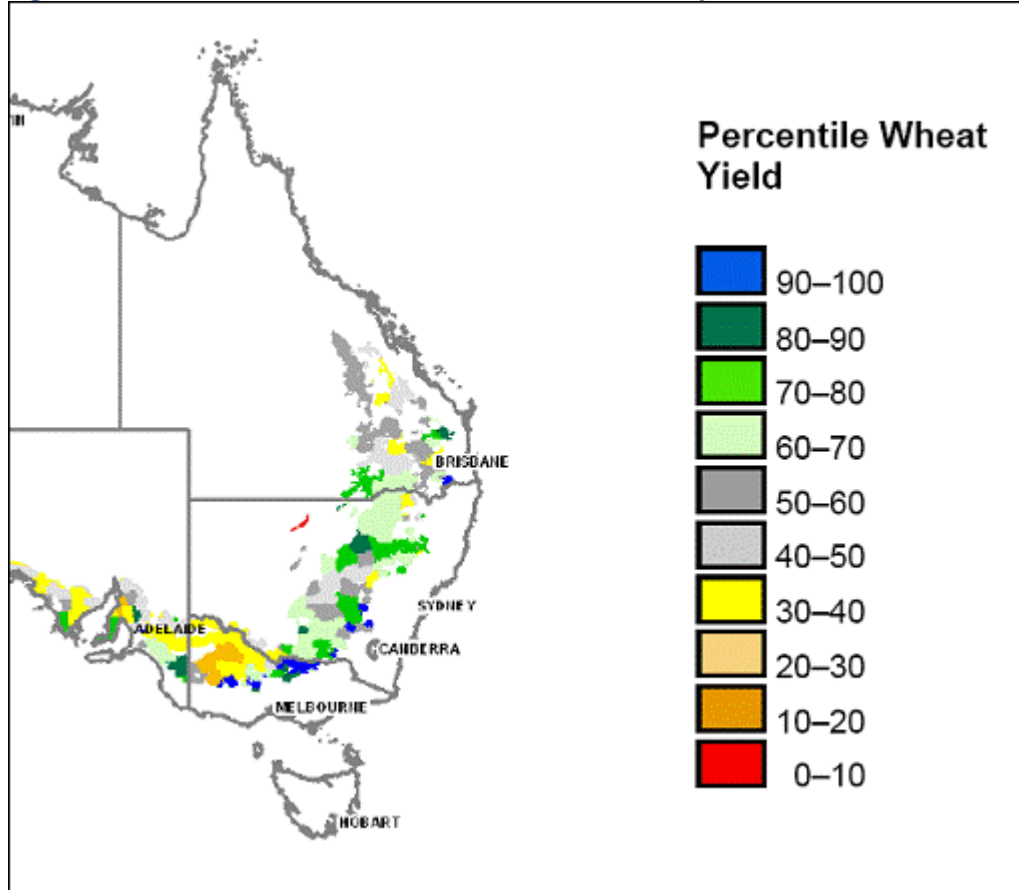


Figure 4 : Predicted Wheat Yields ranked relative to all years – NSW, SA, VIC and QLD



Source: NAMS Climate and Agricultural Update - National Report - July 2008

For further information please contact Robert Melville on (08) 9217 3113 or 0418 888 133.

Yours sincerely

**ANDREW MCBAIN**  
Managing Director