western australia

- Conditions across the Western Australian grains belt have been variable. In early June the majority of the grains belt was in need of rainfall. Crops that have already been sown are starting to suffer from moisture stress as well as the effect of relatively warm temperatures for this time of year. Below average rainfall in May delayed sowing of the majority of winter crops. Rainfall during the remainder of June will be critical to planting decisions in Western Australia.
- Total winter crop area is forecast to fall by 12 per cent to just over 7.1 million hectares, similar to the area sown to winter crops in the early 2000s. Rainfall in April across most of the grains belt was above average but the lack of follow-up rainfall since that time is expected to reduce winter crop plantings.
- The area sown to wheat in 2006-07 is forecast to decline by 8 per cent when compared with the previous season. The fall reflects the weaker start to the season when compared with last year. Strong wheat prices and the introduction of short growing season varieties are likely to result in the wheat area in Western Australian falling by a smaller magnitude than other winter crops.
- Western Australian barley area is forecast to be 1.1 million hectares, 230 000 hectares lower than in the 2005-06 season. A reduced area planted, combined with yields closer to historical averages is forecast to result in barley production declining by 22 per cent.

winter crop estimates, 2006-07 – Western Australia

	area f	yield f	production f	*area change from 2005-06*
	`000 ha	t/ha	kt	%
Wheat	4 780	1.80	8 604	-8
Barley	1 073	1.90	2 039	-18
Canola	400	1.26	504	-9
Lupins	600	1.20	720	-8

f ABARE forecast.

- It is forecast that 400 000 hectares of canola will be planted in 2006-07, which is 9 per cent lower than last season. Canola yields in 2005-06 were some of the highest on record, averaging 1.43 tonnes per hectare. In 2006-07 it is forecast that yields will return closer to their historical average and canola production will decline by 130 000 tonnes.
- The area planted to lupins in Western Australia in 2006-07 is estimated to be 600 000 hectares, 8 per cent lower than the previous season. Production is expected to reach 720 000 tonnes, which is a 13 per cent decline when compared with 2005-06.