



2008 Australian Pulse Crop Prospects

David Walker

Table 1: Australian Pulse Crop Prospects

	Area - 000 ha				Yield - Tonnes/ha				Production - 000 tonnes			
	5 year	06-07	07-08	08-09	5 year	06-07	07-08	08-09	5 year	06-07	07-08	08-09
Lupins	853	736	454	426	1.09	0.64	0.73	1.22	920	470	331	521
Field Peas	379	384	293	309	0.9	0.36	0.91	1.37	336	140	268	423
Chick Peas	163	244	306	298	1	0.95	1.02	1.33	157	232	313	396
Faba Beans	169	153	133	113	1.17	0.7	1.04	1.56	198	108	138	176
Lentils	136	153	130	106	0.91	0.24	1.01	1.45	114	36	131	153

Source: Pulse Australia, 08/09 June Forecast
Ozprospects.xls, you could cut yield and or area.

Australia is Canada's major competition in the international marketplace. And it has a significant shipping cost advantage into the Indian market which has become a particularly important market to Canada in recent years. Against this, the Australian pulse crops are particularly prone to drought. In fact Australian farmers generally will not seed pulses until they have had a decent "break," the first fall rain which breaks the summer drought.

It might seem rather early to predict production which will not be harvested until October or November, Australian pulses are seeded in the fall – April, May and June, and harvested in the spring. They develop more slowly over the winter months than Prairie pulses do over the summer.

But Australian pulse crop prospects are already beginning to falter. While for field peas and lentils output is still forecast to exceed the five-year average, these forecasts are not viewed as being very favourable as the five-year average includes two drought years - 2006-07 and 2007-08, see Table 1.

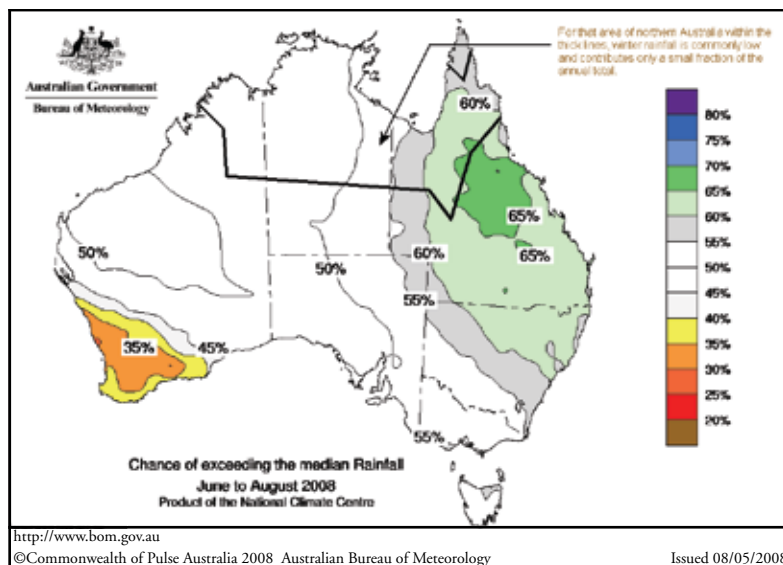
In the northeast, Queensland and northern New South Wales, moisture levels are relatively favourable and forecasts are positive, Map 1. Chick peas are the dominant pulse crop in this region and it is Australia's main chick pea area. Hence, Australian production forecasts for chick peas are relatively favourable. But other pulse crop prospects have not benefited to the same degree.

In contrast to the northeast, Western Australia, having had favourable rain in April, has turned dry and rainfall prospects are not favourable. It is Australia's major lupin production region. Lupin area has declined in recent years and yield prospects are also very uncertain. An

increased area of field peas was seeded in the southwest of the state, but again the crop appears threatened by dry conditions.

Southern New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia geographically between the northeast and west generally have reasonably favourable moisture conditions and rainfall prospects. Consequently production prospects are improved. The exception to this are lentils which were relatively late seeded and are drought susceptible.

Rainfall forecast for Winter 2008



This climate forecast map for the June to August period indicates a dry winter for much of Western Australia, and average to slightly above average for the rest of Australia.

