

NSW Seasonal Conditions Summary - January 2014

Highlights

- Below normal rainfall is likely over the next 3 months, particularly for the north east & parts of southern NSW.
- Warmer daytime & overnight temperatures are likely over the northern, central & eastern areas of NSW, particularly the north east.
- December had somewhat above normal daytime average temperatures, except along the coast. Rainfall was below average, except in the south & south west.
- Over the last 3-6 months, rainfall has been below average across most of NSW, except coastal areas.
- December relative pasture growth was low across much of western, north western & central western NSW, but average in the east & south. Modelled topsoil moisture was low across most of NSW, but improved slightly in the south west. Subsoil moisture declined slightly.
- Stock condition & pasture production will depend upon follow up rainfall over the coming months. Considerable resources are available to assist in management at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/emergency/drought/managing>

Over January to March lower than normal rainfall is likely across most of NSW, particularly in the north east and parts of the south. January is likely to be drier than normal, with the possibility of slightly wetter conditions in the north east in early-mid month. Near normal rainfall is likely over February, with possibly slightly wetter conditions in the north.

Warmer than normal daytime and overnight temperatures are likely over the January to March period, particularly across the northern and central areas. Near normal temperatures are likely in the south west. Mid-late January is likely to be warmer than normal and February near normal, except overnight in the south west.

The ENSO climatic indicators are currently neutral, and the ENSO outlooks suggest a high probability for neutral conditions to continue over summer and into autumn.

Over December, 47% of NSW received below average rainfall. Only 8% of NSW received above average rainfall, over areas of the far south west. Most of the north, north east and central areas of NSW as well as the central to north coast and Hunter valley received less than

60% of normal rainfall. Areas of the north west and far west received less than 20% of normal. The average daytime temperature during December was 1-2°C above normal, particularly in the south west, and the average overnight temperature was 0.5°C above normal.

During December most of the north and north east (including the North West, Northern Tablelands, North Coast and Hunter and areas of Western and Central West LLS districts) received well below average to extremely low rainfall, relative to historical records. Rainfall across much of the west, north west and Riverina was 25 mm or less, with northern areas receiving less than 10 mm. Central NSW and the south coast received average relative rainfall (43% of NSW), with falls of at least 25-100 mm.

In relative terms, quarterly rainfall was below average across 77% of NSW, covering most of the central, north west, far west, tablelands and Riverina. Quarterly relative rainfall was average over 20% of NSW, and above average over just 3%. Half yearly relative rainfall was below average across a similar area, and covering 83% of NSW.

Modelled topsoil moisture was low over 96% of NSW, remained low in the west and central west but improved slightly in the south west. Modelled subsoil moisture also declined slightly during the month, with an additional 5% of NSW in the low category. Higher than normal rainfall is needed to replenish depleted profiles.

Modelled pasture growth for December was limited across the western and central areas of NSW, although improved in the south west. Relative to historical records, it was below average over much of these areas. Biomass levels were similar to November, being low in the north of the Western LLS district and across the North West and Central West LLS districts but moderate along the coast. Relative to historical records, biomass was average across the coast and most of the west. Quarterly relative growth was well below average across most of the tablelands, central and western areas, and was average in other areas.

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 January 2014.

Figure 1: Relative monthly topsoil moisture

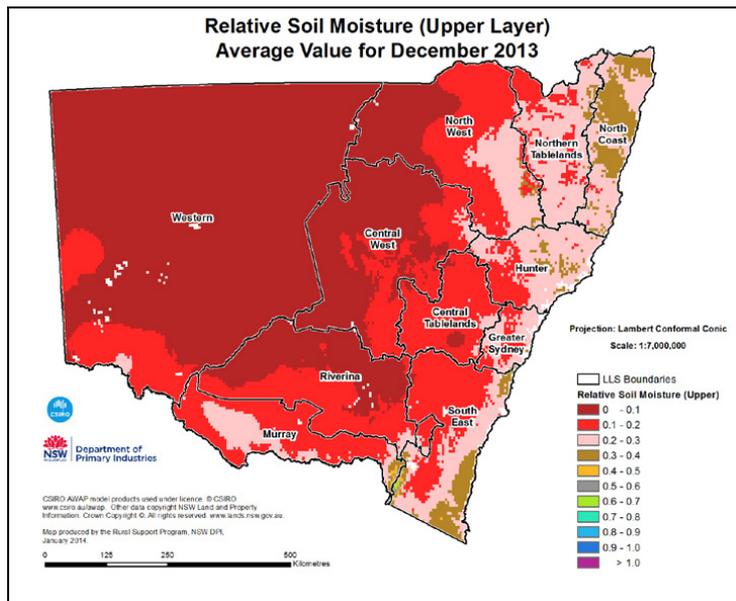
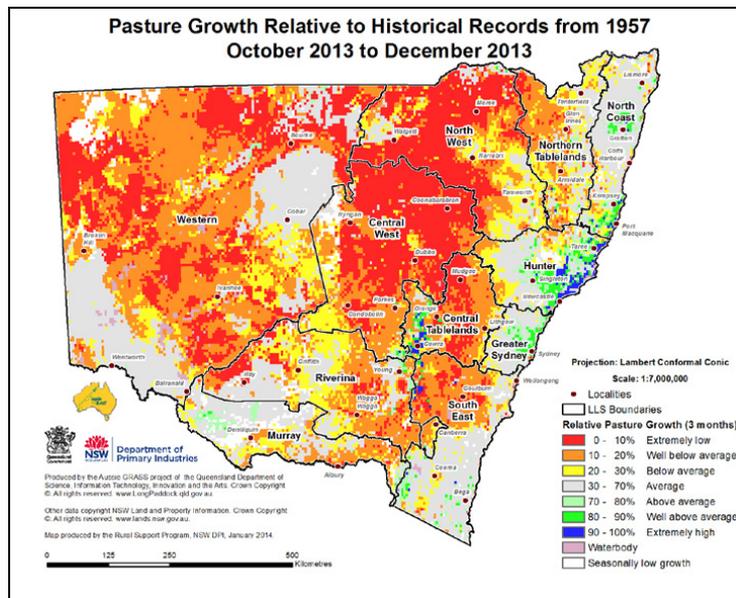


Figure 2: Relative quarterly pasture growth



More information

For more information, contact the NSW Department of Primary Industries on 02 6391 3100.

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 Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, Catchment Management Authorities and NSW Department of Primary Industries.

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