

DECEMBER 2012 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 0% (no change)
Area in **Marginal**: 73.0% (increase from 47.1%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 27.0% (decrease from 52.9%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Nil

REVOCATIONS (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
New England LHPA	Part of district moved from satisfactory to marginal
Western LHPA	Whole district moved from satisfactory to marginal

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Nil

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

RAINFALL FOR NOVEMBER 2012 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall maps)

NSW received little rainfall across most of NSW during November, except in smaller parts of eastern NSW. The western part of NSW generally recorded falls up to 25 mm, though some areas received no rain. Central NSW generally recorded falls of 1 mm up to 50 mm. The eastern part of NSW generally recorded falls of 10 mm up to 100 mm in smaller sections.

Generally, the state is not experiencing any 6 month rainfall deficiencies, except for several smaller parts across the state which are experiencing serious deficiencies.

There has been a slight worsening of rainfall deficiencies in affected areas of southern NSW over the [7-month \(April to October\)](#) period. North-eastern NSW received rainfall in the lowest 10 per cent of records.

The three monthly deciles shows that the rainfall has ranged from lowest on record in several small parts of the central and western parts of NSW up to average rainfall across larger areas of NSW.

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

The twelve monthly deciles show that all of NSW has received average to very much above average 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, 9 December 2012)

The harvest of the States winter crop wound up in most of the western cropping zones across NSW by the end of November. Regions where the harvest is ongoing are in the north on the Liverpool Plains, upper central and southern slopes and tablelands and the southern irrigations areas. It is expected unless we see a significant shift in weather patterns the NSW, winter crop harvest will be wound up before the last week in December.

The dry conditions through much of the State over late spring and the start of summer brought harvest forward for many growers, with harvest finishing ahead of normal dates. The continuation of good weather through most of the harvest period has meant largely an uninterrupted harvest for many growers. A series of storm fronts passed through NSW over the November period, dropping significant rainfall in some districts in a short period. Griffith received on the 7-8th of November 94.2 mm, lesser rainfall events were recorded in other districts through November. Whilst the rainfall recorded was high in many instances the short duration and the return to warmer days, quickly allowed harvest to re commence in these districts and we did not see major issues with weather down graded grain as the previous 2 seasons.

Overall performance of wheat has been variable, with those crops sown on time throughout the State yielding remarkably well given the well below average winter and spring rainfall for most districts. Overall wheat yields across the State will be below long term averages but above what would have been expected based on in-crop rainfall. The good levels of stored soil moisture across the State from the wet summer has been the driving force behind this years crop performance. Grain quality has been the biggest issue, with grain protein levels being reported as low in most regions. The 2 previous big cropping years, the flooding that occurred earlier in the year and the dry late winter and spring have led to cropping paddocks being low in nitrogen, resulting in low protein grain.

Barley crops have again performed well with there shorter maturity allowing them to cope with the dry spring conditions. With wheat the main concern for many growers has been the low grain protein, resulting in crops being down graded from malt to feed classifications.

Overall canola yields are below average, however oil levels have been good, with only the later panted crops or those crops suffering moisture stress during the grain filling period having lower then expected oil percentages. Frost has taken some yield off crops right through the State, with growers only realising the extent once the harvesting operation began.

The ongoing focus of growers will be to maintain clean summer fallows for next years winter crop, given the big benefits growers got this year from conserving the summer rainfall received in 2012.

The States summer crop is not fairing well given the continued dry spring conditions. Whilst good subsoil moisture levels are present the lack of a sowing rain through November has affected the overall area sown to summer crops this year. Sorghum, mung bean and dryland cotton areas are expected to all decline if no rainfall occurs prior to the 20th December.

Some of the current dryland sorghum crop is struggling given the tough start and little spring rainfall. If no more rain comes in the next 10-14 days, growers may take the option of spraying these crops out and fallowing the paddock through for a winter crop.

If a good rain event (40-50 mm) does occur prior through the central and northern areas by mid December, we are likely to see some further areas of dryland sorghum sown, with a likely big shift to the shorter season sunflower types as growers look to maximise the returns from a shortened growing season and higher returning summer crop option. If no rainfall eventuates for December then this country will most likely be fallowed through to a winter crop.

The irrigated cotton and rice crop are doing well, with good irrigation allocations across all the main production regions, the warmer conditions have been of benefit to these crops.

Pasture conditions continue to deteriorate across the State with the limited November rainfall in most districts. Good growth of perennial species such as lucerne occurred in November where the storm activity was present. The overall biomass of annual pastures are low in most regions except for some tablelands and coastal districts. The need for hand feeding stock has eased across much of the cropping zone as growers move stock off pastures and onto crop stubbles. If good rainfall is not received by mid December and kicks start perennial pastures, grower will be faced with returning to hand feeding stock by January as crop stubbles are exhausted. In most cases cereal crop stubbles will be of low nutritional value once stock clean up any split grain from harvest operations as the trend for low protein grain also means stubble will have very low residual protein (nitrogen levels) to maintain stock, so if stock are to continue to graze stubbles they will need to be supplemented with a protein source.

RAINFALL & TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK – December 2012 to February 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% in the far north western part of NSW up to 75% in a small part of the far north eastern part of NSW.

The chances that the average maximum temperature will exceed the long-term median is from 30% in the far north eastern part of NSW, up to 65% across the southern border of NSW.

The chances that the average minimum temperature will exceed the long-term median ranges from 35% across the southern border of NSW up to 50% in the far north eastern part of NSW.

El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) indicators in the tropical Pacific remain at neutral levels. As ENSO events are usually well established by the end of the southern spring, the current neutral pattern is likely to persist at least until the end of the year.

Although being below El Niño levels, tropical Pacific Ocean temperatures remain warmer than average. Atmospheric indicators, such as the Southern Oscillation Index, trade winds and tropical cloud patterns, have all remained at neutral levels through the winter and spring.

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

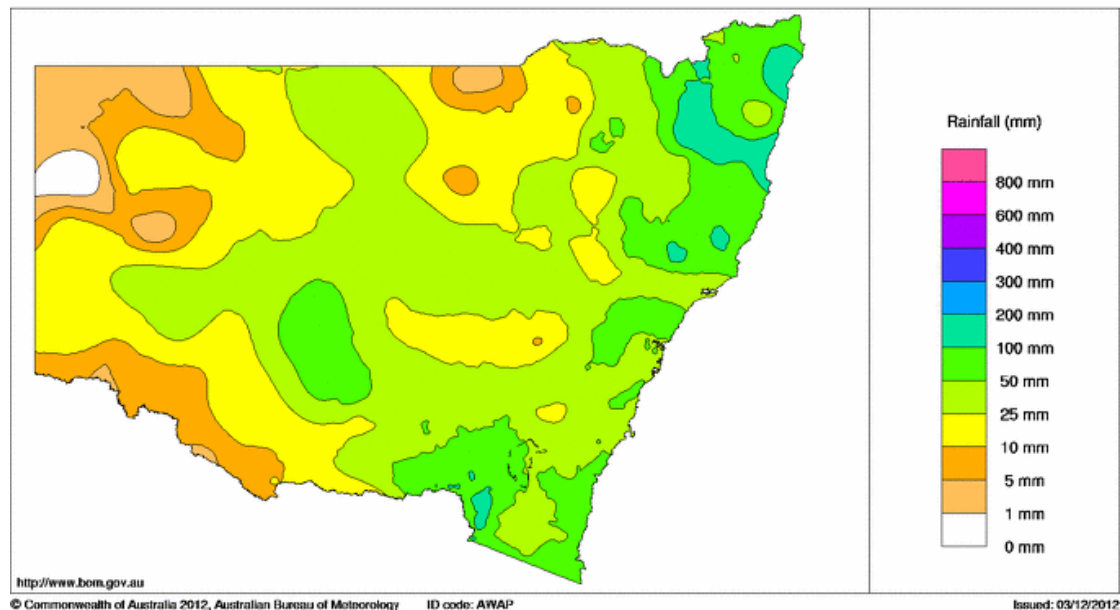
After reaching positive levels during spring, the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is following its normal cycle of decay approaching the end of the year and is currently near neutral. The IOD has limited influence upon Australian climate over summer and autumn.

STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	2 November 2012	4 December 2012	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	87	unk	unk
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	unk	unk	unk
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	94	unk	unk
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	91	unk	unk
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	87	unk	unk
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	98	94	4
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	86	unk	unk
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	59	unk	unk
Oberon Dam, Oberon	98	95	3
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	98	94	4
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	99	unk	unk
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	89	73	16
Blowering Dam, Tumut	91	92	(1)
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	99	99	0
Hume Dam, Albury	95	unk	unk
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	99	98	1
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	95	unk	unk
Lostock Dam, Singleton	93	unk	unk
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	96	92	4
Broggo Dam, Bega	100	unk	unk

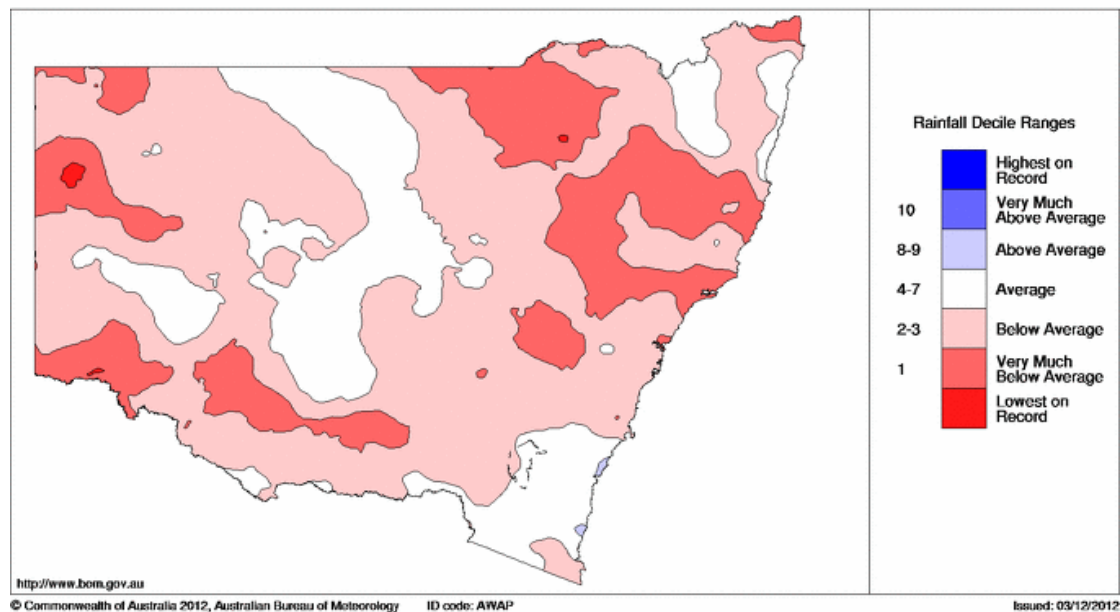
NSW rainfall (actual) November 2012

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



NSW rainfall (3 month decile) September to November 2012

New South Wales Rainfall Deciles 1 September to 30 November 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