

DECEMBER 2011 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 0.0% (down from 6.3%)
Area in **Marginal**: 26.4% (down from 27.8%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 73.6% (up from 65.9%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Nil

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

Central West LHPA Part of District moved from Drought to Marginal
North West LHPA Part of District moved from Drought to Marginal

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Nil

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

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

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

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

NSW recorded excellent rainfall across all areas during November. The eastern half of NSW generally recorded falls up to 200mm. Small areas around Moree, Armidale and Port Macquarie received up to 300mm, which led to flooding in parts of the central north. The western half of NSW received falls between 25-100mm with the area around Tibooburra receiving up to 200mm.

The three monthly deciles show that all of NSW has received average to above average rainfall. The southern areas of the State have generally received average rainfall, while the northern half has received above average rainfall. The central north, hunter and far north-west have received very much above average rainfall while an area of the northern border, west of Moree, has received their highest rain on record.

Six month rainfall deciles indicate that generally most of the State has had at least average rainfall. A small area in the States south west and another south of Orange received below average rainfall. In contrast the north east of the State had above to very much above average rainfall.

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, 7 December 2011)

Winter crop

The harvest of the states winter crop is well under way, with harvest progress across the state varying from 30% in the more easterly districts, to being wound up in some of the western districts. A major rain event impacted on the states winter crop over the period of 22 - 26 November, (Moree – 218 mm, Narrabri 173 mm, Tamworth – 198 mm and Gunnedah 125 mm) this interrupted harvest and resulted in flooding in parts of the state. In addition to any losses from flooding the rain has had a significant effect on the quality of the states winter cereal harvest and to a less extent on oilseeds and pulse crops. Barring further rain the level of crop downgrading will not be as severe as in 2010 season, as many of the more westerly areas had harvested the bulk of there crops prior to the rain.

North – harvest is well underway, faba bean harvest is complete, canola harvest is complete in north western areas, with a small number of crops still to be harvested on the Liverpool Plains (Tamworth and Gunnedah). Chickpea harvest is 60% complete on the plains, but many crops on the slopes are now too wet to access in the short term. An estimated 85% of cereal crops are now harvested on the plains and 60% harvested on the slopes. It is expected that apart from some of the later crops in the more easterly areas that grain quality will have deteriorated significantly from the rain in November. Paddock trafficability is now a major issue and will further delay growers even if the grain dries out. There will be some crop losses due to flooding. Gunnedah, Narrabri-Wee Waa and Moree are the worst affected areas, the full extent will not be known until the flood waters move through the river systems beyond Walgett and other western towns.

Centre –the majority of the faba beans, field peas and canola have been harvested, with some canola still in windrows around Molong, Cudal and Cowra. Both chickpeas and albus lupin crops were still drying down when the rain interrupted harvest. Cereal harvest is estimated to be 60% complete across the region. Prior to the rain good quality milling wheat and malt barley were being delivered into the system, except for the more easterly crops, most now has been downgraded to either GP or Feed classifications. Some localised flooding has occurred around Forbes following the rain in November.

South – harvest in the dryland areas of the Riverina is starting to wind up with much of the area missing out on the rain events that moved through the rest of the state. Grain quality is holding up, with most of the weather damaged grain coming from the more easterly areas of the region. In the east (South West Slopes) the cereal harvest is estimated to be 45% complete. Most of the cereals now would have some degree of weather damage, reports indicate that the crop on the upper slopes may have escaped a lot of the damage, but will be very susceptible to any further rain. Some canola has been affected by

the rain, with lower test weights at this stage, most is still making grade specifications, but we are seeing a drop in oils percentages by 3-4% in weather damaged grain.

Storm events have occurred in some districts on the southwest slopes with the worst hit areas being west of Wagga, Ganmain, Downside and old Junee on the 29 November, where hail, heavy rain and strong winds damaged crops and some farm infrastructure. Some storm damage has also been reported in the Wyalong district.

A developing issue is the availability of grain storage in parts of the southern delivery region. Large amounts of carry over grain from the 2010 harvest is seeing some storages reach capacity, plus the higher than expected grain tonnages for crops like canola has seen some storage fill earlier than expected.

Mice activity is low, with only limited reports of field activity and some activity around sheds being reported. The wet harvest again will provide an opportunity for a potential build up of mice over summer if crops are not harvested fully due to paddock inaccessibility and poor trafficability, losses from flooding or higher than usual header losses from lodged/damaged crops. Regions with past activity and summer crops will need to be vigilant and monitor both harvested crop stubbles and maturing summer crops for mice build up and crop damage.

Pasture conditions have improved across the state with the November rainfall. Good conditions persist across the upper NSW slopes and tablelands, central and northwest slopes. The south east slopes still needs some more rain to continue to build biomass before the season finishes. The south west slopes and Riverina areas also need more rain to stimulate perennial pastures as many areas in the western Riverina have missed the bulk of the November rains. Through out the State, growers will be taking advantage of crop stubbles as the winter crop is harvested, stock feed will become an issue for growers once this resource is depleted and will see handfeeding resume unless continuing rain is received through January and February.

Summer Crop

Prospects for the summer crop continue to improve across the state following the above average rainfall in parts of the state. The cooler conditions through November, has slowed crop development in parts, but the full soil profiles will allow the crops to compensate once it warms up.

Irrigation water supplies across the state continue to improve with many irrigation districts at 100% allocation levels.

There will be limited summer crop losses in the north west of the state along the river system due to flooding. The rain may also delay some sowing of late sorghum crops, as growers will need to wait for paddocks to dry out. There may also be increased areas of summer grain and fodder crops sown in the

less traditional areas to take advantage of the good November rains and full soil profiles.

The southern rice crop continues to be plagued by ducks, with significant damage being done in districts like Denning, where whole paddocks have been lost due to continuing duck feeding. Reports indicate it is the worst level of damage seen for decades.

RAINFALL & TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK – December 2011 to February 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 December 2011-February 2012 are at 65-75% in the States east (tablelands and coast). The central areas of the State display a 50-65% chance of above average rainfall. In contrast, the western third of the State can expect 40-50% chance of above average rainfall.

The odds of higher than normal maximum temperatures over the southern border ranges between 60-75%. In contrast the odds of above average temperature declines as you move towards the northeast. The central areas of the State should be average while there is only a 35-40% chance of above average temperatures in the north east.

The odds of higher than normal minimum temperatures over NSW ranges between 50-55%.

Most atmospheric and oceanic indicators remain at or just exceed La Nina thresholds. Model surveyed suggest this event is likely to peak at the end of the year and persist into early 2012. This La Nina event is much weaker than the 2010-11 event. The 30 day SOI value is +7.7.

WATER SUPPLIES

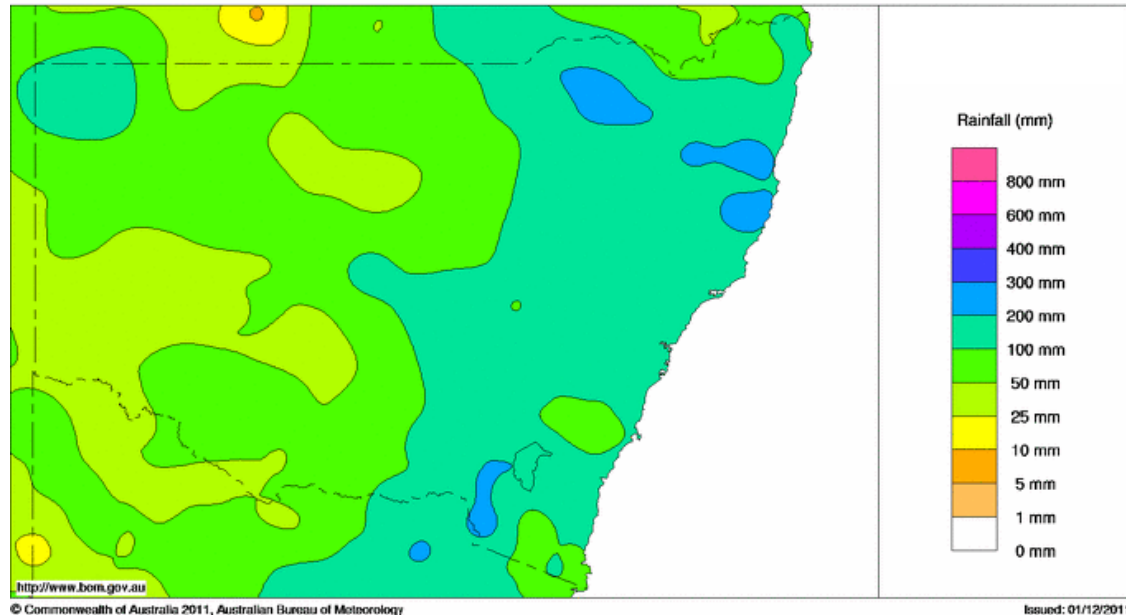
Note: The State Water Storages report is no longer produced. An updated table will now be included showing the situation for each of the major storages.

STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	4 November 2011	5 December 2011	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	100	100	0.0
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	108	108	0.0
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	56	84	28.0
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	99	97	(2.0)
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	22	38	16.0
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	100	101	1.0
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	86	89	3.0
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	46	48	2.0
Oberon Dam, Oberon	59	62	3.0
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	90	87	(3.0)
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	83	85	2.0
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	90	96	6.0
Blowering Dam, Tumut	92	94	2.0
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	74	75	1.0
Hume Dam, Albury	93	93	0.0
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	99	100	1.0
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	95	97	2.0
Lostock Dam, Singleton	100	101	1.0
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	101	100	(1.0)
Broggo Dam, Bega	100	101	1.0

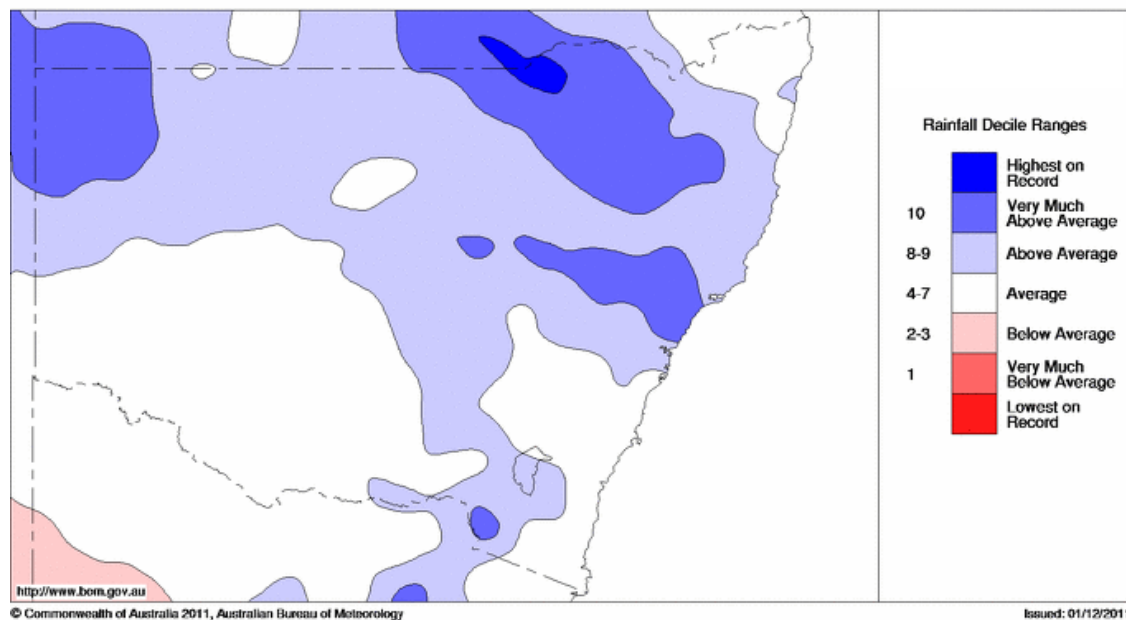
**Information sources:
NSW rainfall (actual) November 2011**

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



NSW rainfall (3 month decile) September to November 2011

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



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8 December 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