

SEPTEMBER 2011 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 13.9% (up from 8.6%)
Area in **Marginal**: 27.0% (down from 27.7%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 59.1% (down from 63.7%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Central North LHPA Part of District moved from Marginal to Drought
Central West LHPA Part of District moved from Marginal to Drought

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

Nil

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Darling LHPA Part of District moved from Satisfactory to Marginal
(Whole District now Marginal)

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Nil

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

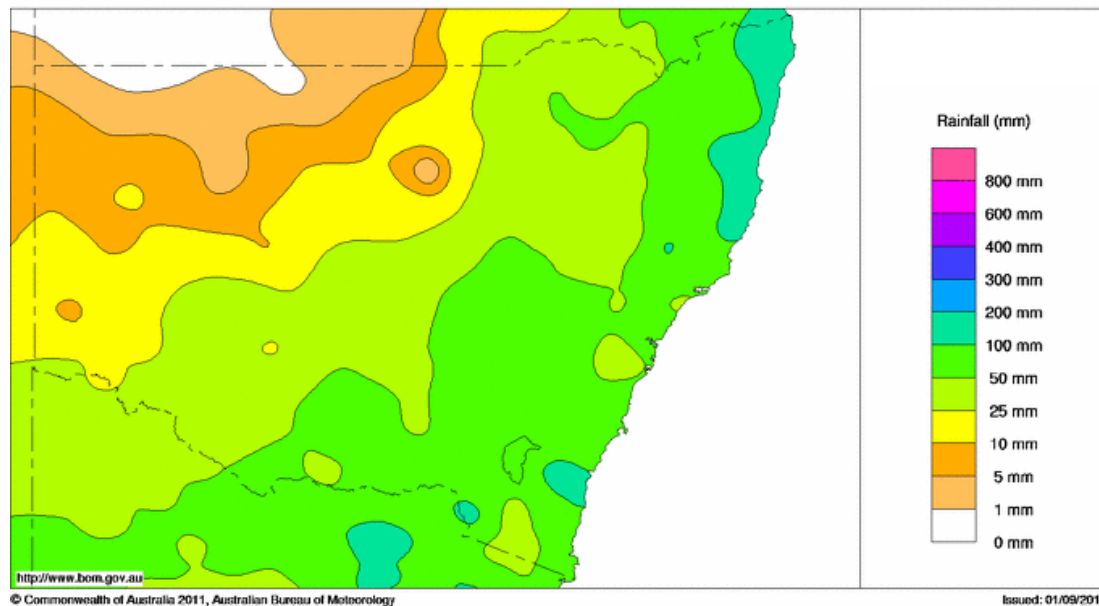
RAINFALL FOR August 2011 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall maps)

NSW recorded reasonable rainfall throughout the eastern half of August, importantly including the cropping belt. The tablelands, central west, central north and central southern areas received fall between 25-100mm. The north coast received up to 200mm. The north west area of the State only received between 1-25mm. The six month actual rainfall figures show that the entire coastal strip and adjoining tablelands has received between 300-1200mm. The central areas of the sate have received 100-300mm while the States far north west has received up to 100mm.

The three monthly deciles show a bleaker picture with most of NSW receiving below average rainfall. The exceptions have been a small strip running down the tablelands into the south coast, the central northern border region and southern border region. The north coast has received above to very much above average rainfall.

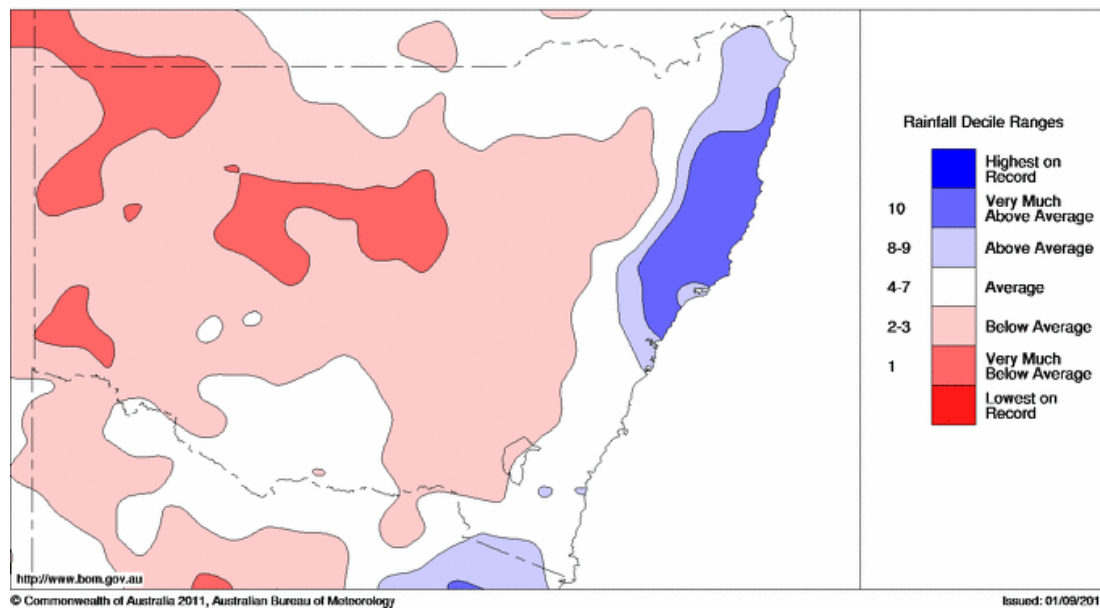
NSW rainfall (actual) August 2011

New South Wales Rainfall (mm) August 2011
Product of the National Climate Centre



NSW rainfall (3 month decile) June to August 2011

New South Wales Rainfall Deciles 1 June to 31 August 2011
Distribution Based on Gridded Data
Product of the National Climate Centre



CROPS AND PASTURES (provided by Peter Matthews, Dept. Primary Industries, August 2011)

The condition of the estimated 5.1 million ha of winter crop is variable across the state, as rainfall in some areas continues to be below average for the year. Yield prospects for the states winter crop have declined, following drier conditions in early August for most of the central and northwest slopes and plains region.

Continuing on from the below average rain in June and July, early August saw crops in the central and northwest slopes and plains struggling. The predicted rain front on the 17-19 August provided much needed relieve for growers in the southern and central areas. Falls between 25-35 mm were recorded for the central west plains, 30-55 mm on the central west slopes, 15-45 mm in the Riverina, south west slopes 30-80 mm. Unfortunately north-western growers only receiving falls of 5-15 mm.

Even with this rain event, crops in the western areas of the central region such as the Gulargambone district have started to be grazed by growers as yield prospects decline and the need for stock feed increases. If no useful rainfall eventuates by mid September, more crops will be abandoned and grazed off or fallowed through to next year. Overall yield potential of the winter crop is slowly being eroded as this dry period continues across large areas of the states cropping regions. September will be a critical month for the central and north western winter crop with above average rainfall needed to ensure grower get close to achieving average crop yields.

Pasture growth has been variable across the state with hand feeding stock now common place in the central, north and western Riverina districts. August has seen some good growth in the south east as pastures took advantage of the good rainfall and warmer August temperatures. If September remains dry, handing stock will increase and the decision to graze crops become more common. Whilst rainfall has been good on the higher slopes and tablelands, colder conditions in July slowed growth, with pasture paddocks now just beginning to build bulk, more rain is needed in early September to support continued pasture growth. Grazing cereals continued to provide useful feed through August, with growers beginning to lock up paddocks from late July through August to allow recovery for grain harvest.

Crop growth stage varies from wheat and barley crops in the more western areas at early grain fill through to crops that were sown later in the eastern districts at late tillering. Canola and pulse crops have been flowering in most districts now for several weeks, with more western areas at early pod fill.

The mice situation still remains a major concern for the majority of the state. Mice activity has increased in the Riverina and lower central west slopes districts, with crop damage being reported to both cereal and broadleaf crops. As the temperatures increase mice activity and crop damage will increase if growers are not vigilant with crop monitoring and baiting programs.

Stripe rust in wheat is now readily been found in the Riverina and central regions as the temperatures rise, growers that have not applied pre sowing treatments or in mixes with post sowing herbicides are now spraying fungicides to protect crops.

Following the August rainfall growers have been concentrating on getting any late post emergent herbicides applied for weed control.

Prior to the forecast rain in August significant areas of cereal and canola crops were top dressed with nitrogen in the southern and more easterly districts of the central slopes to boost and maintain yield potentials of crops on paddocks with lower fertility status, after last years big harvest.

Summer crop areas under irrigation will increase this year given the expectation of good irrigation water allocations and present prices for grain and fibre crops. Cotton will be the crop where we will see the most significant area increase in both the northern and southern irrigations areas.

LIVESTOCK (Regional staff)

Pasture conditions across the state were generally deteriorating due to the below average rain and winter conditions. Improvements are expected in many areas due to the recent rains and warmer weather, though more rain is needed throughout spring.

Any standing feed carried over from summer is now of very poor quality and not sufficient to maintain growing, pregnant or lactating stock. Hand feeding stock, particularly pregnant or lambing ewes and cattle, is on the increase. Some handfeeding all stock is occurring in the western half of the northwest LHPA district and some adjoining areas.

The earlier sown grazing cereals are providing some useful stock feed, but with the below average rainfall and cold frosty conditions, growth rates are slow. In some parts of the central and northwest, livestock have been put on to failing crops. This will increase if further rain fails to eventuate.

WATER SUPPLIES

Note: The State Water Storages report is no longer produced. An updated table will now be included to provide an idea of the State's water supply situation.

STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	30 June 2011	3 Aug 2011	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	100%	99%	(1.0)%
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	116%	114%	(1.7)%
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	50%	50%	0.0%
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	98%	99%	1.0%
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	20%	20%	0.0%
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	101%	101%	0.0%
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	90%	91%	1.1%
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	46%	46%	0.0%
Oberon Dam, Oberon	52%	54%	3.8%
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	92%	92%	0.0%
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	76%	77%	1.3%
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	88%	94%	6.8%
Blowering Dam, Tumut	97%	94%	(3.1)%
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	64%	67%	4.7%
Hume Dam, Albury	93%	96%	3.2%
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	96%	100%	4.2%
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	88%	88%	0.0%
Lostock Dam, Singleton	101%	101%	0.0%
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	101%	101%	0.0%
Broggo Dam, Bega	101%	101%	0.0%
TOTAL NSW Dam storage	81%	82%	1.0%

RAINFALL & TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK – September to November 2011 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall and temperature outlook and El Niño Southern Oscillation [ENSO] wrap-up)

In summary the next three months are forecast to bring average rainfalls and slightly warmer temperatures.

The chances of receiving above median rainfall during the September-November period are generally average over most of the State with the odds between 45-55%. The south western corner of the State can expect below average rainfall with the decile range at 35-40%. The outlook for maximum and minimum temperatures averaged throughout September to November show the odds favouring slightly higher than average temperatures over the majority of NSW at 50-55%.

Neutral conditions still persist in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, though a return to La Niña towards the end of 2011 cannot be ruled out. Trends over the past fortnight include further cooling of the central Pacific Ocean, persistent positive Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) values and stronger than normal trade winds. However, cloud patterns are currently close to normal, and all indicators remain well short of the strong La Niña conditions evident at the same time last year. The majority of international climate model forecasts of ENSO predict that neutral conditions are likely to continue into the southern spring.

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Information sources:

NSW rainfall maps

http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-bin/silo/rain_maps.cgi?map=contours&variable=totals&area=nsw&period=1month®ion=nsw&time=latest

Rainfall outlook

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/rain.seaus.shtml>

Temperature outlook

http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/temps_ahead.shtml

ENSO Wrap-Up

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/>

Drought Statement

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/drought.shtml>