

OCTOBER 2011 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

OCTOBER 2011 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS (see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 12.2% (down from 13.9%)
Area in **Marginal**: 28.7% (up from 27.0%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 59.1% (no change)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Nil

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

Central North LHPA Part of District moved from Drought to Marginal

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

South East LHPA Part of District moved from Satisfactory to Marginal

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Central West LHPA Part of District moved from Marginal to Satisfactory

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

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

NSW recorded reasonable rainfall in most areas during September. The eastern half of NSW generally recorded falls ranging from 25 to 100mm. Falls in the north east were generally upwards of 100mm, while the south east generally recorded falls up to 50mm. The western half of NSW received falls between 5-25mm, though the northern border region fared better with falls between 50-100mm.

The three monthly deciles show that the majority of NSW has received average rainfall. Small areas of above average rainfall have been recorded in the central coast and adjoining tablelands, south east corner and the central northern border region around Collarenebri. An area stretching from the far west (central and southern) through the centre of the State (Condobolin, Forbes to Goulburn) is displaying below average rainfall.

Six month rainfall deciles indicate below average rainfall across the western half and southern central regions of NSW. The north east third of the state had average rainfall with above average falls over much of the coast.

Twelve month rainfall deciles show above average to very much above average rainfall across NSW.

CROPS AND PASTURES (provided by Peter Matthews, Dept. Primary Industries, 11 October 2011)

The condition of the estimated 4.64 M ha of winter crop was variable across the state, as rainfall in some areas continued to be below average for the year. Yield prospects for the state's winter crop declined through September, following on from the drier conditions in August. The rain event in the last week of September, which continued into early October, has shored up the state's winter crop. Forecasts in the third week of September placed the state's production at 10.11 M tonnes of grain, this is now conservatively expected to increase by 10% if wetter conditions persist through October.

Frost has been a concern through southern and central NSW with an event on the 12-14 September causing damage to both cereal and broadleaf crops that were flowering at the time. Damage has been reported by growers through these regions, with the worst reports coming from the western Riverina.

The dry conditions in August and most of September saw some crops in the central and north western part of the state abandoned, with crops being grazed out.

Crop growth stage varies from wheat and barley crops in the more western areas at mid-late grain fill through to crops that were sown later in the eastern districts at early ear emergence. By the end of September most canola crops were finishing flowering, except for some later crops in the south east. With the drier conditions through September many canola crops prematurely finished flowering due to lack of moisture and hotter temperatures.

Pasture growth improved through September in districts that received good rainfall through the second week of September. Hand feeding stock remained common place in the central, north and western Riverina districts. The end of September rain will boost pasture growth across the state, but may be too late for some of the more western areas as annual pasture species have already moved into the reproductive phase, with little more vegetative growth expected to be produced. Growers with perennial based pastures will benefit from the late September rain.

The mice situation still remains a concern parts of the state. Mice activity has increased in some parts of the Riverina, lower central west slopes and south west slopes districts, with crop damage being reported to both cereal and broadleaf crops. Mice activity is more prevalent in paddocks where no control was undertaken through winter or where crops adjoin pasture or riparian areas. As the temperatures increase and crops mature, mice activity and crop damage will increase if growers are not vigilant with crop monitoring and baiting programs.

The drier weather through early and mid September saw the development of stripe rust in wheat decline. The rain in the last week of September will now see another build up of stripe rust, given the more favourable conditions. Growers with more susceptible varieties will need to continue to monitor crops and apply fungicides as required.

Summer crop areas under irrigation will increase this year given the expectation of good irrigation water allocations and present prices for grain and fibre crops. Early plantings of sunflowers has already commenced in northern NSW. Cotton will be the crop where we will see the most significant area increase in both the northern and southern irrigations areas. The end of September rain has been timed perfectly providing excellent sowing moisture for this year's summer crop in central and northern NSW.

LIVESTOCK (Regional staff)

Pasture conditions across the state are expected to improve with recent rainfall and warmer spring temperatures. Standing feed from last summer is of very poor quality and not sufficient to maintain stock. Hand feeding stock in some areas, particularly pregnant or lambing ewes and cattle, is increasing. In some parts of the central and northwest, livestock have been put on to failing crops.

RAINFALL & TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK – October to December 2011 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall and temperature outlook and El Nino Southern Oscillation [ENSO] wrap-up)

In summary, the next three months are forecast to bring slightly above average rainfall and slightly warmer temperatures.

The chances of receiving above median rainfall during the October-December period are generally just above average over most of the State with the odds ranging between 50-60%. The south border regions of the State can expect average rainfall with the decile range at 50-55%, while the rest of the State has a 55-60% chance of above average rainfall.

The outlook for October to December maximum and minimum temperatures show the odds favouring average to slightly higher than average temperatures. The odds of higher than normal maximum temperatures over the north, north east and coastal regions of NSW range between 50-60%, while in the southern and western regions of NSW the odds range between 60-75%. The odds of higher than normal minimum temperatures over all of NSW range between 60-75%.

The continuing cooling trend in the central Pacific Ocean is consistent with a developing La Nina event. The majority of climate models predict current patterns and trends will continue. The Southern Oscillation Index is currently +8, indicating La Nina conditions. If a La Nina forms, it is not expected to be as strong as the 2010-11 event.

WATER SUPPLIES

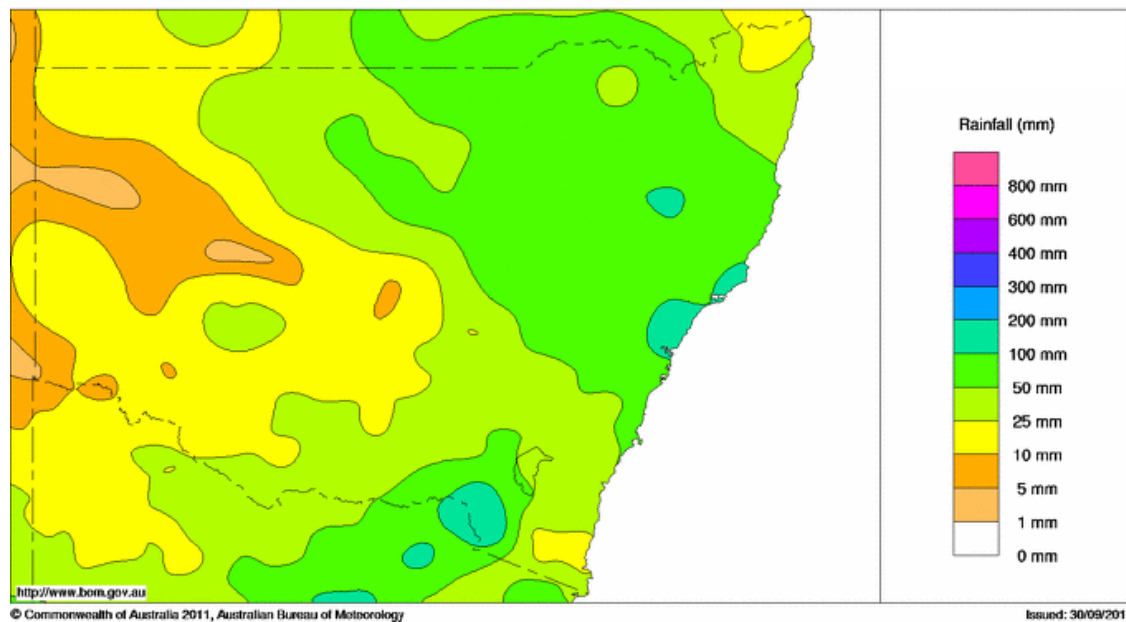
Note: The State Water Storages report is no longer produced. An updated table will now be included showing the situation for each of the major storages.

STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	3 Aug 2011	12 Oct 2011	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	99	100	1.0
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	114	108	(6.0)
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	50	54	4.0
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	99	99	0.0
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	20	21	1.0
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	101	100	(1.0)
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	91	88	(3.0)
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	46	46	0.0
Oberon Dam, Oberon	54	59	5.0
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	92	92	0.0
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	77	83	6.0
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	94	99	5.0
Blowering Dam, Tumut	94	93	(1.0)
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	67	72	5.0
Hume Dam, Albury	96	98	2.0
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	100	100	0.0
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	88	94	6.0
Lostock Dam, Singleton	101	100	(1.0)
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	101	101	0.0
Broggo Dam, Bega	101	100	(1.0)

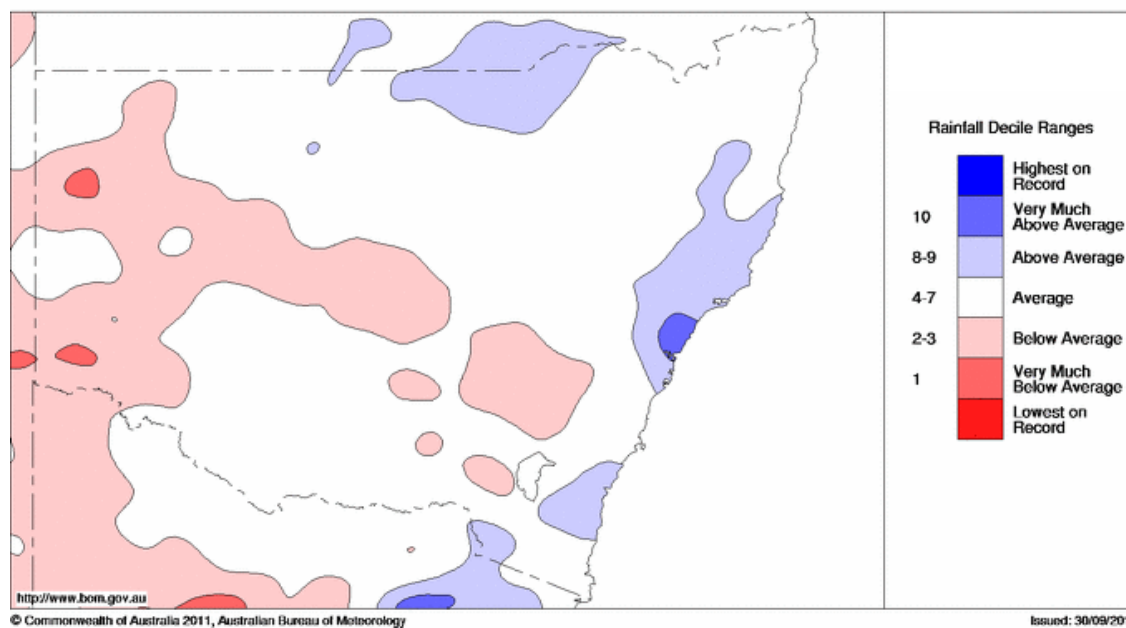
Information sources: NSW rainfall (actual) September 2011

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



NSW rainfall (3 month decile) July to September 2011

New South Wales Rainfall Deciles 1 July to 30 September 2011
Distribution Based on Gridded Data
Product of the National Climate Centre



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14 October 2011

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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