



# **PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES**

**AUSTRALIA**  
*PRELIMINARY*

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) WED 19 AUG 1998

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- For further information about these and related statistics, contact Nigel Gibson on Hobart 03 6222 5939, or any ABS office shown on the back cover of this publication.

## NOTES

SYMBOLS AND OTHER	ACS	Agricultural Commodity Survey
USAGES	ha	hectare
	n.c.	not collected
	p	preliminary
	SE	standard error
	t	tonne
	—	nil or rounded to zero
	..	not applicable



### INQUIRIES

For information about other ABS statistics and services, please refer to the back of this publication.

For further information about these statistics and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Nigel Gibson on Hobart 03 6222 5939.

W. McLennan  
Australian Statistician

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### AREA OF CROPS

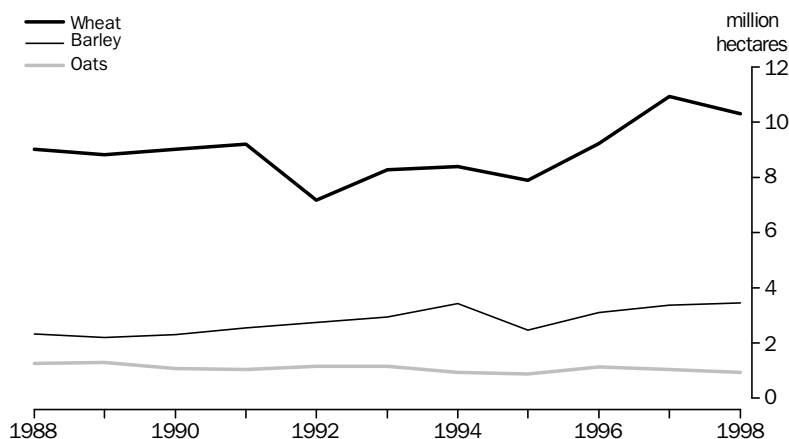
Preliminary estimates for 1997–98 show a downturn for the major crops from the previous year. The estimate of total area of wheat sown in 1997–98 decreased 5.7% from the area sown in 1996–97, to 10.3 million hectares. This figure is still well above the low point experienced in 1991–92 when only 7.2 million hectares were planted. The largest decrease in area planted to wheat in 1997–98 was in New South Wales, down 11.0% on area planted in 1996–97 to 2.8 million hectares. Other States to record significant falls in area planted to wheat were Victoria and South Australia which experienced falls of 9.8% and 7.0% respectively. Western Australia was again the State with the largest area planted to wheat with 4.2 million hectares, which was 40.5% of the total area of wheat in Australia.

The total area of oats sown fell 11.3% to 933,000 hectares. The area of oats sown in New South Wales decreased by 15.5%. New South Wales had the largest area planted to oats of any State with 332,000 hectares, 35.6% of the total area of oats.

The total area of barley sown for grain increased 2.6% to 3.5 million hectares. The majority of the barley crop was sown and produced in South Australia and Western Australia, with just over 1.0 million hectares each. The area planted to barley in Western Australia in 1997–98 was 10.0% higher than that recorded in 1996–97.

The area planted to cereals for hay was 389,000 hectares in 1997–98, 19.3% higher than in 1996–97.

#### Wheat, oats and barley



### PRODUCTION OF CROPS

The total production of wheat for grain declined in 1997–98, by 15.3%, to 19.4 million tonnes, after the record 22.9 million tonnes harvested in 1996–97. A reduction in yields in the eastern States reflected less favourable growing conditions than in 1996–97. As a result of both the fall in area sown and yields, production in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland decreased significantly by 31.3%, 29.5% and 24.6% respectively. Western Australia was Australia's largest wheat producer, with 40.1% (7.8 million tonnes) of Australia's production. Western Australia was also the only major wheat producing State to record an increase in production in 1997–98 (3.6%).

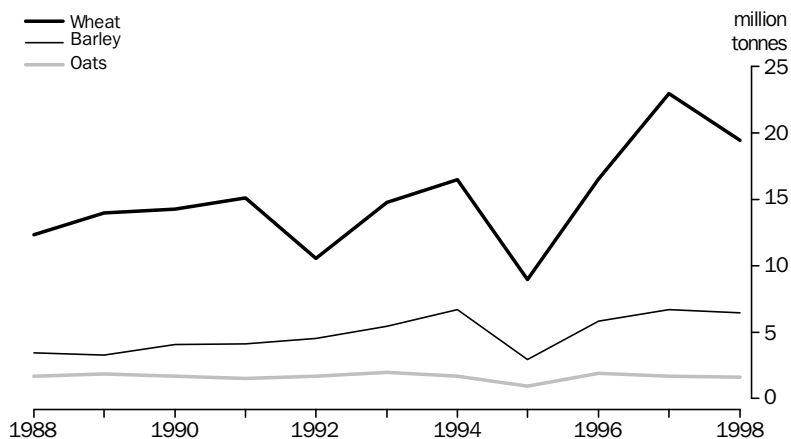
## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### PRODUCTION OF CROPS *continued*

Production of oats in 1997–98 was 1.6 million tonnes, down 4.2% from the previous year. New South Wales was the State contributing most to the decline, with production of 503,000 tonnes being 17.1% lower than last year's crop. Western Australia was the nation's highest oats producer, with 575,000 tonnes in 1997–98.

Production of barley (6.4 million tonnes) was 4.0% less than in 1996–97 despite increases in plantings in the larger producing States. Significant falls in barley production were experienced in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, down 42.9%, 19.8% and 11.4% respectively, as a result of a combination of a fall in plantings and lower yields. Australia's two largest barley producers, South Australia (2.0 million tonnes) and Western Australia (1.8 million tonnes) both experienced increased harvests during 1997–98, by 6.1% and 12.8% respectively. Plantings and yields increased in both States.

#### Wheat, oats and barley



#### Sugar

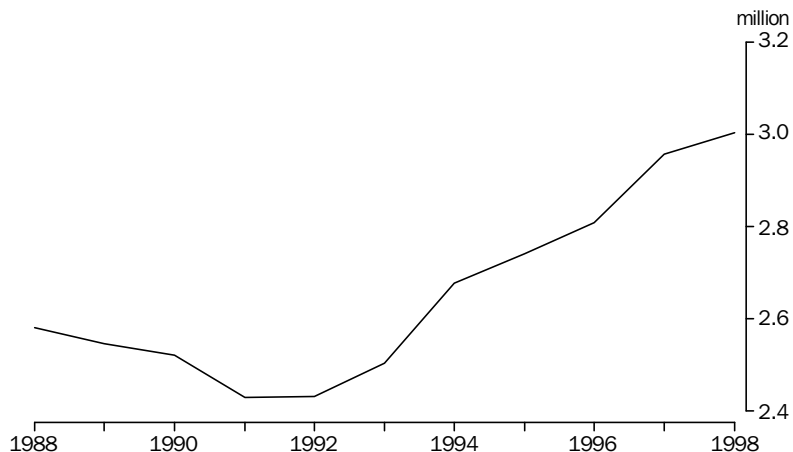
The preliminary estimate for production of sugar cane cut for crushing in 1997–98 was 39.1 million tonnes, a rise 1.1% on 1996–97.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### LIVESTOCK

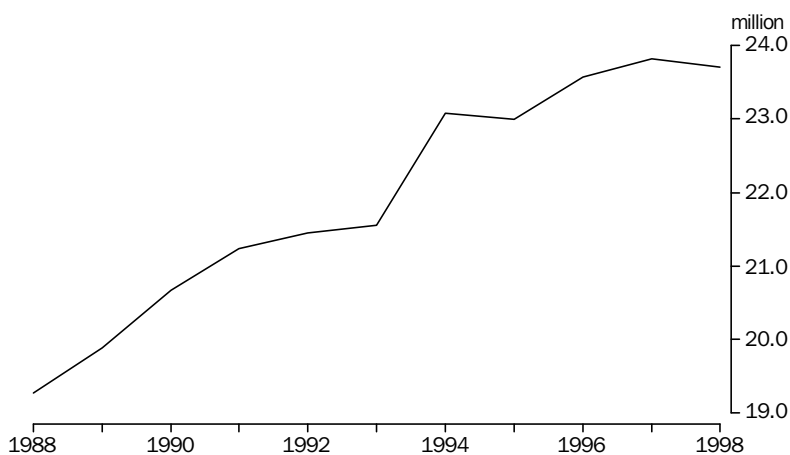
Preliminary estimates of livestock numbers at 31 March 1998 show the Australian dairy herd at just over 3.0 million head, continuing the upward trend in dairy cattle numbers since the low of 2.4 million recorded at 31 March 1991. Victoria has Australia's largest dairy cattle herd (1.8 million), comprising 60.2% of the Australian total.

#### Milk cattle



The estimated size of the beef cattle herd at 31 March 1998 (23.7 million head) was down marginally from 31 March 1997 (23.8 million). Decreases of 9.1% and 5.6% were experienced in Victoria and New South Wales, while Queensland (2.8%) and the Northern Territory (2.4%) experienced increases in beef cattle numbers. The Queensland beef cattle herd was Australia's largest with 44.0% (10.4 million) of the national total.

#### Beef cattle

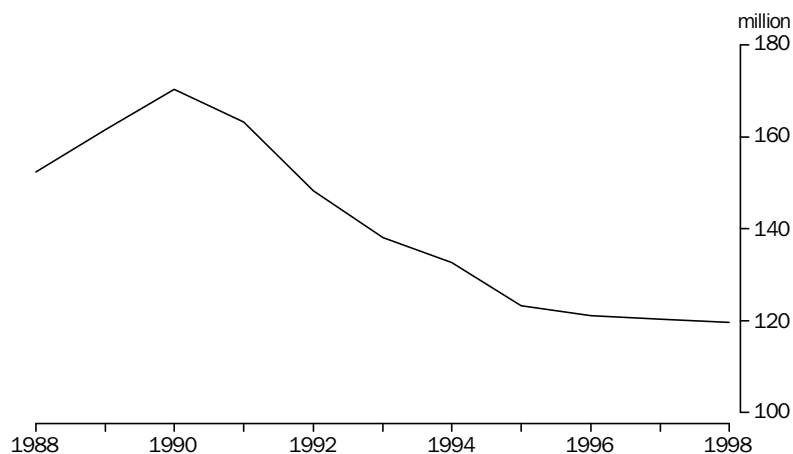


## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### LIVESTOCK *continued*

The estimated size of the sheep and lamb flock was 119.6 million at 31 March 1998. Although the decline in 1997–98 was small, this was the eighth successive annual decline in sheep and lamb numbers since the recorded 170.3 million at 31 March 1990. A 2.3% decrease in sheep and lamb numbers in New South Wales was offset by small increases in other States, with Queensland's 6.1% increase the largest of these.

#### Sheep and lambs



The number of ewes intended to be mated during the year ended 31 March 1999 was estimated to be 52.8 million head. Actual matings for the year ended 31 March 1998 (52.4 million) were 2.2% higher than actual matings reported the previous year.

There were 41.3 million lambs marked during the year, compared with 40.4 million in 1996–97, an increase of 2.1%. The average lambing ratio in 1997–98 remained steady at 78.8%.

### WOOL

The number of sheep shorn in Australia for the year ended 31 March 1998 was 130.5 million. New South Wales (43.1 million) and Western Australia (32.8 million) accounted for 58.1% of the total flock shorn. A total of 569,800 tonnes of wool was produced in 1997–98.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

### PIGS

Preliminary estimates show there were 2.7 million pigs at 31 March 1998, a 4.9% increase on the number at 31 March 1997. New South Wales, with 810,000, recorded the largest pig herd in Australia followed by Queensland (612,000) and Victoria (524,000).



	Area	SE	Production	SE
	'000 ha	%	'000 t	%
.....				
WHEAT FOR GRAIN				
NSW	2 840	2	5 893	2
Vic.	869	3	1 554	3
Qld	1 000	2	1 493	2
SA	1 428	2	2 684	1
WA	4 172	1	7 784	1
Tas.	2	10	9	12
NT	1	—	1	—
ACT	—	—	—	—
<b>Aust.</b>				
<b>1998p</b>	<b>10 311</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19 417</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>10 936</b>	..	<b>22 924</b>	..
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>9 221</b>	..	<b>16 504</b>	..

.....				
OATS FOR GRAIN				
NSW	332	3	503	3
Vic.	173	6	329	6
Qld	16	9	11	12
SA	111	6	151	6
WA	292	4	575	5
Tas.	8	6	15	9
NT	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
ACT	—	—	—	—
<b>Aust.</b>				
<b>1998p</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 583</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>1 052</b>	..	<b>1 653</b>	..
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>1 136</b>	..	<b>1 875</b>	..

.....				
BARLEY FOR GRAIN				
NSW	648	4	1 314	4
Vic.	629	4	953	4
Qld	152	3	245	3
SA	1 014	2	2 041	2
WA	1 000	3	1 844	3
Tas.	12	7	30	7
NT	1	—	1	—
ACT	—	—	—	—
<b>Aust.</b>				
<b>1998p</b>	<b>3 455</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6 429</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>3 367</b>	..	<b>6 696</b>	..
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>3 111</b>	..	<b>5 823</b>	..

(a) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.



	Area	SE	Production	SE
	'000 ha	%	'000 t	%
.....				
CEREALS FOR HAY				
NSW	87	5	284	5
Vic.	72	7	267	7
Qld	23	5	77	5
SA	106	4	410	4
WA	100	5	445	6
Tas.	2	10	8	12
NT	—	—	1	—
ACT	—	—	—	—
<b>Aust.</b>				
<b>1998p</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 491</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>326</b>	..	<b>1 220</b>	..
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>469</b>	..	<b>1 742</b>	..

.....				
SUGAR CANE CUT FOR CRUSHING				
NSW	18	5	2 416	5
Vic.	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
Qld	380	1	36 431	1
SA	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
WA	2	23	209	16
Tas.	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
NT	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
ACT	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
<b>Aust.</b>				
<b>1998p</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39 057</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>390</b>	..	<b>38 633</b>	..
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>377</b>	..	<b>35 889</b>	..

(a) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.

## 2

### MILK CATTLE—Year ended 31 March 1998p

	COWS IN MILK AND DRY.....		OTHER MILK CATTLE.....		TOTAL MILK CATTLE.....	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
NSW	251	5	145	5	397	5
Vic.	1 233	2	574	3	1 807	2
Qld	203	2	103	4	306	2
SA	106	3	55	4	161	3
WA	72	2	51	2	123	2
Tas.	137	2	73	3	210	2
NT	—	—	—	—	—	—
ACT	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Aust.</b>						
<b>1998p</b>	<b>2 002</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 001</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3 004</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>1 977</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>2 958</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>1 884</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>2 808</b>	<b>..</b>

(a) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.

## 3

### MEAT CATTLE—Year ended 31 March 1998p

	BULLS AND BULL CALVES		COWS AND HEIFERS.....		OTHER CALVES.....		OTHER MEAT CATTLE.....		TOTAL MEAT CATTLE.....	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
NSW	115	3	2 821	1	1 768	1	1 070	2	5 775	1
Vic.	55	3	1 189	4	657	2	488	3	2 389	3
Qld	227	1	5 070	1	2 402	1	2 718	1	10 417	1
SA	28	3	546	3	315	5	182	3	1 072	3
WA	47	4	984	3	498	3	343	3	1 871	3
Tas.	11	3	236	2	167	2	111	4	525	2
NT	49	—	951	—	329	—	317	—	1 647	—
ACT	—	—	6	—	4	—	1	—	11	—
<b>Aust.</b>										
<b>1998p</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11 803</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6 139</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5 230</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23 706</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>11 931</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>6 047</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>5 291</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>23 822</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>11 667</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>5 768</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>5 581</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>23 569</b>	<b>..</b>

(a) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.

# 4

## SHEEP AND LAMBS—Year ended 31 March 1998p

	BREEDING EWES.....		LAMBS AND HOGGETTS....		OTHER SHEEP.....		TOTAL SHEEP AND LAMBS..	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
NSW	19 665	1	10 955	1	10 790	2	41 409	1
Vic.	10 095	2	4 807	2	6 998	3	21 900	2
Qld	4 597	2	2 473	2	4 103	3	11 173	2
SA	6 860	1	3 705	1	2 787	2	13 352	1
WA	13 760	2	7 541	2	6 431	3	27 731	2
Tas.	1 598	2	1 052	2	1 292	3	3 942	2
NT	n.c.	..	n.c.	..	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
ACT	32	—	15	—	24	—	71	—
<b>Aust.</b>								
<b>1998p</b>	<b>56 608</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30 547</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32 424</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>119 579</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>57 380</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>30 461</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>32 387</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>120 228</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>57 182</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>29 410</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>34 524</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>121 116</b>	<b>..</b>

(a) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.

# 5

## LAMBING—Year ended 31 March 1998p

	EWES MATED.....		LAMBS MARKED.....		PROPORTION(a) %
	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	
	'000	%	'000	%	
NSW	18 485	2	14 723	2	79.6
Vic.	9 133	2	7 506	2	82.2
Qld	3 825	2	2 533	2	66.2
SA	6 353	1	5 426	1	85.4
WA	12 962	2	9 733	2	75.1
Tas.	1 616	3	1 336	2	82.7
NT	n.c.	..	n.c.	..	..
ACT	29	—	20	—	67.9
<b>Aust.</b>					
<b>1998p</b>	<b>52 403</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41 277</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>78.8</b>
<b>1997(b)</b>	<b>51 291</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>40 436</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>78.8</b>
<b>1996(b)</b>	<b>50 874</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>39 187</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>77.0</b>

(a) Lambs marked to ewes mated.

(b) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.

# 6

## INTENDED MATINGS—Year ended 31 March 1998p

	TO MERINO RAMS.....		TO SHORT WOOL RAMS..		TO OTHER RAMS.....		TOTAL.....	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
NSW	12 003	2	3 821	3	2 081	5	17 904	1
Vic.	5 078	4	3 214	4	1 292	7	9 584	2
Qld	3 902	3	127	8	125	9	4 154	3
SA	4 119	2	1 626	3	773	5	6 519	1
WA	10 337	2	1 847	5	887	10	13 071	2
Tas.	908	3	389	5	215	7	1 512	2
NT	n.c.	..	n.c.	..	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
ACT	16	—	3	—	3	—	22	—
<b>Aust.</b>								
<b>1998p</b>	<b>36 363</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11 027</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5 377</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>52 768</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>36 581</b>	..	<b>11 085</b>	..	<b>6 113</b>	..	<b>53 780</b>	..
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>33 803</b>	..	<b>n.c.</b>	..	<b>n.c.</b>	..	<b>52 917</b>	..

(a) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.

# 7

## WOOL—Year ended 31 March 1998p

	SHEEP SHORN.....		WOOL PRODUCED...	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>SE</i>
	'000	%	t	%
NSW	43 057	1	190 409	1
Vic.	24 024	2	98 280	2
Qld	10 961	2	48 222	2
SA	15 471	1	74 493	1
WA	32 788	2	141 582	2
Tas.	4 097	2	16 600	2
NT	n.c.	..	n.c.	..
ACT	72	—	232	—
<b>Aust.</b>				
<b>1998p</b>	<b>130 469</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>569 817</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>128 884</b>	..	<b>572 396</b>	..
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>n.c.</b>	..	<b>n.c.</b>	..

(a) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.

	<i>Number</i>	<i>SE</i>
	'000	%
NSW	810	5
Vic.	524	13
Qld	612	3
SA	419	4
WA	289	5
Tas.	23	10
NT	3	—
ACT	—	—
<b>Aust.</b>		
<b>1998p</b>	<b>2 680</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1997(a)</b>	<b>2 555</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>1996(a)</b>	<b>2 526</b>	<b>..</b>

(a) The Agricultural Commodity Survey was conducted as a census in 1995–96 and 1996–97; as such, standard errors are not available for these years.

# EXPLANATORY NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

**1** This publication contains preliminary agricultural estimates for the 1997–98 season, intended ewe matings for the forthcoming season, and comparative data for earlier years. Because of possible changes in intentions caused by unforeseen circumstances, such as adverse climatic or economic conditions, estimates for the forthcoming season may not always agree with reported statistics from the Agricultural Commodity Survey (ACS).

## SCOPE AND COVERAGE

**2** Estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a substantial proportion of farms in all States and Territories, from the ACS conducted at 31 March 1998.

**3** The scope of the 1997–98 Survey, conducted for the first time in 1997–98, is based on establishments undertaking agricultural activity having an estimated value of agricultural operations (EVAO) of \$5,000 or more. The scope for Agricultural Censuses from 1993–94 to 1996–97 was also \$5,000. Prior to 1993–94 scope has varied. Details are available on request.

## GENERAL

**4** The estimates for earlier years shown in this publication have been revised where necessary.

**5** Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

**6** Unless indicated otherwise, Australian totals include data for all States and both Territories.

**7** Final figures will be published in 1999 when all ACS forms have been fully processed.

## RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

**8** Since the estimates are based on information obtained from a sample drawn from the total farm business population, the estimates are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all farm businesses has been included in the ACS. One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of farm businesses were included. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the figure that would have been obtained if all farm businesses had been included, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two SEs.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

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### FURTHER INFORMATION

**9** The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) also has more detailed agricultural statistics available on floppy disk, compact disk and magnetic tape. *AgStats* on compact disk offers a wide range of data aggregated at smaller geographic levels than those generally available in printed publications, together with an easy-to-use, menu-driven interrogation facility.

### RELATED PUBLICATIONS

**10** A range of agricultural publications is produced by the ABS, including:

*Agriculture, Australia* (Cat. no. 7113.0)

*Agriculture and Fishing, Northern Territory* (Cat. no. 7113.7)

*Agriculture, New South Wales* (Cat. no. 7113.1)

*Agriculture, Queensland* (Cat. no. 7113.3)

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**11** Current publications and other standard products and services are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products* (Cat. no. 1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Release Advice* (Cat. no. 1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Release Advice are available from any ABS office.

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