

NSW Seasonal Conditions Summary - April 2014

Highlights

- Good rainfall in March improved conditions greatly with most of NSW receiving 50-200mm. However, some areas of the north west & far west received lighter falls.
- The chances of a drier or wetter April to June are nearly equal, with drier conditions likely in the north east. Warmer than normal temperatures are likely.
- Pasture growth was average or above over most of NSW, with improved species responding well to the conditions. Growth was limited in some areas of the north west & far south east. Over the last 6 months it was average or above over 50% of NSW, but low over north west, central & some eastern areas.
- Sowing of dual purpose crops continued, with grazing of early sown crops. The outlook for winter cereal crops has greatly improved, particularly in central & southern areas.
- Stock water supplies remain low in some areas due to insufficient run off.
- Resources to assist in management are available at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/emergency/drought/managing>

Good rainfall occurred across much of NSW in March, with nearly 70% of NSW receiving above average rainfall. However, areas of the north west and far west received lighter, patchy falls.

Combined with mild-warm temperatures, the rainfall provided a much needed boost to pasture growth. Improved pastures responded well where sufficient rainfall was received. Sowings of dual purpose crops continued during the month. Early sown dual purpose crops responded well, with many now being grazed. Soil moisture levels over central and southern NSW are now sufficient for the sowing of winter cereal grain crops, but more rainfall will be needed, particularly in spring. More rainfall is still needed over much of the northern cropping area. Stock water supplies remain variable.

The outlook for April to June indicates the chances of a drier or wetter season are nearly equal across central NSW, with a slightly increased chance of drier conditions in the north. Drier than normal conditions are likely over the north east. April is likely to be wetter than normal, except in the north west. The chances of

a drier or wetter May are near equal, except for drier conditions likely across a band running across the centre of NSW. Warmer daytime temperatures are likely over central and eastern NSW from April to June, and warmer than normal overnight temperatures across the State.

Overall, ENSO is still neutral, but there is an elevated risk of El Niño conditions developing. Sea surface temperatures are warming, and there is a more than 70% chance of them reaching El Niño levels in July. Other indicators are also showing increasing El Niño trends.

NSW received average or above average rainfall during March, with most of the State receiving rainfall of 50-200 mm. Daytime and overnight temperatures were above average.

In relative terms, quarterly rainfall was below average across 46% of NSW, particularly across the north west, northern tablelands and coast, but near average over much of the western, southern and central areas. Half yearly relative rainfall was below average for the majority of NSW, except areas in the south and south east.

Stock water supplies remain low in many areas as limited run off occurred. Streamflow analysis over the last year indicates well below average or worse run off across most of the tablelands, Monaro, north coast and north west in particular.

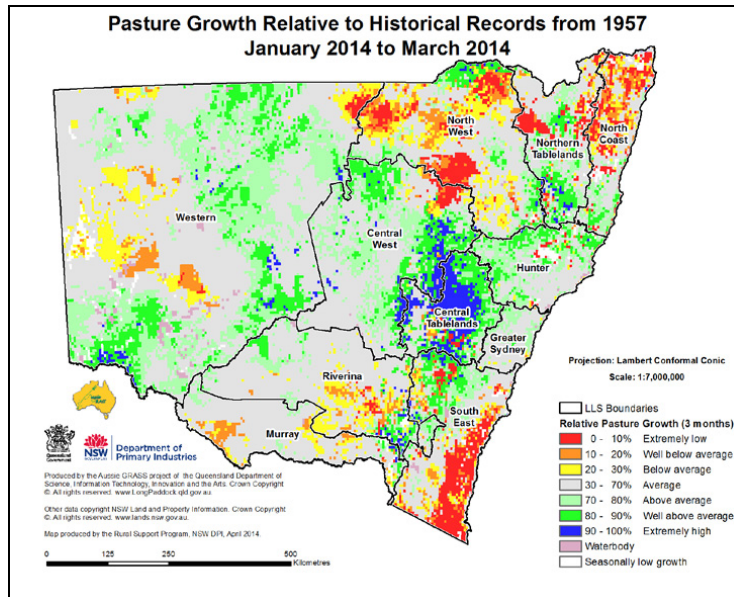
Modelled pasture growth improved greatly across the tablelands, upper slopes, central west, central coast and areas of the north west. Relative to historical records, it was average or better over 74% of NSW and only below average in the far south east and areas of the north west. Biomass levels increased, particularly over the central tablelands and adjacent areas. Relative to historical records, biomass and quarterly growth were low over the north west and across the north and south coast but average or above average over more than 70% of NSW. Half yearly relative pasture growth was average or above over 50% of NSW, but low across the north west, central and much of eastern NSW.

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 31st March – 9th April 2014.

Figure 1: Relative monthly topsoil moisture

Soil moisture data and maps were not available at the time of publication

Figure 2: Relative quarterly pasture growth



More information

For more information, contact the NSW Department of Primary Industries on 02 6391 3100 or Local Land Services on 1300 795 299.

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 Local Land Services and NSW Department of Primary Industries.

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