

JANUARY 2012 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 0.0% (no change)
Area in **Marginal**: 1.5% (down from 26.4%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 98.5% (up from 73.6%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Nil

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

Nil

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Nil

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Central West LHPA	Part of District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory
Darling LHPA	Whole District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory
Lachlan LHPA	Whole District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory
North West LHPA	Part of District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory (Whole District now Satisfactory)
Tablelands LHPA	Part of District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory (Whole District now Satisfactory)

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

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

NSW recorded excellent rainfall across all areas during December. The eastern half of NSW generally recorded falls up to 200mm. Small areas around Tamworth, Tweed Heads and Kempsey received up to 300mm, which led to flooding in parts of the central north. The western half of NSW received falls up to 100mm.

The three monthly deciles show that all of NSW has received average to highest on record average rainfall. The southern areas of the State have generally received average to above average rainfall, while the northern half has received above average to very much above average rainfall. The coast has mainly received average to above average rainfall. An area of the northern border, west of Moree, down to Coonabarabran, has received their highest rain on record.

Six month rainfall deciles indicate that generally most of the State has had at least average rainfall. The central north of the State had very much above average to highest on record rainfall.

Twelve month rainfall deciles show average to highest on record rainfall across NSW, with one small exception in the north west having below average rainfall.

CROPS AND PASTURES (provided by Peter Matthews, Dept. Primary Industries, 9 January 2012)

Winter crop

The harvest of the states 11.23 M tonne winter crop is now winding up with isolated pockets yet to be harvested. The delay is due to the continuing storm activity that persisted through many areas and the flood waters which moved and peaked through the various northern river systems in December, preventing growers from accessing paddocks and harvesting crop.

Well above average rainfall was received during December for much of the northern and central regions which compounded the effects of the big falls received in the last week of November. Moree 126.6 mm, Walgett 84.6 mm, Coonamble 128.4 mm, Tamworth 79.8 mm, Gunnedah 94 mm, Dubbo 74.8 mm, Parkes 130.6 mm, Condobolin 95.8 mm and Cowra 111.2 mm for the month. The southern region was more fortunate but still in many cases received above average rain in the more easterly areas, Wagga 67.4 mm, Cootamundra 59 mm, Temora 63 mm.

Overall the level of down grading of grain quality is not expected to be as high as in the 2010 season across all crops, but we will still see in the order of 40% of the wheat across NSW downgraded to some extent. Apart from the associated down grading of grain quality from the rain, many growers through the state achieved low protein levels in cereal crops, particularly if these were on cereal stubbles or followed poorly maintained summer fallows. These lower protein levels have seen an increased proportion of the crop delivered into APW and ASW grades compared to previous years.

The one highlight this year has been the excellent oil content of the bulk of the NSW canola crop, levels ranged from 40-44% in the west and north and 42-48% plus in the centre and south of the state.

Grain storage and delivery to storages was an issue for some regions in the central and southern parts of the state. The situation was made worse by the need for an increased number of segregations at sites due to the downgrading of grain by the rain through harvest. A large amount of grain has been temporarily stored on farm due to the rush to beat rain events and the delivery congestion at some sites, this will need to make its way into the system through the coming months.

Mice activity is reported as low, with some activity in crop stubbles and around sheds. The rain interrupted harvest, will again provide an opportunity for a potential build up of mice in areas that have residual populations from this

season. Growers will need to remain vigilant through summer and monitor paddocks for activity, particularly in paddocks where unharvested areas remain or higher than usual header losses have occurred.

Continuing storm activity across the state has maintained pasture conditions through December, with good to excellent conditions over the majority of the state. The southwest slopes and the Riverina received a number of rain events, stimulating perennial pastures that were struggling in November. As harvest progressed across the state growers began moving stock onto crop stubbles, relieving the pressure on pastures. With the continuing wet conditions some growers have locked up paddocks, particularly lucerne pastures in an attempt to cut some late hay having missed the opportunity through late spring.

With the late season rain, crop stubbles have begun to green up with volunteer crop and weeds species. Growers will need to begin fallow spaying operations to keep paddocks in good condition for the 2012 season. The benefits of maintaining good fallows through the 2010/11 summer showed dividends for growers with higher yields and higher protein levels in 2011.

Summer Crop

The prospects for the summer crop continued to improve across the state following further rain in the central and northern regions. The cooler conditions associated with the rain events continued to slow the crop through early December, but with temperatures picking up in late December crops were compensating.

The current estimates for December were for 686,689 ha of summer crop, plus an additional 100,000 ha of rice sown in southern NSW. Reports indicate that up to 30% of the dryland cotton and 5% of the irrigated cotton may be lost in the Gwydir valley. Losses are also expected in the Lower Namoi valley.

Sowing is still on going for short season summer crop varieties, given the excellent condition in many parts, with the biggest issue being wet paddocks and growers waiting for them to dry out.

General security irrigation allocations across the state are now at 100% for all the major river systems, providing excellent conditions to maximise summer crop yields.

RAINFALL & TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK – January 2012 to March 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 January 2012-March 2012 are at 50-60% in the States east (tablelands and coast). The central areas of the State display a 45-60% chance of above average rainfall. In contrast, the western third of the State can expect 35-40% chance of above average rainfall.

The odds of higher than normal minimum temperatures over NSW ranges between 55-65%.

Most atmospheric and oceanic indicators continue to exceed La Niña thresholds. The Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) monthly December value of +23 being the highest value since the breakdown of the 2010-11 event in autumn 2011. The effects of this La Niña can be seen in Australia, with much of the country receiving above average rainfall since October.

WATER SUPPLIES

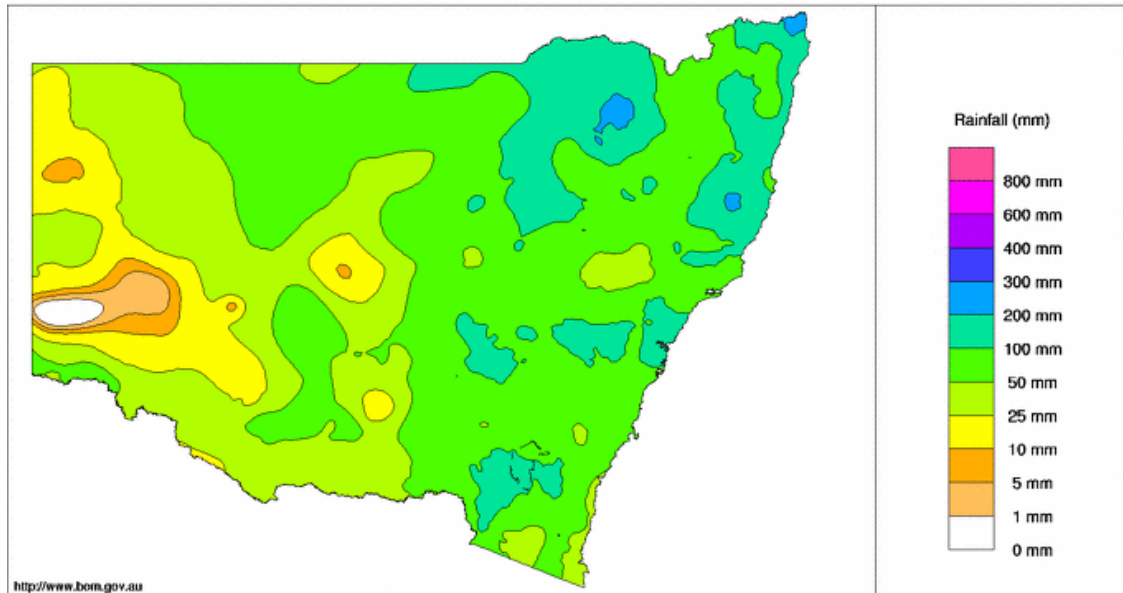
Note: The State Water Storages report is no longer produced. An updated table will now be included showing the situation for each of the major storages.

STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	5 December 2011	10 January 2012	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	100	100	0
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	108	unk	unk
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	84	unk	unk
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	97	98	1
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	38	unk	unk
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	101	100	(1)
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	89	85	(4)
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	48	48	0
Oberon Dam, Oberon	62	63	1
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	87	83	(4)
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	85	87	2
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	96	87	(9)
Blowering Dam, Tumut	94	87	(7)
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	75	76	1
Hume Dam, Albury	93	78	(15)
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	100	100	0
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	97	unk	unk
Lostock Dam, Singleton	101	unk	unk
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	100	100	0
Broggo Dam, Bega	101	101	0

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

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



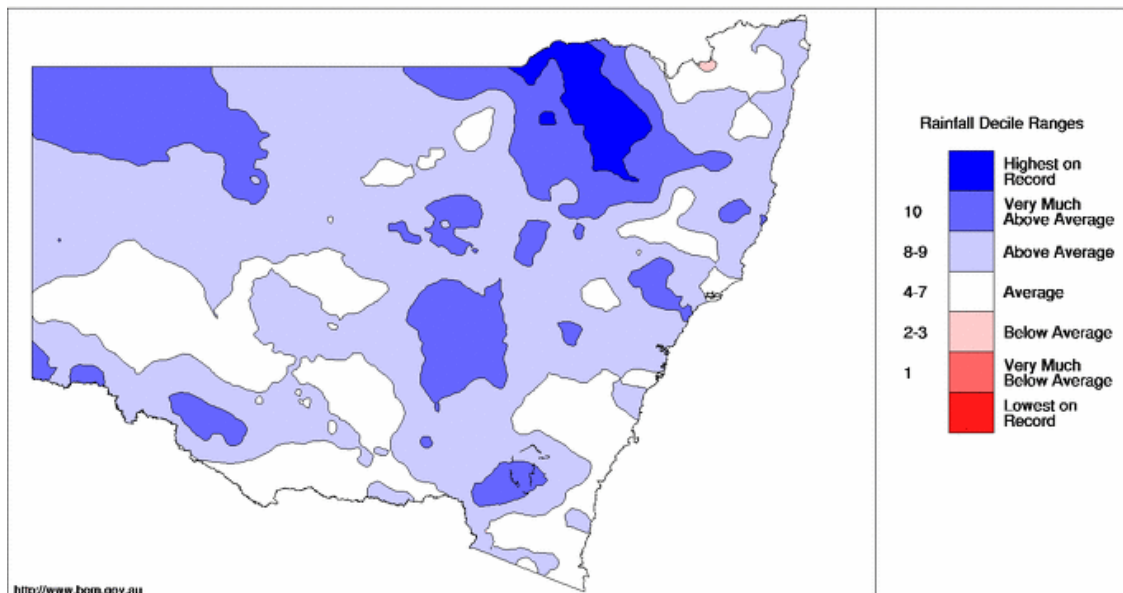
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NSW rainfall (3 month decile) October to December 2011

New South Wales Rainfall Deciles 1 October to 31 December 2011

Distribution Based on Gridded Data
Product of the National Climate Centre



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12 January 2012**

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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