

NSW Seasonal Conditions Summary - May 2014

Highlights

- Good rainfall in April continued to boost conditions over much of southern, central & western NSW. However, areas of the north west & west received lighter falls.
- The chances of a drier or wetter May to July are nearly equal, as are warmer or cooler daytime temperatures. Wetter conditions are likely in the south east. Warmer overnight temperatures are likely in the east & south.
- Pasture growth continued to increase, with improved species responding well, but was limited over some areas of the north west, west & coast. Over the quarter it was average or better over 92% of NSW. Some areas may experience a 'green drought' during winter as growth slows.
- Sowing of mid-season winter crops continued over central & southern areas, which now have good soil moisture. Early sown and dual purpose crops have responded well. More rainfall is needed in the north.
- Stock water supplies remain variable in some areas.
- Resources to assist in management are available at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/emergency/drought/managing>

Conditions continued to improve during April over southern, central and most of western NSW and areas of the coast. Rainfall was particularly good across western and southern NSW. However, some areas of the north west and west continued to receive lighter, patchy falls.

Combined with mild-warm temperatures, the rainfall continued to boost to pasture and forage crop growth and to improve conditions for winter grain crops. Improved pastures and early-sown dual purpose crops continued to respond well, although growth slowed in the tablelands. Some areas may experience a 'green drought' over winter. Mid-season winter grain crop sowings are progressing; with sowings of late season varieties yet to commence. Soil moisture levels over much of central and southern NSW continued to improve. More rainfall is still needed over much of the northern cropping area. The rainfall affected the harvesting and quality of some summer crops. Stock water supplies are variable over the tablelands and north west.

The chances of a wetter or drier than normal May to July are equal across the western and

central areas. There is a slightly increased chance of wetter conditions across the south east and some of the east. Wetter conditions are likely in the far south east. The chances for warmer or cooler daytime temperatures are roughly equal, with possibly cooler daytime temperatures across central NSW. Warmer daytime temperatures are likely in the far south east. Warmer overnight temperatures are likely over the east and south, and the chances of warmer or cooler overnight temperatures are roughly equal elsewhere.

ENSO is still neutral, but El Niño conditions are likely to develop over winter. Sea surface and sub-surface temperatures have continued to warm and other indicators are showing or likely to develop El Niño trends. The Bureau of Meteorology has issued an El Niño alert.

Most of NSW received average to above average rainfall during April. Rainfall over most areas ranged from 25-100 mm. It was lower across the north but above average in the west and south. Daytime temperatures were above average in the north and average elsewhere. Overnight temperatures were above average.

In relative terms, quarterly rainfall was average or above average over 97% of NSW, with lower rainfall over the north coast and northern tablelands. Half yearly relative rainfall was average or above over 83% of NSW.

Stock water supplies have improved, but are variable. Streamflow analysis over the last year indicates well below average run off over areas of the tablelands, north coast and north west.

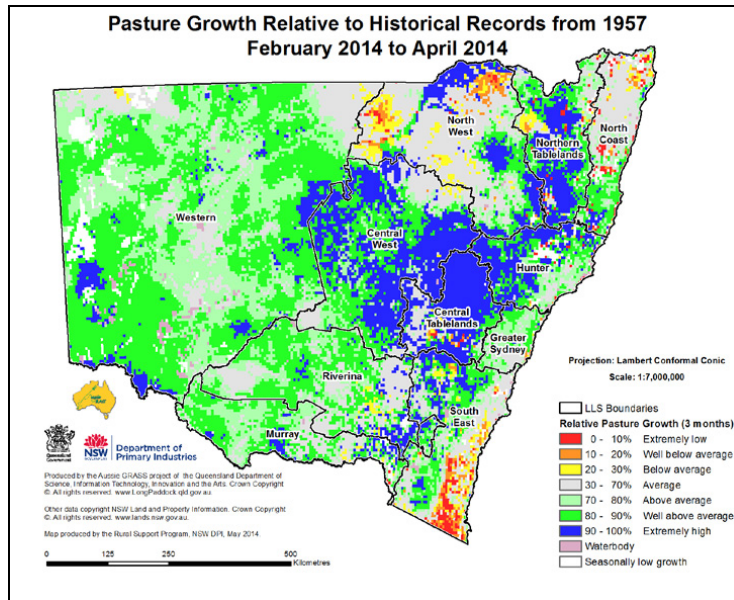
Modelling indicated pasture growth continued to improve, although slowing over the tablelands and low over the coast, far west and north west. Relative growth was average or better over 74% of NSW during April and 92% of NSW over the quarter. Biomass levels improved, particularly over central areas. Relative biomass and half yearly relative growth were average or above over 85% or more of NSW.

The seasonal outlooks presented in this report are obtained from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology & other sources. These outlooks are general statements about the likelihood (chance) of (for example) exceeding the median rainfall or minimum or maximum temperatures. Such probability outlooks should not be used as categorical or definitive forecasts, but should be regarded as tools to assist in risk management & decision making. Changes in seasonal outlooks may have occurred since this report was released. Outlook information was up to date as at 8th May 2014.

Figure 1: Relative monthly topsoil moisture

Soil moisture data and maps were not available at the time of publication

Figure 2: Relative quarterly pasture growth



More information

For more information, contact the NSW Department of Primary Industries on 02 6391 3100 or Local Land Services on 1300 795 299.

Acknowledgments

Information used in this report was sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, Queensland Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, NSW Local Land Services and NSW Department of Primary Industries.

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