

NOVEMBER 2011 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 6.3% (down from 12.2%)
Area in **Marginal**: 27.8% (down from 28.7%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 65.9% (up from 59.1)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Nil

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

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

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Nil

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Central North LHPA Part of District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory
Central West LHPA Part of District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory
South East LHPA Part of District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory
(Whole District now Satisfactory)

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

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

NSW recorded reasonable rainfall in most areas during October. The eastern half of NSW generally recorded falls ranging from 25 to 100mm. Falls up to 200mm were recorded in parts of the north coast. The western half of NSW received falls between 5-25mm, though a small area around Bourke only received up to 10mm.

The three monthly deciles show that the majority of NSW has received at least average rainfall. The north east and central northern regions have recorded above to very much above average rainfall. In contrast areas in the south east stretching from the central west south through Young, Wagga Wagga to Albury and an area around Cobar are displaying below average rainfall.

Six month rainfall deciles indicate below average rainfall across the western half and southern central regions of NSW. The north east third of the state had average rainfall with above to very much above average falls over much of the coast.

Twelve month rainfall deciles show above average to very much above average rainfall across NSW.

CROPS AND PASTURES (provided by Peter Matthews, Dept. Primary Industries, 9 November 2011)

Winter crop

The states winter crop yield potential has improved since September responding to the late September and October rain events. Winter crop production is currently forecast at 10.89 M tonnes, an increase of 8% on the mid September estimate of 10.11 M tonnes. Estimated winter crop area to be harvested is 4.69 M ha. The mid September estimate was for 4.64 M ha. About 4.68 M ha were harvested in 2010.

Harvesting of the estimated 2.94 M ha wheat crop is expected to commence in the first week of November in northern NSW. The estimated state average yield is currently 2.42 t/ha. This estimate is up on the September forecast of 2.29 t/ha following good rainfall in the last week of September and through October for key regions of the state.

Grain quality will be mixed as the milder wetter conditions in some districts may result in lower protein levels at the expense of higher grain yields. If wet conditions occur as in 2010, harvest operations will be delayed and there may be deterioration in grain quality from potential weather damage.

Harvest of the NSW barley crop started in late October in the northern region. An estimated 705,500 ha could be harvested producing about 1.75 M tonnes for an average yield of 2.48 t/ha. Grain quality is of concern in the north as frequent rain events move through the northern region. Yield predictions for the estimated 253,200 ha oat crop to be harvested are around 2.21 t/ha, producing 560,695 tonnes. An estimated 743,495 tonnes was harvested in 2010. The south eastern Riverina and South West Slopes are expected to produce most of the milling oats.

Triticale area is forecast at 112,120 ha, with an estimated yield of 3.32 t/ha. Yield estimates are up on the 3.18 t/ha average yield forecast in September following the good rains in late September and October in the main growing regions of the South West Slopes and the eastern Riverina.

The NSW canola is estimated at 387,940 ha and forecast to produce 649,452 tonnes for an average yield of 1.67 t/ha. Harvest has commenced in the western areas in all regions, where windrowing began in mid October. Early reports indicate solid yields of up to 2 t/ha for well managed crops in western areas with oil good contents around 43% and above being measured, a reflection of the milder finishing conditions.

A dry winter and early spring has reduced disease impacts on pulse crops this season. The 145,160 ha chickpea crop is forecast to yield about 1.49 t/ha. This is higher than the September estimate and is a result of much needed rainfall

arriving in time to boost yield potential. This extra moisture was ideal for grain fill. The comparatively dry winter and early spring, and good disease management has minimised any potential impact from *Ascochyta* on this years crop.

Faba bean harvest started in the north in the 3rd week of October, an estimated 40,520 ha is forecast to produce 61,121 tonnes for an average yield of 1.51 t/ha. Yields of the early sown crops are ranging up to 3.2 t/ha. About 95% of the crop is in the north.

Field pea crops have filled well, with the mild October conditions and there have been few disease issues this season. The estimated area of 41,100 ha is forecast to produce 63,485 tonnes for an average yield of around 1.54 t/ha. The albus lupin crop is forecast to average 1.60 t/ha from 36,250 ha and the angustifolius crop 1.53 t/ha from 29,850 ha.

Stripe rust incidences increased through October with some late fungicide applications applied by growers to protect the more susceptible varieties. By the end of October the crop was past the more vulnerable crop stages, either mature or at mid to late grain filling stage. Stem rust has been of a concern in the south western parts of the Riverina with growers using fungicides to protect the susceptible wheat varieties.

Mice activity through late October slowed, with baiting undertaken by growers through October to protect crops in the southern slopes and plains being effective. Whilst mice activity is low, the potential build up of numbers over summer again is off concern for next year's winter crop and for any summer crop in areas of past mouse activity. Growers will need to remain vigilant and monitor both harvested crop stubbles and maturing summer crops.

Pasture conditions across the state are variable. Good conditions persist across the upper slopes and tablelands following good rainfall through late September and October, further rainfall will be needed for this to be maintained through summer. The northwest slopes and plains have responded to the rain with the native and introduced perennial grasses building bulk up for the summer. The central and south western slopes and plains are still looking for more rain to try and simulate some pasture growth from the perennial grasses and lucerne. Little pasture bulk has been built up through spring, with much of the annual grass and broadleaf species now seeding. Good rain will be needed so growers can avoid hand feed stock through summer once reserves from crop stubbles are depleted.

Summer Crop

Prospects for summer crops are very good at this stage despite a cool start to the season. Improved water supplies for irrigation and an increase in dryland cotton plantings have increased summer crop estimates to 687,205 ha (excluding rice), 30% larger than last season, which was the largest for a decade. The forecast of possible La Nina conditions across eastern Australia and the probability of above average rain over the next three months is positive for the states summer crop.

Grain sorghum plantings are forecast to be 197,600 ha, around 22% above the 161,350 ha harvested last season. Establishment of early sown crops has been affected generally by cool temperatures and in some areas by waterlogging and submergence after heavy rainfall in mid October around Moree. Some of these crops have been resown. The Liverpool Plains and Moree remain the largest production areas.

Maize area is forecast to be 22,210 ha. About 50% of the state plantings will be in the north with major areas the Liverpool Plains and around Moree. Crop establishment has been slow due to the cool spring conditions. Limited contracts and relative profitability compared to cotton has resulted in smaller areas planted in the Riverina this season.

Most of the early sunflower crop of an estimated 7,300 ha has been planted. A total planting of 13,650 ha is forecast, down 42% on the 23,460 ha harvested last season. Soybean area is forecast at 25,185 ha, with 45% of this area to be sown on the north coast. Mungbean plantings are estimated at 11,170 ha, well down on the 22,15 ha harvested last season, this drop is largely due to the increase in cotton and sorghum areas.

The NSW cotton crop is forecast at 416,500 ha, comprising 276,000 ha irrigated and 140,500 ha dryland on skip row configurations. Around 85-90% of the crop is currently sown. Establishment conditions have been difficult in many areas with cool, wet conditions in early-mid October resulting in 5-10% of the crop being resown.

The rice crop is forecast at around 100,000 ha. Current water availability, which includes carryover water, is 94% for the Murray valley and 92% for the Murrumbidgee valley. Temperatures were below average for the first half of October, but have improved over the last 2 weeks of October. As a result of low temperatures, establishment has generally been slow. Warmer temperatures are now needed to promote establishment and early growth.

RAINFALL & TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK – November 2011 to January 2012 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall and temperature outlook and El Nino Southern Oscillation [ENSO] wrap-up)

The chances of receiving above median rainfall during the November 2011-January 2012 period are over 60% across NSW. The south border regions of the State can expect average rainfall with the decile range between 60-65%. In the central regions the deciles range between 65-70% while the central north and north east are showing a 70-75% chance of above average rainfall.

The odds of higher than normal maximum temperatures over the southern border ranges between 60-65%. In contrast the odds of above average temperature declines as you move towards the northeast. The central areas of the State should be average while there is only a 25-35% chance of above average temperatures in the north east. The odds of higher than normal minimum temperatures over NSW ranges between 65-80%.

The tropical Pacific Ocean is now in the early stages of a late forming La Nina event. Models suggest furthering strengthening will occur until mid-summer. If a La Nina forms it is not expected to be as strong as the 2010-11 event. Key atmospheric signals such as trade winds, cloud and the SOI are close to La Nina thresholds.

WATER SUPPLIES

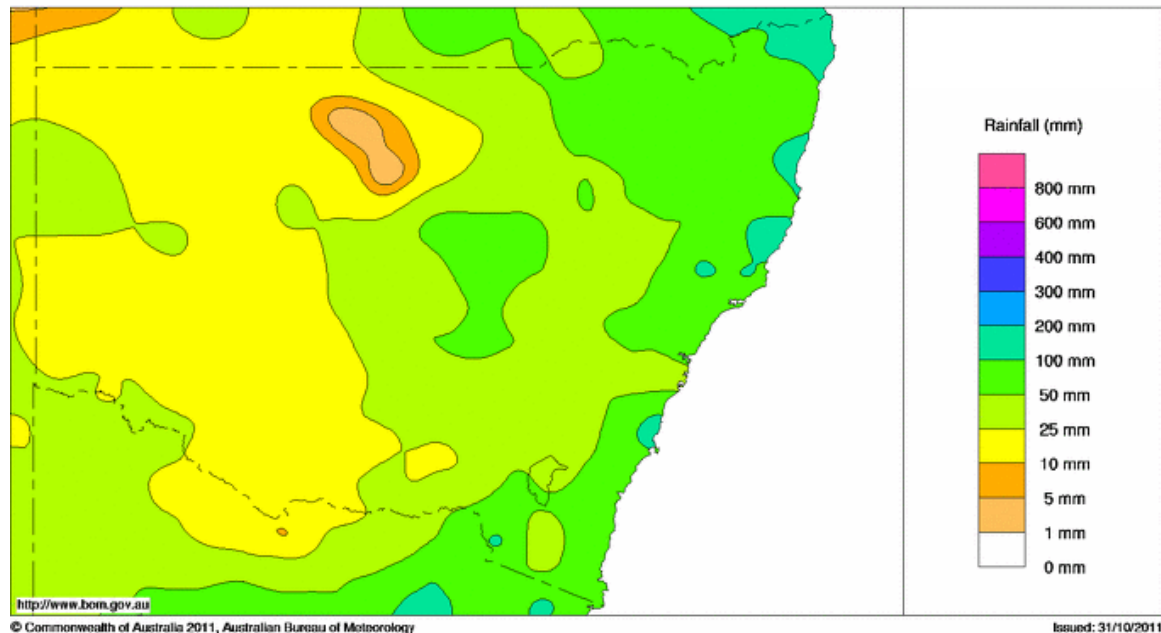
Note: The State Water Storages report is no longer produced. An updated table will now be included showing the situation for each of the major storages.

STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	12 Oct 2011	4 November 2011	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	100	100	1.0
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	108	108	0.0
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	54	56	2.0
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	99	99	0.0
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	21	22	1.0
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	100	100	0.0
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	88	86	(2.0)
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	46	46	0.0
Oberon Dam, Oberon	59	59	0.0
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	92	90	(2.0)
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	83	83	0.0
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	99	90	(9.0)
Blowering Dam, Tumut	93	92	(1.0)
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	72	74	2.0
Hume Dam, Albury	98	93	(5.0)
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	100	99	(1.0)
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	94	95	1.0
Lostock Dam, Singleton	100	100	0.0
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	101	101	0.0
Broggo Dam, Bega	100	100	0.0

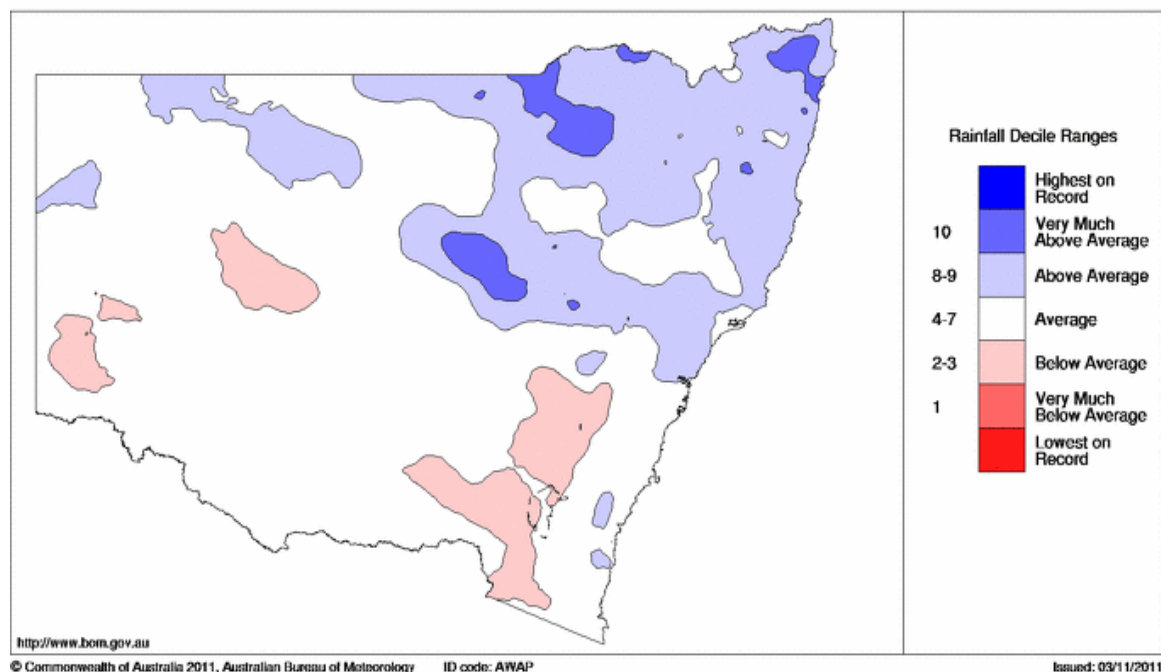
**Information sources:
NSW rainfall (actual) October 2011**

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



NSW rainfall (3 month decile) August to October 2011

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



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10 November 2011**

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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>

State Water Storage Report

http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au/water.shtml?ppbm=STORAGE_SITE&da&3&dakm_url