

MAY 2012 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS REPORT

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(see Dept. Primary Industries agricultural conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 0.0% (no change)
Area in **Marginal**: 0% (no change)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 100% (no change)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Nil

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

Nil

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Nil

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Nil

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

RAINFALL FOR APRIL 2012 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall maps)

NSW received good rainfall across most areas during April, except the north west. The south eastern part of NSW generally recorded falls of up to over 100 mm. The north eastern part of NSW generally recorded falls of up to over 200 mm. The north western part of NSW generally received falls of up to 5 mm. The south western part of NSW generally received falls of up to 25 mm.

The three, six and twelve monthly deciles show that all of NSW has received average to highest on record rainfall.

CROPS AND PASTURES (provided by Peter Matthews, Dept. Primary Industries, 3 May 2012)

NSW Seasonal Conditions April 2012

The current forecast is for the sowing of 5.18 M ha of winter crops, comprising 4.25 M ha of winter cereals and 0.93 M ha of pulses and oilseeds. Patchy rainfall through April has meant the delay in planting of some early sown crops across the State. Whilst in most areas there is still good sub soil moisture, no useful rain has meant that the top soil has dried back and planting is delayed in some regions. Sowing is continuing on the well maintained fallow paddocks, where stubble has been retained and weeds controlled over summer. For the

winter sowing program to get fully under way across all the State, a general rain event of 20-30 mm will be needed.

Useful falls have been received in the first few days of May in southern and central NSW in some regions, with regions recording Wagga 19.8 mm, Dubbo 21.6 mm, Griffith 7.8 mm, Condobolin 8.2 mm and Cootamundra 20 mm.

If no useful rain occurs in early May for the regions that missed the latest weather front, some adjustments in sowing intentions will occur, with a possible reduction in crop area and a shift to quicker maturing crop types and a bigger focus on cereal crops.

There are still some areas in central and southern NSW where flooding and wet conditions through February and March has meant paddock remain un-trafficable and may not able to be sown this season.

Pasture conditions across the State are variable. Summer pasture is now drying off and losing quality with some growers in the north east of the State hand feed stock to supplement the low quality bulk on offer. Winter pasture species have begun to germinate through March and April as the soil temperatures have dropped. Further rain to keep them going before the onset of the colder conditions in winter is needed in many of the central and northern areas, southern areas that have been more fortunate with rain boosting early pasture establishment and growth.

Reports of mice activity is variable, with a general increase reported in activity around buildings and other farm infrastructure. No reports have been provided of any paddock activity.

Locusts activity has been limited to the south west with reports of low populations being present in some stubble paddock prior to sowing. Growers have been undertaking precautionary spraying of these paddocks, when applying knock down and pre emergent herbicides prior to sowing.

With the two previous big winter crops, growers are looking to increase the amount of pre and in-crop nitrogen fertiliser applied to winter crops. There has been a hiccup in the supply of anhydrous ammonia (Big N) across the State this year, with Incitec Pivot Ltd having operational and logistic issues which will prevent all requests for Big N by growers to be met. Current reports indicate alternative N fertilisers are not in short supply.

The summer crop harvest is continuing with good yields being reported for all crops in the north and southern areas, the drier April has aided in crop harvest and dry down. Reports indicate that 70-80% of the dryland grain summer crop is now completed through the central and northern region. Rice harvest in the south is beginning to wind up, with growers in the MIA reporting yields of greater than 10-11 tonnes/ha.

Cotton picking is continuing across the state with harvest being delayed due to the cooler conditions slowing crop maturity and the defoliation process. The

pick is well underway in the north with western areas reported to be 60% complete. In southern NSW irrigation areas the western areas are about 20% complete, but more easterly areas have yet to start cotton harvest. There is still a concern that rain will hamper harvest of some crops, as we are now entering May, traditionally a wetter month.

RAINFALL & TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK – May 2012 to July 2012 (see Bureau of Meteorology rainfall and temperature outlook and El Niño Southern Oscillation [ENSO] wrap-up)

The chances of receiving above median rainfall during the May to July period are from 40% in the south western part of NSW up to 75% in the north eastern part of NSW.

The chances that the average maximum temperature for autumn will exceed the long-term median maximum temperatures range from 25% in the north eastern part of NSW up to 75% in the south western part of NSW.

The chances that the average minimum temperature for autumn will exceed the long-term median minimum temperatures range from 60% in the south western part of NSW up to 80% in the north eastern part of NSW.

The 2011-12 La Niña event has ended, with all key indicators now at neutral (not El Niño nor La Niña) levels. Climate models surveyed by the Bureau of Meteorology indicate neutral conditions are likely to continue over the coming months, with some (but not all) models suggesting El Niño conditions may develop during the winter or spring.

Climate indicators across the tropical Pacific Ocean remain neutral (neither El Niño or La Niña). Climate models surveyed by the Bureau of Meteorology suggest that the tropical Pacific Ocean will remain at neutral levels at least into early winter.

All major indicators of ENSO, including cloudiness, trade winds, the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) and sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific, lie well within the ENSO-neutral range. Over the past week, the SOI has returned to values not seen since April 2010.

Some, but not all, climate models note an increased risk of El Niño conditions evolving during winter or spring. Historically, about 70% of two-year La Niña events are followed by neutral or El Niño phases.

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) has limited influence on Australian rainfall from December through to April. Model outlooks currently suggest neutral conditions are the most likely scenario heading into the southern winter.

Rainfall across most of Australia has been above average in the last six months, partly due to the 2011-12 La Niña event (which has now ended). This has ensured there are currently no significant short-term rainfall deficiencies across the country.

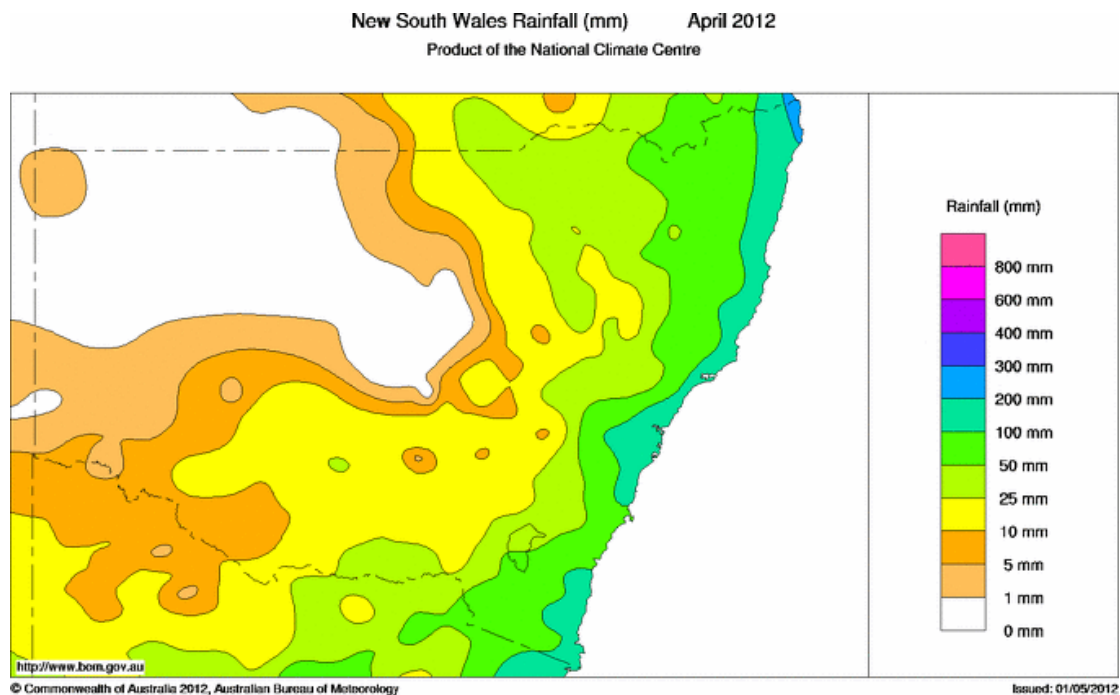
WATER SUPPLIES

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.

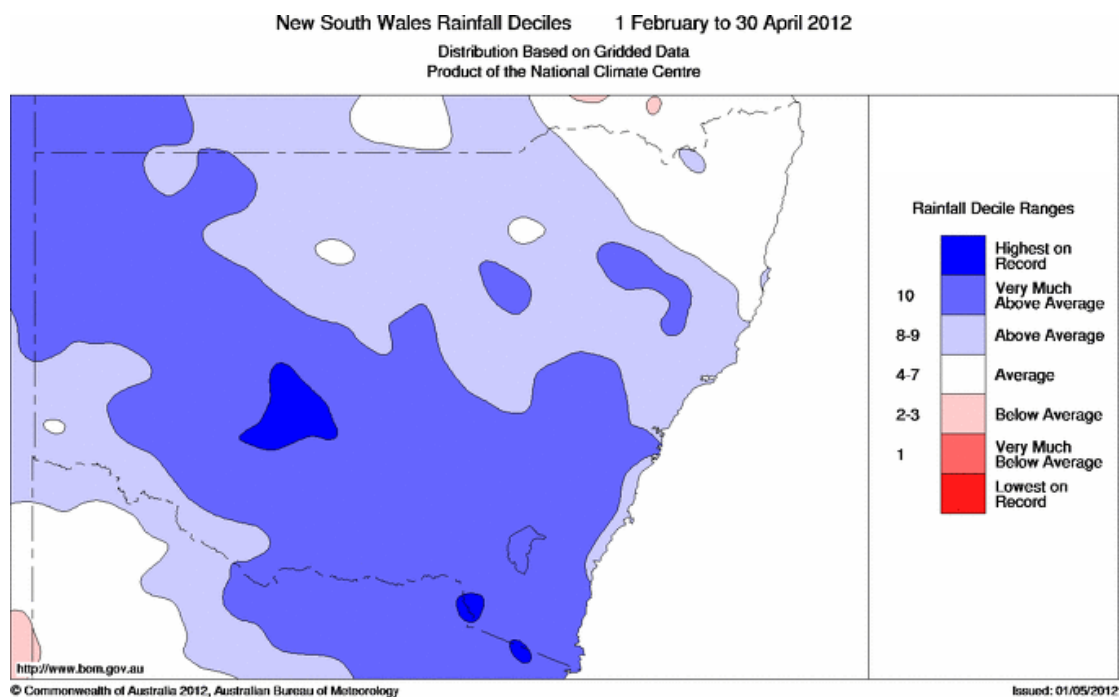
STATE WATER STORAGES

River Valley	10 April 2012	3 May 2012	Change
<i>Storage Dam, Nearest Town</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>Level %</i>	<i>%</i>
Border Rivers			
Pindari Dam, Inverell	98	97	(1)
Lower Darling			
Menindee Lakes, Broken Hill	unk	unk	unk
Gwydir Valley			
Copeton Dam, Inverell	98	97	(1)
Namoi Valley			
Keepit Dam, Gunnedah	99	99	0
Split Rock Dam, Manilla	82	83	1
Chaffey Dam, Tamworth	101	100	(1)
Macquarie Valley			
Burrendong Dam, Wellington	103	101	(2)
Windamere Dam, Mudgee	58	58	0
Oberon Dam, Oberon	89	90	1
Lachlan Valley			
Wyangala Dam, Cowra	94	94	0
Carcoar Dam, Carcoar	49	99	50
Murrumbidgee Valley			
Burrinjuck Dam, Yass	92	94	2
Blowering Dam, Tumut	94	94	0
Murray Valley			
Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta (Vic)	82	83	1
Hume Dam, Albury	88	87	(1)
Hunter Valley			
Glenbawn Dam, Scone	100	100	0
Glennies Ck Dam, Singleton	99	99	0
Lostock Dam, Singleton	100	100	0
Coastal Area			
Toonumbar Dam, Kyogle	101	102	1
Broggo Dam, Bega	101	102	1

**Information sources:
NSW rainfall (actual) April 2012**



NSW rainfall (3 month decile) February to April 2012



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9 May 2012**

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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