SEPTEMBER 2012 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 0% (no change)
Area in **Marginal**: 15.9% (increase of 15.9%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 84.1% (decrease of 15.9%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)
Nil

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)
Nil

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)
DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Central West LHPA	Part of district moved from satisfactory to marginal
Darling LHPA	Part of district moved from satisfactory to marginal

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)
Nil

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)
Nil

RAINFALL FOR AUGUST 2012 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall maps)
NSW received good rainfall across most areas during August except across the north western part of NSW. The southern half of NSW generally recorded falls up to 100 mm. The northern half of NSW generally recorded falls up to 50mm, though some areas received no rain.

The three monthly deciles shows that the rainfall has ranged from very much below average in a small part of the south western part of NSW through to above average in parts across the northern part of NSW.

The six monthly deciles shows that the rainfall has ranged from very much below average in a small area in the mid north coast region to very much above average in parts of the north western and south eastern parts of the State.

The twelve monthly deciles show that all of NSW has received average to highest on record rainfall.

CROPS AND PASTURES (provided by Peter Matthews, Dept. Primary Industries, 10 September 2012)
The condition of the NSW winter crop continues to diverge across the State, with eastern regions still looking at above average yields, compared with large areas of the western regions now heading to potentially below average yields. The next 2-3 weeks will be a key period, setting the yield potential for much of the

States crop. If the dry conditions experienced in August continue into September, some of the States 5.11 M ha winter crop will be at risk of failure.
Rainfall through August was in general below average, with some areas well below recording decile 1 rainfall for the month. This shift to below average rainfall is a major concern as the winter crop moves into spring and warmer growing conditions, which will increase the demand on limited soil moisture reserves.

Severe frosts continued into August slowing both crop and pasture growth. These are a concern, with a late frost recorded in many areas on the 30 and 31 of August. The on going frosts have affected the later sown crops more, slowing there development and biomass build up. With the majority of the canola crop either starting to flower or well into early pod fill, some damage has been reported of flower loss and early pod death. There is some concern of the impact of the frost on early sown cereals, with some potential damage to the developing heads, whilst still in the boot, the extent of this will not be known until after the head emergences.

Pasture growth of annual species is still slow with the frost retarding growth and limiting stockfeed. Overall pasture conditions across the State declined through August on the back of below average rainfall and frosty conditions. Hand feeding of stock is becoming more common place through the cropping belt as pasture supplies diminish. Apart from some more easterly dual purpose cereal crops, stock have been removed from most grazing crops to prevent damage and potential lower grain yields. With the lack of winter feed, indications are some growers in the central and northern areas may risk sowing some early summer forage into colder soil conditions, in a bid to have stock feed going into a potentially drier spring.

Crop growth stages are variable across the State with most regions having cereals from late tillering through to the more advance western crops of early head emergence. The majority of the canola crop is now flowering, with earlier sown canola crops in the western areas at mid pod fill.

Stripe rust on wheat is now common in the westerly areas, with the more susceptible varieties needing to be sprayed for rust. As the weather continues to warm up this will be a increasing problem for the later easterly wheat crops. Yellow leaf spot has caused come concern, but with the drier August conditions has slowed in development and will need a prolonged wet period to flare up and cause further problems.

Insect activity was on the increase through August, with many pests that prefer drier conditions starting to build up in crops. The main concern currently is aphids in both cereal and canola crops. The lack of wet cold conditions through August which normally reduce aphid build up due to higher mortality rates from these conditions has seen some need for spraying in the north western slopes and plains. The biggest ongoing concern will be for podding canola crops and potential yield decline from feeding aphids.

Limited mice activity has been reported across the State, with no current crop damage being noted. Continued monitoring will be necessary as the weather warms up and they become active and begin to look for food.

Crop nutrition as been a focus across the State for wheat, with a large percentage of crops showing nitrogen deficiency. This lack of soil nitrogen is largely due to the past two season's high crops yields and in some districts impacted by flooding, the loss of soil nitrogen by denitrification process whilst the paddocks were waterlogged. With the variable and low rainfall through August some caution is being shown by growers in applying further fertiliser to crops on the back of continuing discussion of the State moving into El Nino conditions. With the opportunity to apply further nitrogen fertiliser fast disappearing as this dry period continues, many crop will be nitrogen deficient, resulting in lower grain yield and protein levels. Supplies of Urea through August was a concern in some parts, as the demand exceeded supplies coming into port and being able to be transported in land, this has meant that some crops that could have been fertilised were not.

Some earlier summer crop sowing is taking place in north western NSW as growers look to get the crops up and going before the soil surface dries out. This is a concern as currently soil temperatures would be just at levels needed for the successful establishment of sorghum and maize crops.

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

The chances of receiving above median rainfall are from 25% in the far south western part of NSW to 55% in the central northern to north western part of NSW.

The chances that the average maximum temperature will exceed the long-term median maximum temperatures is 60% across most of NSW, with up to 65% in the south western half and smaller parts along the northern and southern borders of NSW.

The chances that the average minimum temperature will exceed the long-term median minimum temperatures range from 45% in the north eastern part of NSW up to 75% in the south western part of NSW.

Tropical Pacific Ocean indicators have remained close to El Niño thresholds over the past fortnight. While tropical Pacific sea surface temperatures and the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI), approached or exceeded El Niño values during the past fortnight, other indicators such as the trade winds and tropical cloud patterns have yet to show typical El Niño signatures.

Regardless of the ENSO state, the tropical Pacific remains warmer than average. This, combined with other influences on Australian climate such as cooler than normal waters to the north of the continent and the patterns of

cloud and ocean temperatures in the Indian Ocean, tends to favour below-average rainfall over eastern Australia.

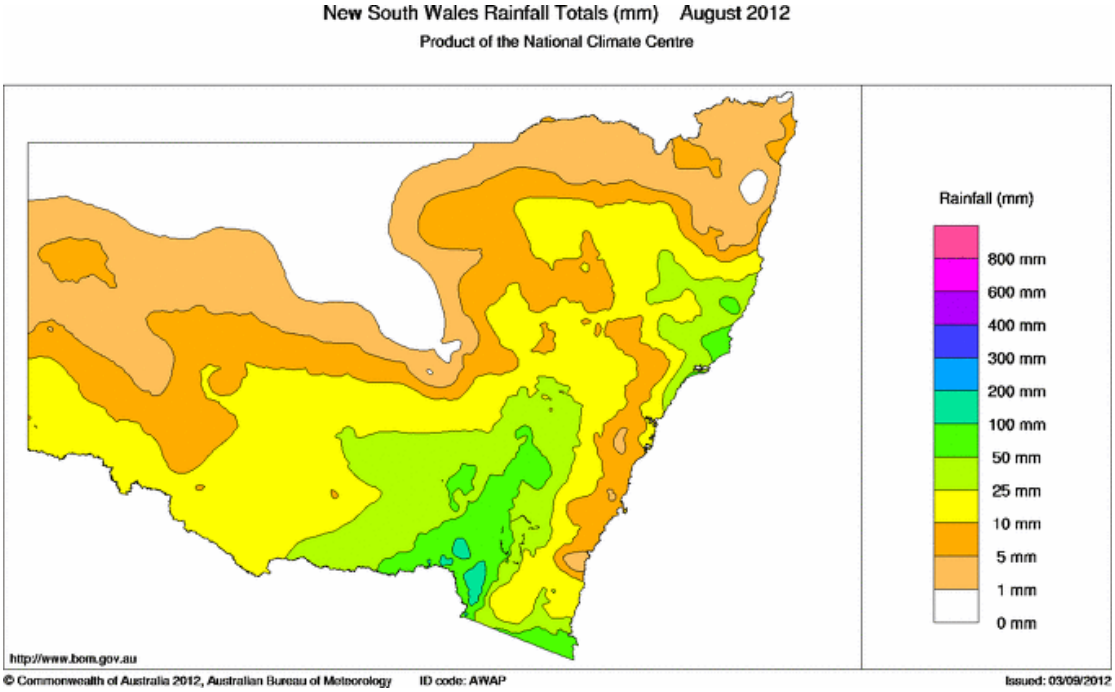
Climate models surveyed by the Bureau of Meteorology suggest sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean will maintain values close to, or greater than, typical El Niño thresholds before returning to neutral towards the end of 2012 or early 2013.

The Indian Ocean Dipole is presently neutral. Outlooks from the Bureau's climate model indicate a neutral to weakly positive Indian Ocean Dipole is likely through spring.

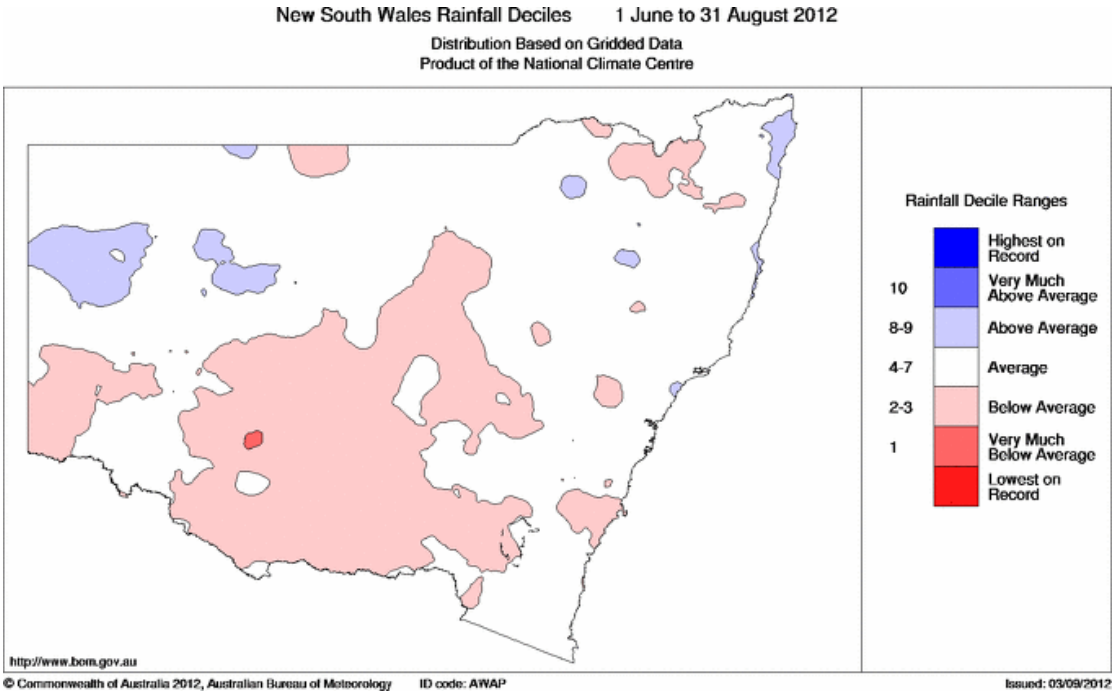
STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	6 August 2012	11 September 2012	Change
Storage Dam, Nearest Town	***Level %***	***Level %***	***%***
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	91	91	0
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	119	unk	unk
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	100	100	0
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	100	99	1
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	87	87	0
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	100	100	0
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	105	100	5
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	60	60	0
Oberon Dam, Oberon	99	98	1
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	97	99	(2)
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	100	100	0
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	97	99	(2)
Blowering Dam, Tumut	98	97	1
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	91	95	(4)
Hume Dam, Albury	98	97	1
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	101	100	0
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	98	97	1
Lostock Dam, Singleton	100	99	1
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	101	100	1
Brogo Dam, Bega	101	100	1

NSW rainfall (actual) August 2012



NSW rainfall (3 month decile) June to August 2012



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Information sources:

NSW rainfall maps
http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/rain/index.jsp?colour=colour&time=latest&step=0&map=totals&period=month&area=ns

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