



ANNA BINNA update

A wet August turns our season around

The crops

Our rainfall for August was 30% above average, which delivered 60 to 90 mm of rain. This rain has rescued our season locally and has given the crops a welcome drink. Maitland has now received 280 mm (11 inches) of rain for the year with only just over 180 mm (7 inches) in the coastal areas. With so little rain, it's a testament to our farming system to have the crops looking as good as they are. We have applied a bit more fertiliser and most of the crop has received an application of fungicide to keep any disease away. Some of the lentils have now reached canopy closure and are flowering with pods forming.

In the coastal areas, many of the cereal crops were forced up to head early due to the dry conditions, and with this rain the wheat heads should fill. The later-sown crops have tillered well and are just pushing up to head now.

Risk of frost

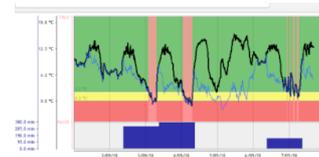


Grenade wheat starting to fill grain, rainfall just under 8" or 200 mm



Canola looking good near Maitland with 280 mm of rain

Recently, we had some cold nights with a few frost events. With many crops at varying growth stages it will take a while to assess what frost damage may have occurred. Frost in the head will freeze the grain as it forms, but it generally only takes out half of the grains in the head. Stem frost is becoming more common, which is where the stem freezes and stops the sap flow just below the head. This generally takes out the whole head, which increases the yield loss significantly. Generally, the Peninsula doesn't get a lot of frost damage as it's surrounded by the sea, but with the crops getting sowed very early, it does mean the crops are filling grain in the cooler months. Later sowing would decrease our frost risk but also decrease our yield potential in the lower rainfall areas.



Data on air temperature, giving us an indication of potential frost damage

Harvest preparation & our commodities

Our harvest preparation is nearly done. All the machines are serviced and ready to roll. This year some of the barley is too short to windrow which will limit our opportunities to get started as early as we would like. There is about a \$40 drought premium in the cereal market at present with domestic demand from the east coast of Australia. Some of this grain is being shipped around to the east coast ports and some is going on rail from Crystal brook. This premium is likely to disappear as harvest gets in to full swing. Although our tonnages will be down, we have decided to keep our harvest contractor, Tim Schwartz, working with us to capitalise on this opportunity.



Hurricane lentils at canopy closure

The lentil market continues to be quiet as the Canadians begin to harvest their lentils. With a large carryover of lentils in Australia and Canada, there is plenty of supply with limited demand.



Loading lentils out of the shed to make room for this season's crop

We are continuing to sell small parcels of lentils to make room in the shed for this year's crop. We are carting them to Adelaide to be packed in containers for export to Bangladesh. Having the opportunity to use a road train has been great – with a sixty-tonne payload, it's very efficient.



Road train with 60-tonne payload is very efficient for longer haul freight

In other news

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in the Growing the Future 18 conference hosted by the Agricultural students at Adelaide University.



Growing the Future 18 conference hosted by Ag

As indicated in the photo at the top of this newsletter, we have been helping out with some fencing around the Point Pearce community who are celebrating their 150-year anniversary this month.

Also, we recently hosted a bus trip of NSW farmers. It was great to share our experiences with other farmers, some of whom have been impacted by the drought and were looking for time away from their farms.

Compared to many in Australia, we have been very fortunate and we are thankful that the season is shaping up to be a lot better than we had anticipated.

As always, we thank you for your support.

Regards,
Ben Wundersitz



Welcoming NSW farmers, many of whom have been impacted by drought



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