



PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

AUSTRALIA
PRELIMINARY

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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

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION This publication contains preliminary estimates of principal agricultural commodities and livestock numbers for the 1998–99 season, intended ewe matings for the forthcoming season, and comparative data for earlier years.

Final estimates for the 1998–99 season will be published in June 2000 in *Agricultural Commodities, Australia* (Cat. no. 7121.0).

CHANGES TO THIS ISSUE A wool production table no longer appears in this publication. Information regarding wool can be found in *Livestock Products, Australia* (Cat. no. 7215.0).

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACS	Agricultural Commodity Survey
EVAO	Estimated Value of Agricultural Operations
ha	hectare
IRDB	Integrated Regional Data Base
p	preliminary
RSE	relative standard error
SE	standard error
t	tonne
*	relative SE of 25% to 50%
**	relative SE over 50%
—	nil or rounded to zero
..	not applicable

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

W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

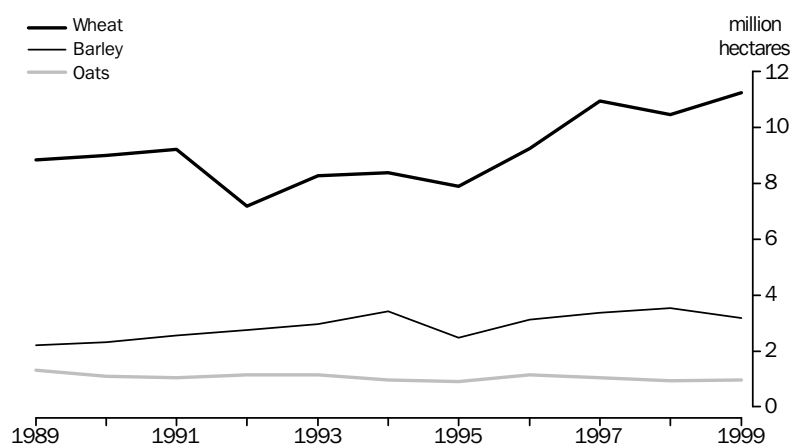
AREA OF CROPS

Preliminary estimates for 1998–99 show a significant increase in the wheat harvest from the previous year. The estimated area of wheat sown in Australia during 1998–99 increased by 8% from 10.4 million hectares to 11.2 million hectares. South Australia reported the largest increase in area planted to wheat, up by 257,000 hectares to a record estimated 1.7 million hectares. Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria all reported marked increases in area planted to wheat, with Queensland's 1.1 million hectares also being a record high.

The total area of barley planted for grain decreased by 10% to 3.2 million hectares. Western Australia recorded the largest drop, down by 25% (257,000 hectares) to an estimated 779,000 hectares.

The total area sown to oats showed little overall change at 947,000 hectares. However there were some significant changes in sowings in some States. Western Australia recorded a decrease of 25% (77,000 hectares) while New South Wales and Victoria recorded increases of 18% (59,000 hectares) and 16% (27,000 hectares), respectively.

The area planted to canola in Australia increased by 60% from 697,000 hectares in 1997–98 to an estimated 1.1 million hectares in 1998–99. The biggest increase was in Western Australia, which saw plantings almost double from 248,000 hectares to 481,000 hectares.



PRODUCTION OF CROPS

Wheat production increased by 10% to 21.1 million tonnes with an average yield of 1.9 tonnes per hectare. The largest increase in production was in Queensland which rose by 39% to 1.9 million tonnes. South Australian wheat production rose by 20% to a record 3.2 million tonnes. Western Australia was again the largest wheat producer in Australia with a record 8.1 million tonnes. This accounted for 38% of the total Australian harvest.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

PRODUCTION OF CROPS *continued*

The production of oats increased by 15% to 1.9 million tonnes, up from 1.6 million tonnes in the previous year. New South Wales reported the largest increase, up 47% from a low 488,000 tonnes in 1997–98 to an estimated 716,000 tonnes in 1998–99. The production of oats fell in Western Australia by 20% to 476,000 tonnes, largely as a result of the move to wheat and canola.

Barley production continued to decline, falling by 7% to 6.0 million tonnes. Most of the decrease in production was in Western Australia, which dropped by 27%, from 1.9 million tonnes in 1997–98 to 1.4 million tonnes in 1998–99, again largely as a result of the move to wheat and canola.

Production of canola increased dramatically from 855,000 tonnes in 1997–98 to 1.5 million tonnes in 1998–99, an increase of 78%. The largest increase occurred in Western Australia where the quantity of canola produced increased by 106% from 270,000 tonnes in 1997–98 to 556,000 tonnes in 1998–99.

Production of lupins for grain increased by 8%, to 1.7 million tonnes. Western Australia was the largest producer, with an estimated 1.4 million tonnes. New South Wales experienced an increase of 130% on the previous year, up from a low 75,000 tonnes in 1997–98 to 172,000 tonnes in 1998–99. The substantial increase was a result of increased plantings plus improved seasonal conditions leading to a marked improvement in yield.



Sugar

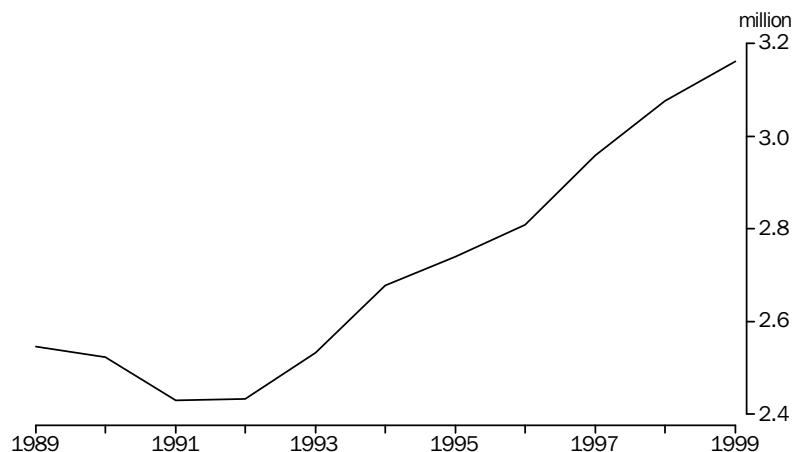
The amount of sugar cane cut for crushing is estimated at 36.9 million tonnes in 1998–99, a decrease of 7% from the record 39.5 million tonnes harvested in 1997–98.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

LIVESTOCK

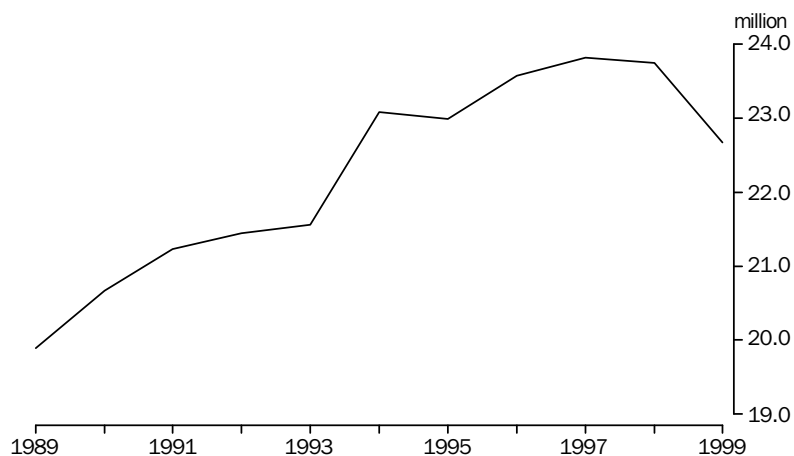
Milk cattle

Preliminary estimates of livestock numbers at 31 March 1999 show the Australian dairy cattle herd at 3.2 million, continuing the upward trend since 1992. Victoria continues to dominate the industry with 1.9 million dairy cattle, or 60% of the nation's herd.



Beef cattle

Beef cattle numbers have declined with an estimated beef herd of 22.7 million head at 31 March 1999, down 5% on the previous year. All States and Territories reported a decline in numbers with Queensland down 4%, New South Wales down 5% and Victoria down 8% on the previous year. The Queensland beef cattle herd remains the largest, with 10.1 million head at 31 March 1999, comprising 44% of the total.

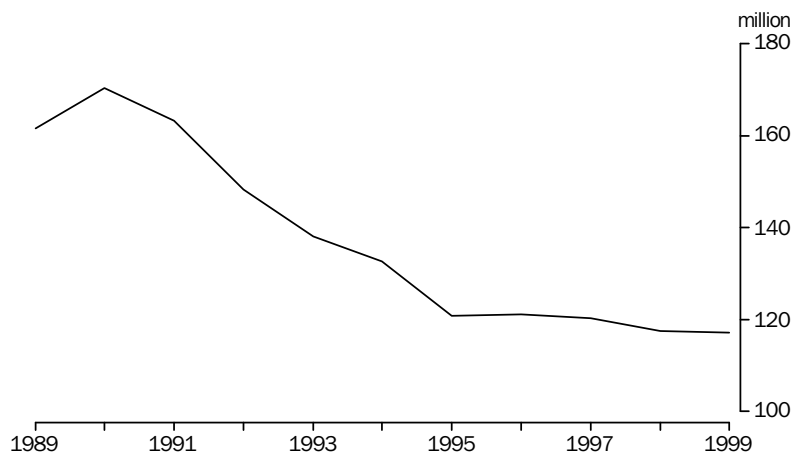


SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

LIVESTOCK *continued*

Sheep and lambs

The estimated sheep and lamb flock at 31 March 1999 was 117 million, showing little change from the previous year. The New South Wales and Western Australian flocks accounted for 35% and 23% of the national total respectively.



The forecast for the number of ewes to be mated during the year ended 31 March 2000 was estimated at 52.9 million, similar to the previous season. Intended matings to merino breeds is estimated to be down 4% to 34.3 million. However, there is a marked increase in the number of ewes forecast to be mated to dual purpose (short wool) breeds in the coming season, with an estimate of 13.2 million, up 19%.

Pigs

Preliminary estimates show a decline in pig numbers between 31 March 1998 and 31 March 1999, down 6% from 2.8 million to 2.6 million. This follows the cyclical pattern of rises and falls in pig numbers over the past 10 years. The main fall was in New South Wales where pig numbers fell by 10% from 849,000 at 31 March 1998 to 763,000 at 31 March 1999.



1

AREA AND PRODUCTION OF PRINCIPAL CROPS—Years Ended 31 March

	AUST.			1999p							
	1997	1998	1999p	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT
WHEAT FOR GRAIN											
Area ('000 ha)	10 936	10 439	11 233	3 006	971	1 120	1 696	4 438	3	—	—
Production ('000 t)	22 925	19 224	21 122	6 396	1 492	1 935	3 222	8 063	13	—	—
OATS FOR GRAIN											
Area ('000 ha)	1 052	937	947	384	199	15	113	228	8	—	—
Production ('000 t)	1 653	1 634	1 874	716	475	16	177	476	14	—	—
BARLEY FOR GRAIN											
Area ('000 ha)	3 367	3 521	3 163	628	569	166	1 011	779	10	—	—
Production ('000 t)	6 696	6 482	6 010	1 218	853	336	2 169	1 405	29	—	—
LUPINS FOR GRAIN											
Area ('000 ha)	1 260	1 425	1 396	104	40	—	77	1 175	—	—	—
Production ('000 t)	1 522	1 561	1 687	172	44	—	102	1 368	—	—	—
CANOLA											
Area ('000 ha)	408	697	1 115	336	189	—	109	481	1	—	—
Production ('000 t)	623	855	1 521	569	233	—	162	556	1	—	—
CEREALS FOR HAY											
Area ('000 ha)	326	401	414	95	91	18	98	111	2	—	—
Production ('000 t)	1 220	1 567	1 717	387	350	82	422	464	10	**1	—
SUGAR CANE CUT FOR CRUSHING											
Area ('000 ha)	390	415	383	20	—	360	—	3	—	—	—
Production ('000 t)	38 633	39 531	36 922	2 565	—	33 931	—	426	—	—	—

	AUST.			1999p.....							
	1997	1998	1999p	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT
MILK CATTLE											
Cows in milk and dry ('000)	1 977	2 060	2 121	284	1 298	210	108	74	148	—	—
Other milk cattle ('000)	982	1 015	1 040	151	602	109	58	48	71	—	—
Total milk cattle ('000)(a)	2 958	3 076	3 161	435	1 900	320	165	122	219	—	—
MEAT CATTLE											
Bulls and bull calves intended for service ('000)	553	546	488	113	51	197	26	44	11	46	—
Other calves under one year ('000)	6 047	6 022	5 717	1 657	597	2 239	291	478	152	300	3
Cows and heifers one year and over ('000)	11 931	11 769	11 264	2 781	1 031	4 853	511	941	226	916	5
Other cattle one year and over ('000)	5 291	5 412	5 204	1 065	442	2 776	170	358	115	275	*2
Total meat cattle ('000)	23 822	23 750	22 672	5 616	2 121	10 065	999	1 821	504	1 537	10
SHEEP AND LAMBS											
Breeding ewes ('000)	57 380	55 703	56 253	20 146	10 076	4 195	6 919	13 254	1 627	(b)	35
Lambs and hoggets under one year ('000)	30 461	29 958	29 763	10 249	4 928	2 439	3 552	7 598	984	(b)	14
Other sheep ('000)	32 387	31 833	31 160	10 218	6 571	4 094	2 826	6 205	1 216	(b)	30
Total sheep and lambs ('000)	120 228	117 494	117 176	40 613	21 575	10 728	13 297	27 057	3 827	—	80
PIGS											
Total pigs ('000)	2 555	2 768	2 604	763	484	641	399	296	21	—	—

(a) Excluding house cows.

(b) Data not collected.

3

LAMBING—Years Ended 31 March

	AUST.			1999p.....							
	1997	1998	1999p	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT
Ewes actually mated ('000)(a)	51 291	51 349	50 840	17 641	8 898	3 844	6 451	12 470	1 511	(b)	26
Lambs marked ('000)	40 436	40 123	41 288	13 938	7 725	2 720	5 670	9 908	1 308	(b)	18
Proportion of lambs marked to ewes mated (%)	78.8	78.1	81.2	79.0	86.8	70.8	87.9	79.5	86.6	..	69.2

(a) Ewes mated to produce lambs marked in the season shown.

(b) Data not collected.

4

INTENDED MATINGS—At 31 March

	AUST.			1999p.....							
	1997	1998	1999p	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT
To merino rams ('000)	36 581	35 671	34 265	11 516	4 661	3 614	3 849	9 732	873	(a)	18
To short wool rams ('000)	11 085	11 073	13 166	4 862	3 943	108	1 902	1 889	460	(a)	2
To other rams ('000)	6 113	5 262	5 464	2 133	1 181	71	855	973	245	(a)	6
Total ('000)	53 780	52 005	52 895	18 511	9 785	3 794	6 607	12 595	1 578	(a)	26

(a) Data not collected.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 This publication contains preliminary estimates of principal agricultural commodities and livestock numbers for the 1998–99 season, intended ewe matings for the forthcoming season, and comparative data for earlier years.

SCOPE AND COVERAGE

2 Estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from the Agricultural Commodity Survey (ACS) conducted at 31 March 1999.

3 The scope of the 1998–99 Survey is establishments undertaking agricultural activity having an Estimated Value of Agricultural Operations (EVAO) of \$5,000 or more. This is the same as the scope for Agricultural Censuses from 1993–94 to 1996–97 and the ACS in 1997–98. Prior to 1993–94 the scope has varied. Details are available on request.

REVISIONS

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

SAMPLE ERROR

5 The estimates are based on information obtained from a sample drawn from the total farm population in scope of the collection, and are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all farm businesses had 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.

6 In this publication, sampling variability of the estimates is measured by the relative standard error (RSE) which is obtained by expressing the SE as a percentage of the estimate to which it refers. Most published estimates have RSEs less than 5%. For some States with limited production of certain commodities, RSEs are greater than 25%. If an estimate is identified by a single asterisk (e.g. *2) the RSE lies between 25% and 50%. If an estimate is identified by a double asterisk (e.g. **1) the RSE is above 50%. Separate indication of the RSEs of all estimates is available on request.

7 The ACS was conducted as a census in 1996–97 and therefore the estimates for that period are not subject to SEs.

FURTHER INFORMATION

8 The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) also has more detailed agricultural statistics available on floppy disk, compact disk and magnetic tape. These statistics include details of land use, crop and horticultural activity, and livestock numbers and are available for many years. The ABS also conducts special interest surveys with a rural focus. In 1997–98 and 1998–99 these surveys asked about information technology use by farmers and in particular about uptake of Internet use and barriers to its use.

9 Agstats on the Integrated Regional Data Base (IRDB) offers a wide range of data aggregated at smaller geographic level than those generally available in printed publications, together with an easy-to-use, menu-driven interrogation facility.

10 The ABS will provide a data consultancy service to clients who require non-standard or unpublished outputs. For information about this service contact Nigel Gibson on Hobart 03 6222 5939 or Information Services in any ABS office.

GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

11 ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated. Without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

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

Agriculture, Australia (Cat. no. 7113.0)

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