

NOVEMBER 2012 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 0% (no change)
Area in **Marginal**: 47.1% (increase from 30.1%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 52.9% (decrease from 69.9%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Nil

REVOICATIONS (moved out of drought)

Nil

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Central North LHPA	Part of district moved from satisfactory to marginal
Central West LHPA	Part of district moved from satisfactory to marginal
Darling LHPA	Part of district moved from satisfactory to marginal (Whole district now marginal)
Lachlan LHPA	Part of district moved from satisfactory to marginal
New England LHPA	Part of district moved from satisfactory to marginal
North Coast LHPA	Whole district moved from satisfactory to marginal
North West 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 OCTOBER 2012 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall maps)

NSW received little rainfall across most areas during October except in a small section on the south coast. The western half of NSW generally recorded falls up to 10 mm, though some areas received no rain. The eastern half of NSW generally recorded falls of 10 mm up to 200 mm in a small section of the south coast.

Generally the south western part of the state, and parts of the central coast hinterland are experiencing 7 month rainfall deficiencies, with a rainfall percentile ranking of serious deficiency, with smaller pockets in the areas experiencing severe deficiencies.

The three monthly deciles shows that the rainfall has ranged from lowest on record in several small parts of the northern part of NSW, with most of NSW receiving very much below average to below average, through to average in some parts of NSW, including the south eastern part.

The six monthly deciles shows that the rainfall has ranged from very much below average, to below average across the majority of NSW, through to average across parts of NSW.

The twelve monthly deciles show that all of NSW has received average to highest on record rainfall, except small parts in the far south west and the northern tablelands, which have received below average rainfall.

CROPS AND PASTURES (provided by Peter Matthews, Dept. Primary Industries, 12 November 2012)

Winter crop

Yield prospects for most of the State's cropping regions have declined since the September forecast. The lack of much needed rain through October has reduced winter crop yield potential. Any rain now will only benefit crops in eastern areas, with most crops in the west either ready for harvest or in the dry down phase. Rain now may result in grain quality downgrades.

Further rain now will be of little value for much of the State's winter crop, except for the more easterly areas where crops are still filling grain. For the third consecutive year there is concern of rain over the harvest period, with the first major rain event forecast for the second week of November.

Central and southern NSW wheat crops continued to be impacted by frost events through October, adding to the damage from late September frosts. This has resulted in some crop damage particularly in lower lying areas. Crop damage varies, from a few missing florets to complete head loss in low lying areas, or in the worst cases, isolated stem frosting has been reported. Individual crop damage reports vary from 1% up to 20% yield loss.

Most of the frost damage to canola crops occurred through September, with late September frosts causing damage in eastern crops that had earlier escaped damage from early September frosts. Frost effects have been significant at the individual paddock level, with some growers reporting losses of up 80% yield in low lying crops. Currently in specific regions the outlook is:

North – prospects for the 1.07 M ha of winter crop have fallen during October. Harvest commenced in early October with faba beans, barley and canola the first crops harvested. Dry weather is now needed for the winter crop harvest to proceed uninterrupted.

Centre – yield prospects also declined in the central region, with potential yield losses being higher as many crops were not as advanced as those in the north. Further rain now would mainly assist later crops on the more easterly slopes and tablelands. The estimated 1.90 M ha is forecast to produce about 3.57 M tonnes. Harvest has already commenced on canola, field peas, faba bean, barley and some early wheat crops.

South – yield prospects for the estimated 1.77 M ha to be harvested in the south have also declined, especially in western areas which largely missed October rains. Harvest of canola, field peas and barley has commenced in western areas, with wheat harvest expected to start in the second week of November.

Irrigation allocations vary across the State, with general security allocations at 0% Lachlan, 32% Lower Namoi, 39% Belubula, 57% Macquarie, 64% Murrumbidgee, 78% Peel, with the remaining valleys at 100% allocation or above. These general security allocations do not include any carryover water from 2011-12, so valleys like the Lachlan, while having no current year allocation, can use carryover water for this season.

Harvest is well underway in the north with wheat, canola, barley, chickpeas and faba beans currently being harvested. In central western NSW canola, field peas, oats and barley are being harvested, with some early sown wheat crops also being harvested. In southern NSW canola, field peas, oats and barley are being harvested in the western Riverina, with the wheat harvest not expected to begin until the second week of November.

Any rain now will be of benefit to this year's summer crop, which has had a variable start with the dryland crop now under moisture stress. Many growers are still waiting for a sowing rain or, for those that chanced sowing in late September, further rain is needed to fully establish crops.

Pasture conditions across the State have declined, with only some areas on the upper slopes and tablelands having reasonable pasture growth for the month. The best of the area remain on the south eastern slopes and tablelands, where they have been more fortunate with the recent rain events. With the dry conditions across the majority of the State, little pasture bulk has been built up through spring, with much of the annual grass and broadleaf species now seeding. Hand feed is common across the State as growers supplement what dry feed they have. Growers are waiting for crops to be harvested so they can utilise crop stubbles and provide some relieve from hand feeding.

Due to the poor spring pasture growth hay and silage making across the State has not been common and growers have not been able to replenish fodder supplies for this summer and next winter.

Summer Crop

Preliminary estimates are for the sowing of 555,700 ha (excluding rice), which is 8% lower than the estimated 606,794 ha harvested last season. Of the 555,700 ha, cotton will account for about 54% of the area. Very dry seedbeds have impeded the planting of all dryland summer crops and cool temperatures through September and early October have slowed establishment of irrigated crops. Warmer conditions are now benefiting those crops but rain is desperately needed to assist establishing dryland crops and allow further plantings to proceed.

Grain sorghum plantings are forecast to be 167,150 ha, slightly higher than the 163,160 ha harvested last season. There is good subsoil moisture in fallow paddocks, but establishment of early sown crops is patchy as seedbeds were drying down at the time of planting. Sowing has been at a standstill for over a month with only 26% of the crop currently planted. Forecast rain this week should allow planting to recommence.

Maize plantings are forecast to be 32,010 ha. Around 54% of the crop will be planted in the Riverina this season primarily in response to a reduction in cotton area, good water supplies and competitive grain prices. Crop establishment has generally been good, although crops sown in early September in the north were slow to establish due to cool conditions. About 65% of the crop was sown by 26 October.

Mungbean plantings are forecast to be 10,530 ha, down 26% on last season, mainly as a result of disappointing results last season and allocation of cropping area to other lower risk crops.

A sunflower planting of 15,710 ha is forecast, also down on last season. Only 34% of the forecast 8,260 ha of the early monounsaturated type has been sown due to dry seedbeds. Rain is urgently needed in the north to complete plantings. Smaller areas will be sown in the irrigation valleys of the centre and south this season.

Soybean sowings are forecast at 31,300 ha. Strong prices are behind this season's interest in soybeans. The Riverina irrigated crop is forecast at 12,000 ha, which would be the largest since 1993-94. The North Coast is also forecast to have a crop of 12,000 ha, but is waiting on good rains.

The NSW cotton crop is forecast at 416,500 ha, comprising 227,000 ha irrigated and 72,000 ha dryland on skip row configurations. Most of the irrigated crop is now sown but the dryland crop is only about 50% sown and is desperately waiting for a planting rain before the sowing window closes in mid November. Establishment has generally been better than last season with very little replanting. Prices remain low at around \$400/bale.

The NSW rice crop is forecast at around 120,000 ha. Current water availability, which includes carryover water, is 100% for the Murray valley and 89% for the Murrumbidgee valley. Temperatures were below average for the first half of October, but have improved over the past two weeks which is assisting crop establishment. More crops were drill sown this year in order to lower input costs and to avoid duck damage. Ducks are still causing some damage to establishing aerial sown crops in localised areas, along creeks and on the edges of irrigation districts.

RAINFALL & TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK – November 2012 to January 2013 (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 45% along the southern border up to 65% along parts of the far north western border NSW.

The chances that the average maximum temperature will exceed the long-term median maximum temperatures is from 50% across the north western, north eastern and south eastern half of NSW, with up to 60% in the south western half of NSW.

The chances that the average minimum temperature will exceed the long-term median minimum temperatures range from 65% in the south eastern half and a smaller section of the central far western part of NSW up to 75% across the central northern part of NSW.

Indicators of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation remain at neutral levels. Atmospheric indicators such as the Southern Oscillation Index, trade winds, and tropical cloud patterns have persisted at neutral levels through much of the southern winter and spring. Temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean are generally warmer than normal in western and central areas, but are very close to their average values in the east.

Climate models surveyed by the Bureau of Meteorology suggest sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean are likely to remain neutral, but warmer than average through until at least early 2013.

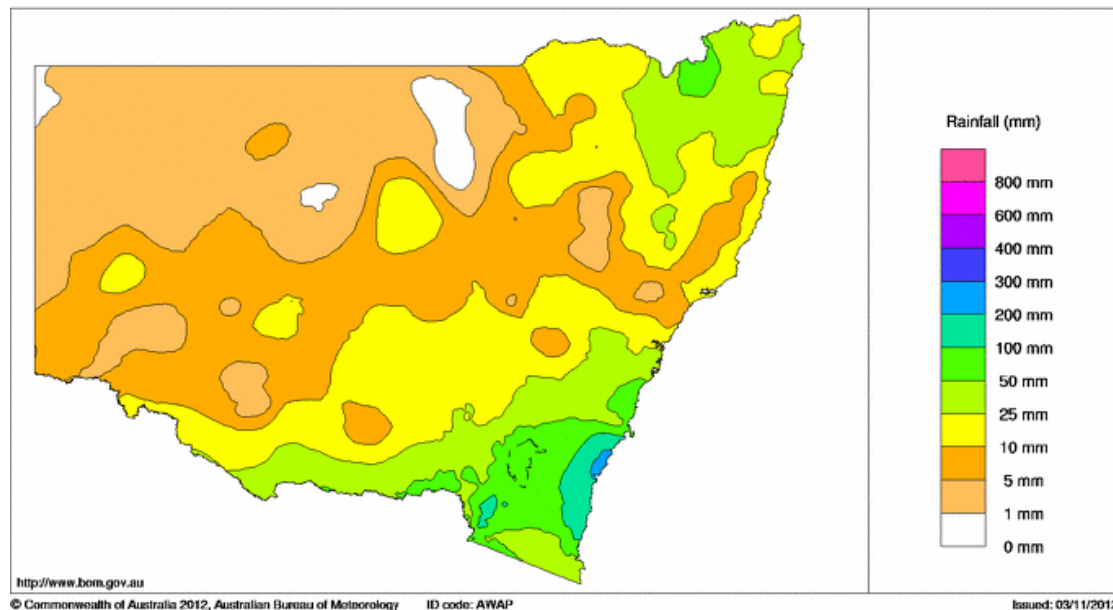
This year has seen a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which has contributed to below average rainfall across large parts of Australia during recent months. The positive IOD pattern in the Indian Ocean has declined over the last few weeks, and has now returned to neutral levels. This is typical behaviour of the IOD, which usually breaks down before the onset of the Australian monsoon.

STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	8 October 2012	2 November 2012	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	89	87	2
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	unk	unk	unk
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	97	94	3
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	95	91	4
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	87	87	0
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	100	98	2
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	97	86	11
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	60	59	1
Oberon Dam, Oberon	unk	98	unk
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	98	98	0
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	100	99	1
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	98	89	9
Blowering Dam, Tumut	92	91	1
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	98	99	(1)
Hume Dam, Albury	98	95	3
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	100	99	1
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	96	95	1
Lostock Dam, Singleton	98	93	5
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	99	96	3
Broggo Dam, Bega	100	100	0

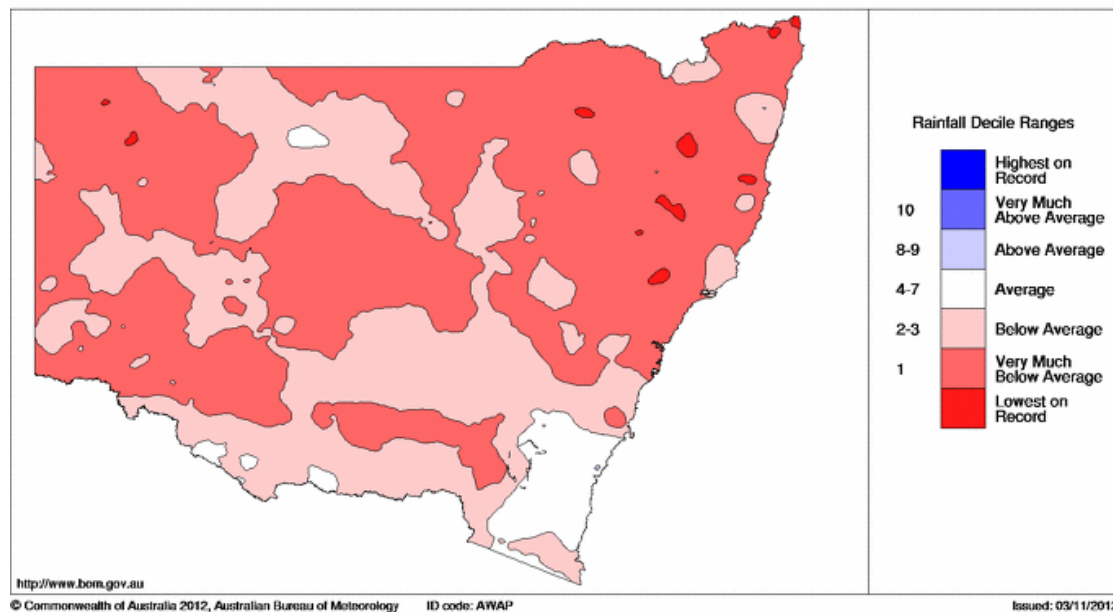
NSW rainfall (actual) October 2012

New South Wales Rainfall Totals (mm) October 2012
Product of the National Climate Centre



NSW rainfall (3 month decile) August to October 2012

New South Wales Rainfall Deciles 1 August to 31 October 2012
Distribution Based on Gridded Data
Product of the National Climate Centre



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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