

AUGUST 2011 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in Drought :	8.6% (up from 0%)
Area in Marginal :	27.7% (up from 20.1%)
Area in Satisfactory :	63.7% (down from 79.9%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

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

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
Central West LHPA	Part of District moved from Satisfactory to Marginal
Darling LHPA	Part of District moved from Satisfactory to Marginal
North West LHPA	Part of District moved from Satisfactory to Marginal
Tablelands LHPA	Part of District moved from Satisfactory to Marginal

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Nil

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

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

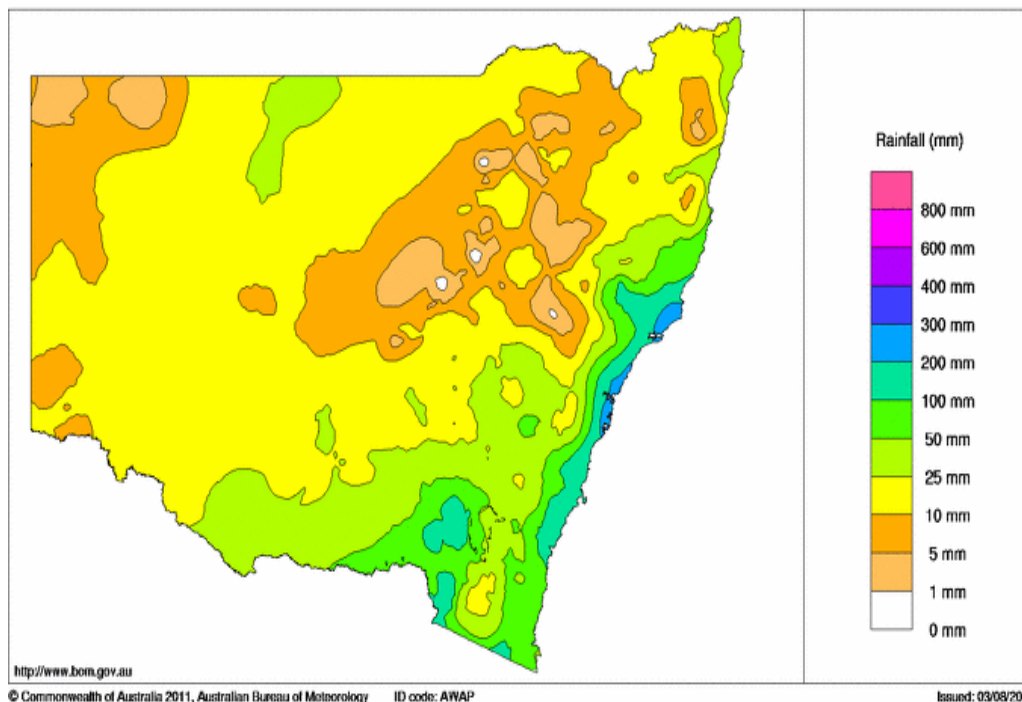
NSW recorded an average rainfall of 23.0 mm during July, below the historical average of 39.4 mm. Rainfall was generally above average on the south and central coasts, predominantly due to a coastal ECL during the month, with well above average rainfall in coastal Sydney and the Central Coast. In comparison, totals were average to below average west of the divide, particularly in the Northern Tablelands. The MDB also recorded 23.7 mm during July, below the historical average of 39.7 mm.

The most significant rain event was between the 20th and 23rd associated with an East Coast Low off the coast, which brought several days of heavy rainfall to the south and central coasts, particularly in Sydney. Daily falls reached 130 mm at Terry Hills in Sydney on the 22nd, with four-day totals as high as 296 mm at Castle Cove in Sydney and 248 mm at Newcastle. This resulted in record-breaking July totals at several stations, and the wettest July since at least 1952 at several coastal stations including Sydney and Gosford. Moderate rain was also recorded in the Snowy Mountains between the 4th and 7th, with totals of 108 mm at Thredbo, associated with strong southerly

winds. Much of this fell as snow, with snow levels at Spencers Creek increasing from 64 cm to 159 cm during the first week of July, the highest levels for early July since 1990. For more information on snow levels see Snowy Hydro.

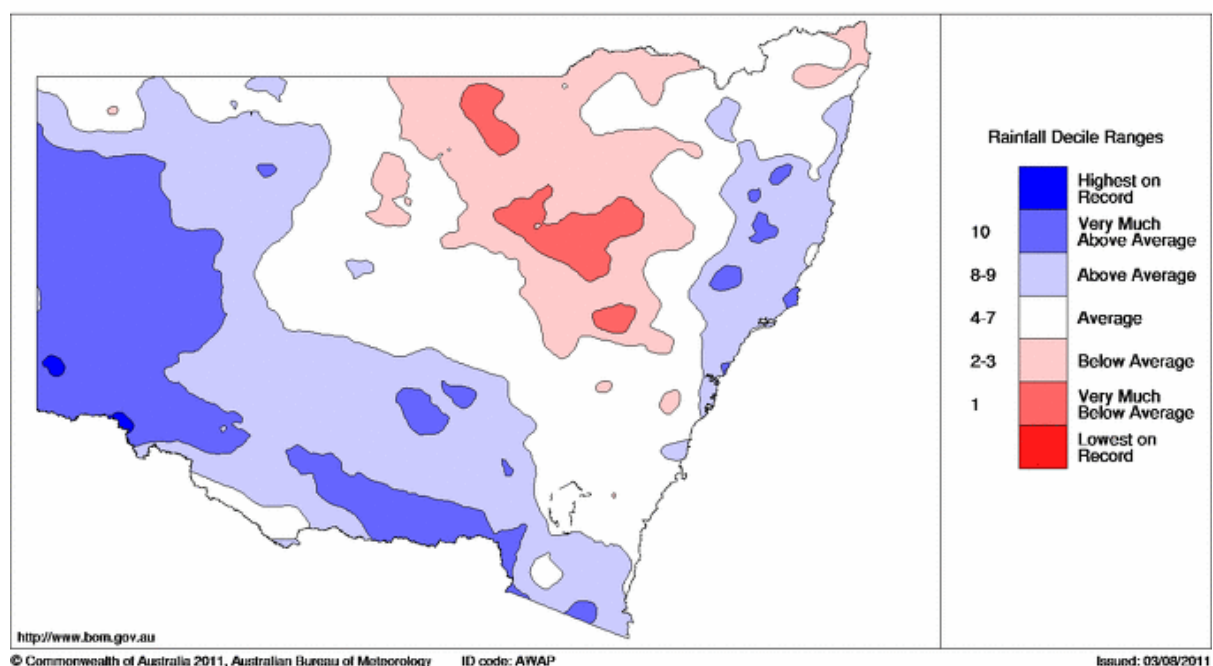
NSW rainfall (actual) July 2011

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



NSW rainfall (deciles) February to July 2011

New South Wales Rainfall Deciles 1 February to 31 July 2011
Distribution Based on Gridded Data
Product of the National Climate Centre



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

The sowing of the estimated 5.1 Mha of winter crop continued into July given the variable rainfall in some regions, by mid July 94% of the estimated winter crop had been planted. Any unsown cropping paddocks now will most likely be either fallowed through to next year or for the central and northern regions where summer cropping is an option considered for a summer crop.

Continuing dry conditions across large parts of the NSW cropping region in July has slowed crop growth and development. Most districts have reported below average rainfall in July, with the exception of some of the more south easterly districts, such as Albury which received 70.2 mm for July. Whilst some useful rain fell in south western NSW, Griffith 29.8 mm, Wagga 34.2 mm and Temora 25.4 mm, most of the central and northern regions did not fair as well with Dubbo receiving 8.4 mm, Condobolin 13.4 mm, Cowra 13.8 mm, Coonamble 8.8 mm, Narrabri 0.8 mm, Moree 6.8 mm and Walgett 14.2 mm for the month of July.

Crop growth is variable in the regions with early sown crops before the 3rd week in May, doing well and being able to get roots deep into the soil profile and use the stored summer rainfall. Any crops sown later are struggling, with roots limited to the drier top soil, these need a significant rain event in the next 10-14 days or some of this area will be lost. Overall yield potential of the winter crop is slowly being eroded as this dry period continues. August will be a critical month for the NSW winter crop with average or better rainfall needed to ensure grower get close to achieving average crop yields.

With this continuing dry period stock feed has been deteriorating; with many producers now hand feeding stock as pasture growth slowed further during July. Early sown grazing cereals have continued to provide excellent grazing in most districts, relieving the pressure on pasture and the need for hand feeding. Many grazing cereal crops have reached head initiation, with growers now beginning to remove stock from these paddocks, allowing them recover for grain production.

The mice situation still remains a major concern for the majority of the state. Mice activity from reports has slowed in many areas with the onset of cold frosty conditions. Bait availability is still an issue in many areas with delays in being able to access it. With the drop in demand as sowing finished and the use of unsterilized grain, supplies are now coming back on line.

With the drier July the emphasis is now on August for a significant weather event (cold wet weather or disease outbreak), to reduce mice numbers going into spring. Continuing grower vigilance through winter will be the key to reducing mice numbers and potential crop losses at harvest.

Stripe rust in wheat was found in a number of isolated crops in NSW through July. Following last years major epidemic in wheat crops, growers will need to

be vigilant, particularly as it starts to warm up through August. The much need rain in August will also provide ideal conditions for disease development and spread through crops.

Growers have been concentrating on getting any post emergent herbicides applied for weed control, with some growers also taking the opportunity to top dress nitrogen on crops, prior to any rainfall events. The focus for August will be crop nutrition, given the large biomass crops grown last year, most paddocks that have been under cropping for a number of years are showing low soil nitrogen levels from deep soil nitrogen tests.

LIVESTOCK (provided by Tim Sears, LHPA)

Pasture conditions across the state have deteriorated over the past few months, with the lack of rain through June and July, most annual pastures are now struggling to grow. The perennial pastures are still providing some useful feed, but growth rates have all but stopped in July across most of the state. The continuing cold frosty conditions are adding to the poor pasture growth rates. Any standing feed carried over from summer is now of very poor quality and not sufficient to maintain growing, pregnant or lactating stock. Hand feeding stock, particularly pregnant or lambing ewes and cattle, is on the increase. Hand feeding all stock is occurring in the western half of the northwest LHPA district and some adjoining areas.

The earlier sown grazing cereals are providing some useful stock feed, but with the below average rainfall and cold frosty conditions, growth rates are slow. In some parts of the Central and North West, livestock have been put on to failing crops.

WATER SUPPLIES

Note: The State Water Storages report is no longer produced. An updated table will now be included to provide an idea of the State's water supply situation.

STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	30 June 2011	3 Aug 2011	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	100%	99%	(1.0)%
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	116%	114%	(1.7)%
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	50%	50%	0.0%
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	98%	99%	1.0%
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	20%	20%	0.0%
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	101%	101%	0.0%
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	90%	91%	1.1%
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	46%	46%	0.0%
Oberon Dam, Oberon	52%	54%	3.8%
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	92%	92%	0.0%
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	76%	77%	1.3%
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	88%	94%	6.8%
Blowering Dam, Tumut	97%	94%	(3.1)%
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	64%	67%	4.7%
Hume Dam, Albury	93%	96%	3.2%
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	96%	100%	4.2%
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	88%	88%	0.0%
Lostock Dam, Singleton	101%	101%	0.0%
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	101%	101%	0.0%
Broggo Dam, Bega	101%	101%	0.0%
TOTAL NSW Dam storage	81%	82%	1.0%

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

Drier and warmer conditions favoured for most of the south-eastern Australia for late winter to spring (August to October).

The pattern of seasonal rainfall odds across Australia has been produced using recent Pacific and Indian Ocean temperature patterns. The outlook factors in the decline of La Niña conditions across the Pacific during the previous season, as well as the persistence of above average temperatures over key parts of the Indian Ocean. The chances of receiving above median rainfall during the August to October period are between 30 and 40% over much of SA, northwestern Victoria and western NSW. Such odds mean that for every ten years with similar ocean patterns to those currently observed, about three to four August to October periods would be expected to be wetter than average over this area, while about six to seven would be drier.

The chance that the average August to October maximum temperature will exceed the long-term median maximum temperature is above 70% across the southeastern mainland of Australia, exceeding 75% in eastern SA, western NSW, southeastern Queensland and western Victoria (see map). Probabilities of between 60 and 70% occur throughout Tasmania and along the east coast of NSW. This means that for every ten years with ocean patterns like the ones currently observed, about seven to eight August to October periods would be expected to be warmer than average in these areas, with about three to four being cooler.

Neutral ENSO conditions persist in the tropical Pacific, with most atmospheric and oceanic indicators at near normal levels. Pacific Ocean temperatures have cooled over the last month, but remain within neutral thresholds. Atmospheric indicators of ENSO such as trade winds and cloudiness near the date-line have fluctuated around normal.

Ross Burton
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4 August 2011

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Information sources:

[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)

[http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-](http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-bin/silo/rain_maps.cgi?map=contours&variable=totals&area=nsw&period=1month®ion=nsw&time=latest)

[bin/silo/rain_maps.cgi?map=contours&variable=totals&area=nsw&period=1month®ion=nsw&time=latest](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>