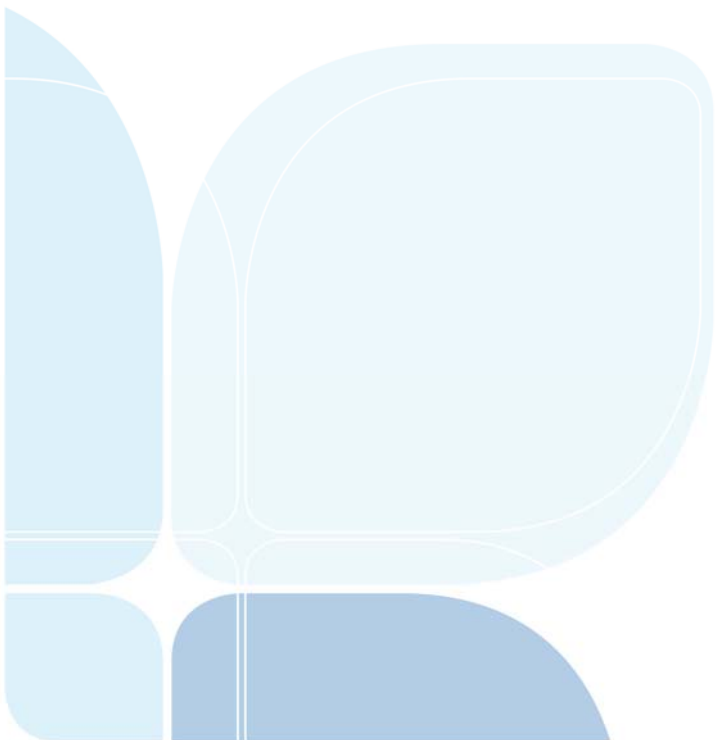




Local Land  
Services

# On-ground Seasonal Conditions Report

August 2015



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**More information**

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing September 2015. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Local Land Services or the user's independent adviser.

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## Introduction

The NSW Government is contributing to national drought reform by replacing the system of State drought declarations with Regional Seasonal Conditions Reports. On a routine monthly basis Local Land Services (LLS) cropping and livestock experts gather, from farmers and other experts, information on conditions existing in their regions which is combined into state-wide LLS Seasonal Conditions. The reports provide valuable information on rainfall, water storage, crops, livestock and other issues to help farmers make informed decisions. The LLS reports complement State and regional Monthly Seasonal Conditions reports developed by NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) which draw information from Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and relevant modelling data. The Regional Assistance Advisory Committee assesses Seasonal Conditions Reports and provides ongoing recommendations on potential farm business, farm family and community support and observations to the Minister. The NSW Seasonal Conditions Report can be viewed on the NSW DPI website.

**Table 1: Seasonal Condition Report Overview**

Details	June 2015	July 2015	August 2015
<b>State overview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six regions have reported no change to their average regional score from last month including, Central Tablelands, Central West, Greater Sydney, North Coast, Northern Tablelands and South East.</li> <li>Murray, North West, Riverina and Western have reported an improvement in conditions from last month.</li> <li>Hunter has reported a decline in conditions from last month.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven regions reported no change to their average regional score from last month including, Central Tablelands, Hunter, Murray, Northern Tablelands, North West, Riverina and South East.</li> <li>Central West and Western have reported an improvement in conditions from last month.</li> <li>North Coast has reported a decline in conditions from last month.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven regions reported no change to their average regional score from last month including, Central West, Hunter, Murray, North Coast, Northern Tablelands, North West and Western.</li> <li>Central Tablelands, Riverina and South East have reported an improvement in conditions from last month.</li> <li>Greater Sydney has not submitted a report this month.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Ranking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very Good – Greater Sydney and North Coast.</li> <li>Good – Hunter, Murray, North West, Riverina and South East.</li> <li>Reasonable – Central Tablelands, Central West and Western.</li> <li>Below Requirements – Northern Tablelands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good – Central West, Hunter, Murray, North Coast, North West, Riverina, South East and Western.</li> <li>Reasonable – Central Tablelands</li> <li>Below Requirements – Northern Tablelands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very Good – Riverina and South East</li> <li>Good – Central Tablelands, Central West, Hunter, Murray, North Coast, North West and Western.</li> <li>Below Requirements – Northern Tablelands</li> </ul>
<b>LGA Scores – Extremely Poor, Extreme or Extremely Critical</b>	There are no LGAs within this scale.	There are no LGAs within this scale.	There are no LGAs within this scale.
<b>LGA Scores – Excellent or Very Good</b>	The following LGAs: Camden, Wollondilly, Singleton, Cessnock, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Greater Taree, Albury, Gwydir, Tamworth, Wingecarribee, Upper Lachlan, Bombala, Snowy River and Yass Valley.	The following LGAs: Narromine, Corowa, Bellingen, Kyogle Shoalhaven, Wingecarribee, Goulburn/Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan, Bega, Bombala, Snowy River and Yass Valley.	The following LGAs: Narromine, Weddin, Corowa, Urana and Deniliquin, Narrabri and Tamworth.

## Data Analysis

**Table 2: Surveyed Property Numbers**

Region	Number of properties surveyed		
	June	July	August
Central Tablelands	38	40	40
Central West	58	51	57
Greater Sydney	14	<sup>1</sup>	<sup>2</sup>
Hunter	20	23	18
Murray	44	48	53
North Coast	44	43	48
Northern Tablelands	34	35	36
North West	17	32	27
Riverina	15	22	23
South East	54	62	59
Western	22	23	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>393</b>

**Table 3: Seasonal Conditions Reporting Scale**

Scale	Regional description	Regional description of seasonal condition as scaled 1 to 10
Level 1	Excellent	Previous 12 months above average seasonal conditions
Level 2	Very Good	Previous 6 months above average seasonal conditions
Level 3	Good	The current season is average
Level 4	Reasonable	The current season is below average
Level 5	Below Requirements	The current season has failed
Level 6	Poor	The past 6 months have been below average
Level 7	Very Poor	Consecutive failed seasons
Level 8	Extremely Poor	NSW DPI trigger event (1 in 5 years 20 <sup>th</sup> percentile for rain, pasture, soil moisture) expected to be flagged
Level 9	EXTREME	NSW DPI trigger event 3 consecutive months
Level 10	EXTREMELY CRITICAL	12 months of failed seasons

<sup>1</sup> Greater Sydney hasn't provided a report this month due to staff member being on leave.

<sup>2</sup> Greater Sydney hasn't provided a report this month due to staff member being on leave.

**Table 4: Average Regional Score and Local Government Areas (LGAs)**

Region	June			July			August		
	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)
<b>Central Tablelands</b>	<b>Reasonable (4)</b>	Bathurst, Lithgow and Orange - <b>Good</b>	Cabonne – <b>Below Requirements</b>	<b>Reasonable (4)</b>	Bathurst, Blayney and Cowra- <b>Good</b>	-	<b>Good (3)</b>	-	Cabonne, Lithgow, Mid Western, Oberon and Orange- <b>Reasonable</b>
<b>Central West</b>	<b>Reasonable (4)</b>	Dubbo, Bogan, Narromine, Gilgandra, Warren and Weddin - <b>Good</b>	Warrumbungles and Lachlan – <b>Below Requirements</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Narromine – <b>Very Good</b>	Wellington, Dubbo, Coonamble, Warrumbungle and Lachlan - <b>Reasonable</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Narromine and Weddin – <b>Very Good</b>	Coonamble and Warrumbungle - <b>Reasonable</b>
<b>Greater Sydney</b>	<b>Very Good (2)</b>	Camden and Wollondilly - <b>Excellent</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Hunter</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Singleton, Cessnock, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Greater Taree – <b>Very Good</b>	-	<b>Good (3)</b>	-	-	<b>Good (3)</b>	-	Dungog, Port Stephens, Newcastle and Greater Taree - <b>Reasonable</b>
<b>Murray</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Albury - <b>Excellent</b>	Conargo – <b>Reasonable</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Corowa – <b>Very Good</b>	Deniliquin - <b>Reasonable</b> Conargo – <b>Below Requirements</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Corowa – <b>Excellent</b> Urana and Deniliquin – <b>Very Good</b>	-

Region	June			July			August		
	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)
North Coast	Very Good (2)	-	Port Macquarie Hastings, Nambucca, Clarence Valley Council, Coffs Harbour, Tweed Shire, Richmond Valley Council, Ballina, Lismore, Byron - <b>Good</b>	Good (3)	Bellingen and Kyogle – <b>Very Good</b>	-	Good (3)	Bellingen and Kyogle – <b>Very Good</b>	Port Macquarie Hastings – <b>Below Requirements</b>
Northern Tablelands	Below Requirements (5)	-	-	Below Requirements (5)	Walcha - <b>Reasonable</b>	-	Below Requirements (5)	Walcha and Armidale Dumaresq - <b>Reasonable</b>	-
North West	Good (3)	Gwydir and Tamworth – <b>Very Good</b>	-	Good (3)	Moree Plains - <b>Reasonable</b> Walgett – <b>Below Requirements</b>	Tamworth – <b>Very Good</b>	Good (3)	Narrabri and Tamworth – <b>Very Good</b>	Gwydir - <b>Reasonable</b>
Riverina	Good (3)	-	Gundagai, Coolamon and Hay - <b>Reasonable</b>	Good (3)	-	Narrandera and Jirilderie – <b>Very Good</b>	Very Good (2)	-	Tumut, Cootamundra, Gundagai, Wagga Wagga, Leeton and Hay - <b>Good</b>
South East	Good (3)	Wingecarribee, Upper Lachlan, Bombala, Snowy River and Yass Valley- <b>Very Good</b>	Goulburn-Mulwaree, Pallerang - <b>Reasonable</b>	Good (3)	-	Pallerang and Eurobodalla – <b>Below Requirements</b>	Very Good (2)	-	Illawarra and Cooma – Monaro – <b>Good</b> Pallerang and Eurobodalla – <b>Below Requirements</b>

Region	June			July			August		
	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)
Western	Reasonable (4)	Wentworth - Good	-	Good (3)	-	Brewarrina and Unincorporated Areas - Reasonable	Good (3)	-	Brewarrina and Unincorporated Areas - Reasonable

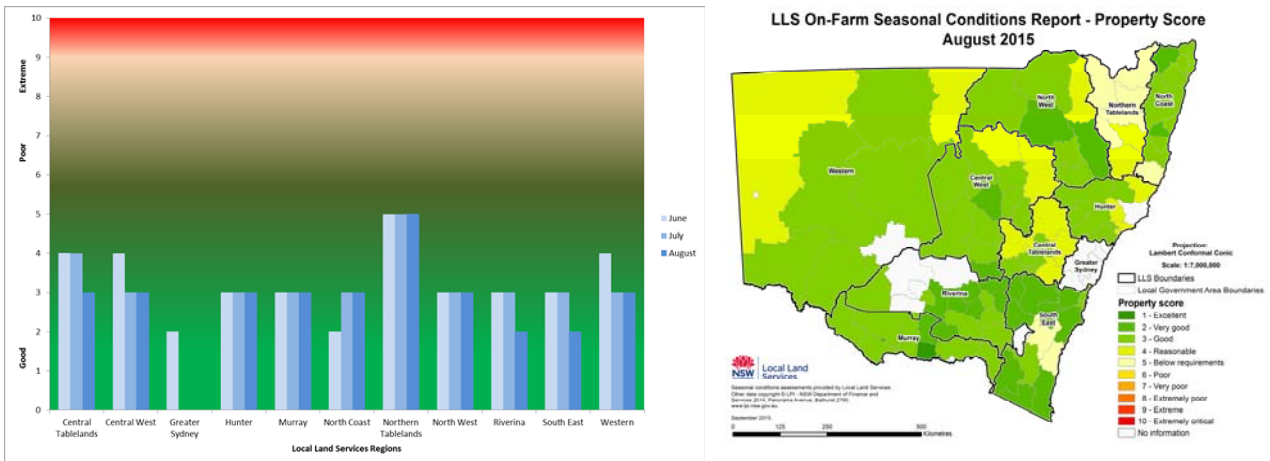


## Average Regional Property Score

**Table 5: The average regional property score (including water, agronomic and livestock categories across the regions LGAs)**

Region	Average scores for regions		
	June	July	August
Central Tablelands	4	4	3
Central West	4	3	3
Greater Sydney	2	-	-
Hunter	3	3	3
Murray	3	3	3
North Coast	2	3	3
Northern Tablelands	5	5	5
North West	3	3	3
Riverina	3	3	2
South East	3	3	2
Western	4	3	3

**Figure 1: Graphical and geographical representation of the average regional property score**

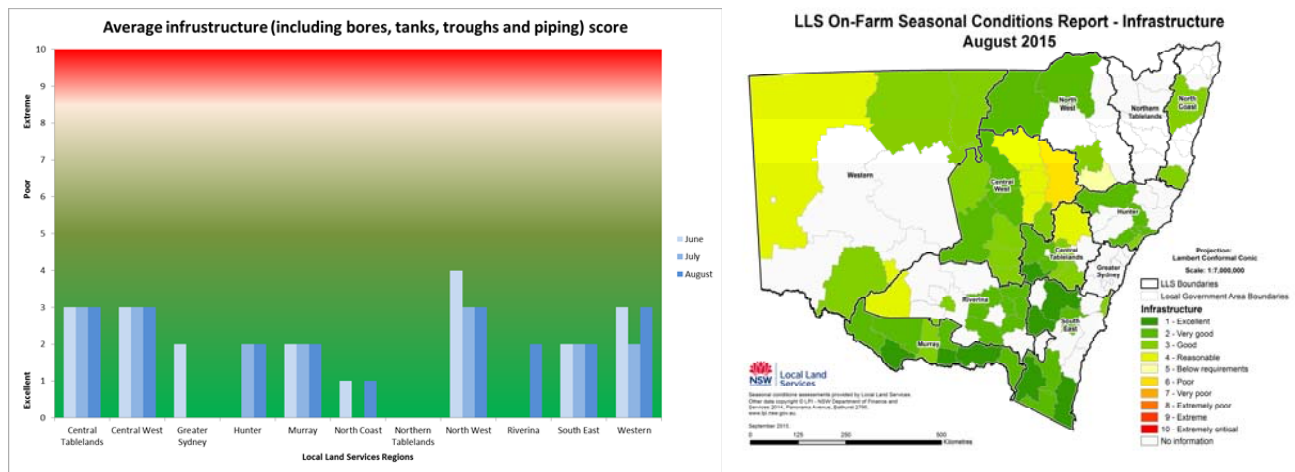


## Average Regional Score for Infrastructure

**Table 6: The average regional infrastructure (including bores, tanks, troughs piping) score**

Region	Average scores for regions		
	June	July	August
Central Tablelands	3	3	3
Central West	3	3	3
Greater Sydney	2	-	-
Hunter	-	2	2
Murray	2	2	2
North Coast	1	-	1
Northern Tablelands	-	-	-
North West	4	3	3
Riverina	-	3	2
South East	2	2	2
Western	3	2	3

**Figure 2: Graphical and geographical representation of the average regional infrastructure score**



## Water, Agronomic and Livestock Reporting Scale (1 to 10)

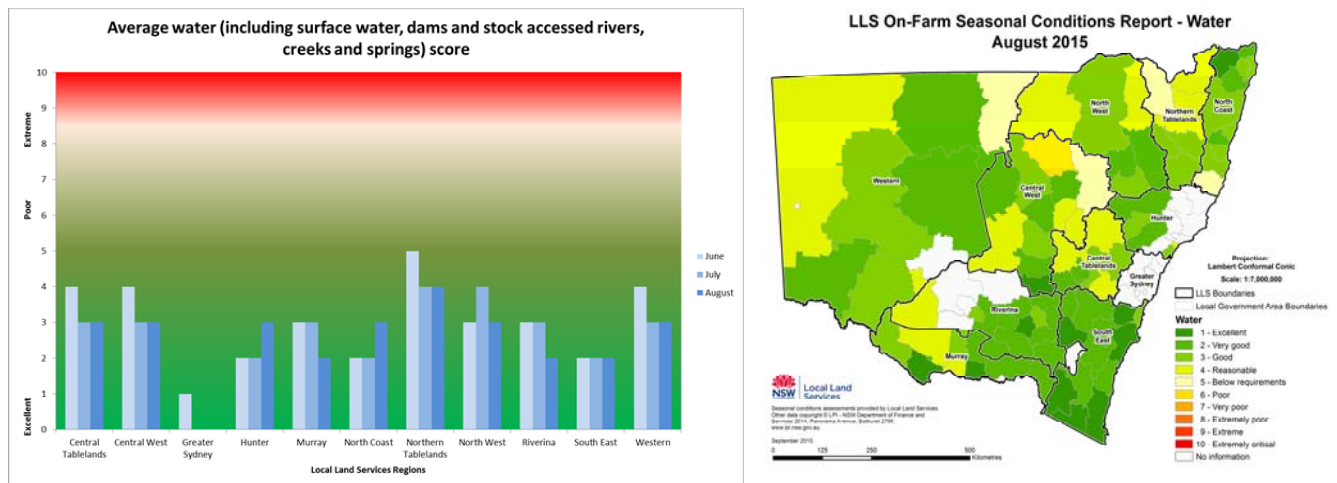
Scale	On-farm observations	Water (quantity, quality and infrastructure) description	Agronomic conditions (winter or summer crops, native and/or improved pasture) description	Livestock conditions/ carrying capacity description
Level 1	Very Good	Water security established on the property for a 12 month period exceeding demands and without any further infrastructure improvements.	2 <sup>nd</sup> year of above average pasture conditions, silage and hay production exceeds normal requirements.	Past 12 months, livestock in excellent conditions, highly productive, stocking rates above expectations.
Level 2	Good	Water supply meets demands and has improved by infrastructure improvements.	Cropping and pasture highly successful, good storage observed on farm.	Carrying maximum and above capacity. Highly productive.
Level 3	Reasonable	Water supply meets demands.	Crops and pasture growth meeting demands plus silage and hay storage observed on farm.	Average carrying capacity.
Level 4	Below requirements	Water has not been replenished during the period.	Some crop failure. Pasture below expectations.	Slower stock growth rates. Supplementary feeding of breeding stock.
Level 5	Depleting	Water levels depleting from last period.	Failed crops and pasture growth, stores used.	Supplementary feeding required to maintain condition of stock for market weights.
Level 6	Poor	Water supply continues to worsen.	Livestock supplementary feeding occurring, local storage being used.	Supplementary feeding necessary to maintain breeding stock, stock losing condition.
Level 7	Very Poor	No surface water in many paddocks.	Supplementary feeding required and sourced of farm, silage and storage hay used.	High volume feeding occurring to maintain breeding stock. Early weaning. Herd and flock culling occurring.
Level 8	Extremely Poor	No surface water in many paddocks. Water poor quality.	Crops and pasture do not support livestock production. All feed being imported. Paddock sacrificing evident. Maintenance of ground cover a priority issue.	Supplementary feeding all livestock. Fat score 3 and 2 within herd/flock.
Level 9	EXTREME	Surface water does not support livestock.	Sparse ground cover. Bare ground evident.	Livestock on properties at level 9 seasonal conditions carry a high probability of welfare concerns.
Level 10	EXTREMELY CRITICAL	No surface water supplies.	No improved pastures, native pasture depleted. Bare ground.	

## Average Regional Water (including surface water, dams and stock accessed rivers, creeks and springs) Score

Table 7: The average regional water score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	June	July	August
Central Tablelands	4	3	3
Central West	4	3	3
Greater Sydney	1	-	-
Hunter	2	2	3
Murray	3	3	2
North Coast	2	2	3
Northern Tablelands	5	4	4
North West	3	4	3
Riverina	3	3	2
South East	2	2	2
Western	4	3	3

Figure 3: Graphical and geographical representation of the average regional water score

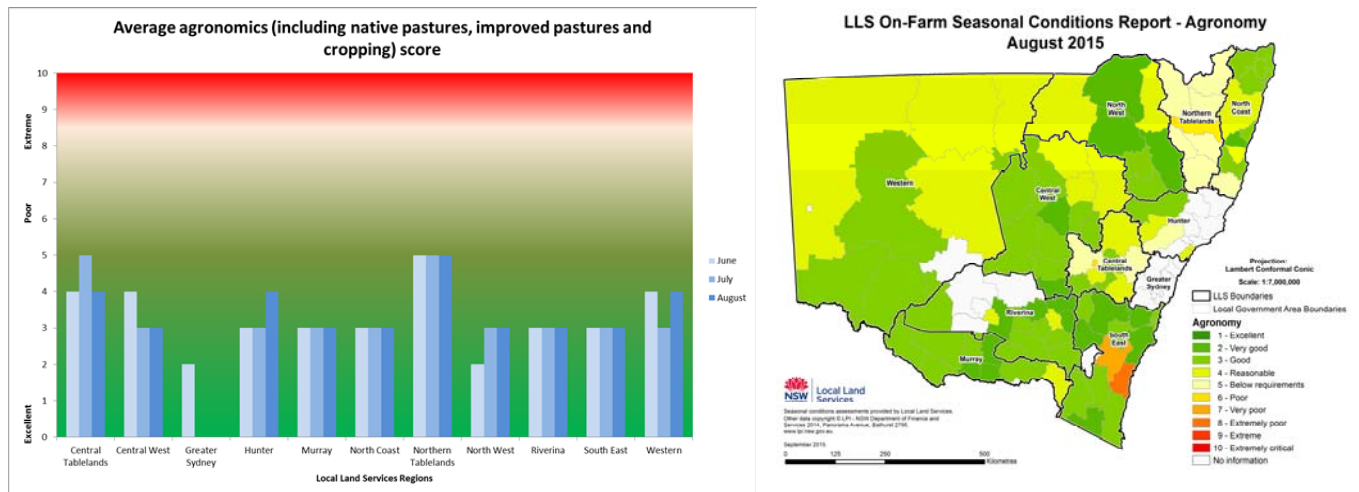


## Average Regional Agronomics (including native pastures, improve pastures and cropping) Score

Table 8: The average agronomics score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	June	July	August
Central Tablelands	4	5	4
Central West	4	3	3
Greater Sydney	2	-	-
Hunter	3	3	4
Murray	3	3	3
North Coast	3	3	3
Northern Tablelands	5	5	5
North West	2	3	3
Riverina	3	3	2
South East	3	3	3
Western	4	3	4

Figure 4: Graphical and geographical representation of the average regional agronomics score

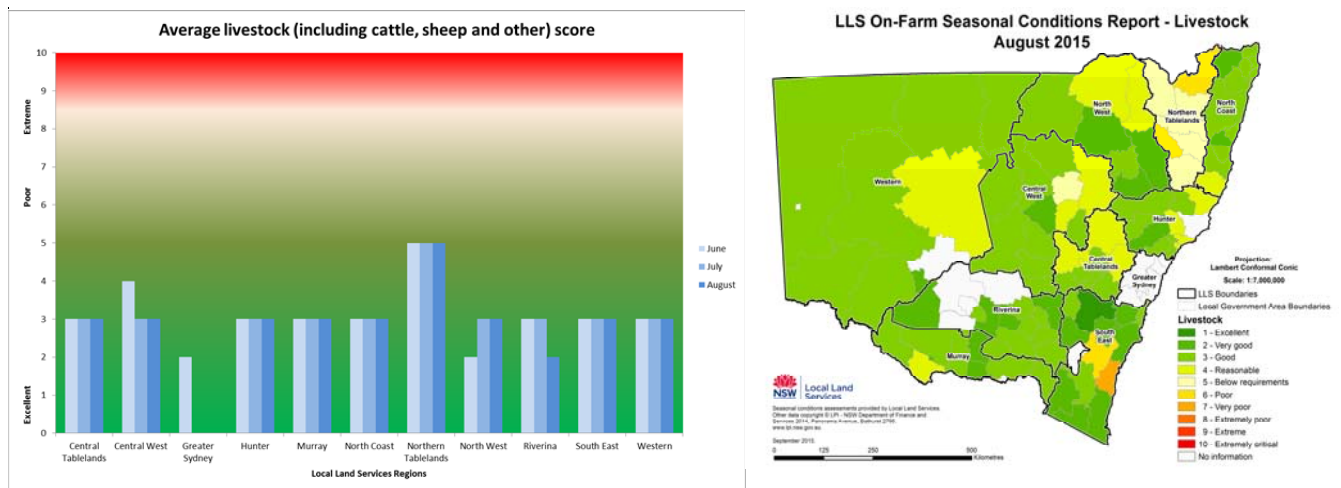


## Average Regional Livestock (including beef, sheep and other) Score

Table 9: The average livestock score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	June	July	August
Central Tablelands	3	3	3
Central West	4	3	3
Greater Sydney	2	-	-
Hunter	3	3	3
Murray	3	3	3
North Coast	3	3	3
Northern Tablelands	5	5	5
North West	2	3	3
Riverina	3	3	2
South East	3	3	3
Western	3	3	3

Figure 5: Graphical and geographical representation of the average regional livestock score



## Regional Comments on Seasonal Conditions

Region	June	July	August
<b>Central Tablelands</b>	Water relatively stable and no grass growth due to cold conditions and some supplementary feeding.	Decent rainfall across the region has helped ease water concerns for many landholders although some properties are still receiving little run-off. Heavy snowfall events have helped add moisture into the ground although some stock losses were also reported as a result. Pasture conditions are still a problem for many landholders with little or no growth occurring. This has resulted in supplementary feeding becoming the norm for many producers across the region.	Reasonable rainfall across the region has continued to ease water concerns for many landholders although a lack of run-off is still causing issues for some producers primarily in the Cabonne and Mid Western Council areas. Pastures are starting to green up although there is still very little growth occurring at present due to cooler temperatures and frosts impacting on pasture growth. With warmer temperatures on the way and clover starting to grow there is still some optimism for the spring period although competition for pasture from high numbers of kangaroos is creating some headaches. Many producers are still supplementary feeding although this should ease off as pasture growth increases across the region. Livestock condition across the Central Tablelands has remained relatively stable although many landholders have decided to sell excess stock to take pressure off their properties and take advantage of good prices. Some stock which have been supplementary fed are in a lighter condition to normal and once again this is more prevalent in those areas where pasture availability and quantity are lacking.
<b>Central West</b>	We certainly have a mixed bag for the last month. Most of the region has received useful rain but with some areas still missing out. Rainfall ranged from 20 - 80mm falling over 3 - 11 days. It would appear that the majority of the region has improved or at least stabilized, however there is still the extremes of either too wet or dry. Reports of some crops "drowning" or the ground too wet to sow. Pasture growth rates have been very slow due to the onset of heavy frost and cooler weather, particularly with native pastures in the south of the region below a line from Nyngan - Peak Hill. The north seem to have missed the break a bit with areas above Coonamble, Quambone, Coonabarabran	Overall things are on the improve across the region. Cold weather is still impacting on pasture growth rates across the region with some isolated pockets with minimal growth due to rain deficiency. Rainfall has ranged from 50 - 110 mm over 5 -12 days on average. Crops are coping well in general with some areas experiencing disease issues due to excessive moisture levels. A couple of producers in the Coonamble area have not sown crops because it's too wet. Livestock have suffered a bit with the onset of better conditions with losses from bloat, lambing sickness etc. but are generally in good condition. Surface water storage's are still below average despite good rainfall and will still be an issue leading into spring	There has being some useful rainfall across the region with falls ranging from 11 – 100mls falling over 4 – 8 days. However substantial runoff rain to fill dams is still a problem for some landholders in the northwest of the region. The southern region has received some very good falls with water storage getting to full capacity. The warmer weather has seen a boost in growth for pasture and crops that have being put in though if no follow up rain heading into the warmer months feed supplies will be in short supply once again. Stock are gaining condition with feed growth and warmer weather. Stock numbers are low in the northwest with landholders starting to purchase stock from drought affected areas in QLD. Bloat was a serious problem at the beginning of the

Region	June	July	August
	<p>still struggling and well below average. On average the region has basically stayed the same with the expected variations from within LGA's. Surface water still remains the most critical issue across the region with very little run off occurring at this point.</p> <p>One landholder has reported that there has been no water allocation for the new year on the Lachlan river.</p>	<p>and summer. I have personally witnessed water running from paddocks across the road a couple of kilometers away from a half empty dam.</p> <p>Overall we are experiencing a fairly normal winter so far. The fact we had a below average Autumn has impacted on the benefits of the July rain.</p> <p>No reports from Bogan or Warren LGA's due to staff shortages.</p>	<p>month but as feed has hardened off the issue has eased.</p>
<b>Greater Sydney</b>	<p>No report provided.</p>	<p>No report provided.</p>	<p>No report provided.</p>
<b>Hunter</b>	<p><b><u>LOWER HUNTER DISTRICT</u></b> (Maitland, Cessnock, Dungog, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie LGA's)</p> <p>Water - Water supply and quality in the Lower Hunter is excellent. Dams are full and creeks are flushed after the recent storms and follow up rain.</p> <p>Pasture -Considering the time of year, pastures are in good condition, but winter haying off has commenced with the recent cold spell. Some of the low lying flood plain areas are remaining water logged, and recovery has been poor, thus explaining some of the lower pasture scores.</p> <p>Stock - In the Lower Hunter, generally people have de-stocked as a result of the floods, however the quality of the remaining stock has remained reasonably good, where pastures have been available. No supplementary feeding is occurring other than the water logged areas.</p> <p><b><u>UPPER HUNTER DISTRICT</u></b> (Upper Hunter. Muswellbrook and Singleton LGA's)</p> <p>Water - Both quality and quantity have improved in most areas due to recent cumulative rainfall, but in some areas lack of run-off has been an issue.</p> <p>Pasture - Native pasture is in a dormant phase, but is average for the time of year, with some residue from late summer/early autumn. Improved pasture quantity and quality is fair. Annual forage crops are looking quite good.</p> <p>Stock - Stock numbers and condition are looking</p>	<p><b><u>LOWER HUNTER DISTRICT</u></b> (Maitland, Cessnock, Dungog, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie LGA's)</p> <p>Water: Supply and quality in the Lower Hunter is still very good. Dams are full and creeks are still flowing.</p> <p>Pasture: Considering the time of year, pastures are in average condition, but lack of follow up rain has pastures in a winter lay off. Some of the low lying flood plain areas still remain water logged following the super storm event of April.</p> <p>Stock: De-stocking has continued as a result of the floods. Stock condition is declining marginally. Supplementary feeding is increasing.</p> <p><b><u>UPPER HUNTER DISTRICT</u></b> (Upper Hunter. Muswellbrook and Singleton LGA's)</p> <p>Water: Ground water in some areas is slowly replenishing; declining in others. Creeks in some areas are slowly dropping.</p> <p>Pasture: Native pasture is average for the time of year, but spring rain will be required. Improved pasture quantity and quality is fair.</p> <p>Stock: Stock numbers are down in general; restocking has not occurred, and therefore condition of remaining stock is good.</p> <p><b><u>MANNING GREAT LAKES DISTRICT</u></b> (Greater Taree, Gloucester and Great Lakes LGA's)</p> <p>Water: Capacity for most properties has declined since last month due to lack of rainfall, but levels are still reasonable.</p> <p>Pasture: Little growth is being experienced due to cold</p>	<p>Conditions in the Hunter are broadly consistent with pasture conditions expected. We have had some handy rainfall and waiting for the warmer days ahead.</p> <p>As expected feed is tight in some areas but the current moisture conditions leave us hopeful for a Spring response. Time will tell.</p>



Region	June	July	August
	<p>reasonable for the time of year. Those on crop are looking in good condition.</p> <p><b><u>MANNING GREAT LAKES DISTRICT</u></b> (Greater Taree, Gloucester and Great Lakes LGA's)</p> <p>Water - Capacity for most rural properties would be at 80% or better. Good general rain through winter has provided good soil moisture levels.</p> <p>Pasture - Improved winter forage pastures are doing well, but naturalised pastures are experiencing no growth due to the cold conditions, but are normal for the time of year.</p> <p>Stock - Stock quality and quantity are average for the time of year in a normal season.</p>	<p>conditions and lack of rainfall, but conditions are close to normal for the time of year.</p> <p>Stock: Cattle are declining in conditions due to lack of dry feed, but de-stocking is not fully evident.</p>	
<b>Murray</b>	<p>Due to rain event in the 2nd week in June (ranged between 25 - &gt;100mm) and some warmer weather over most of the month, there has been winter grass growth occurring in the west, however dry subsoils prior to the rain along with frosts since then caused conditions to dry out very quickly after the rain event. Water levels in ground tanks reliant on surface runoff is still a concerning issue - however, some runoff resulted in some areas.</p> <p>Livestock condition remains pretty good although a lot of supplementary feeding going on (particularly breeding stock) and/or reducing stock numbers. In some areas landholders are generally pessimistic about pastoral conditions going forward with most still hand feeding although further west farmers have been able to reduce supplementary feeding. High lamb marking percentages reported in the west and high scanning percentages across the board.</p> <p>Winter cereals are looking average/above average further west while in some areas in the central Murray winter crops are struggling, canola is very late and poor except on pre-irrigated country. Wheat is patchy, barley is handling the conditions better. Pre-irrigated country is in good condition, not too wet.</p> <p>Irrigation prospects to grow stock feed or finish winter crops are poor after the announcement of 0% water allocation on the Murray Irrigation Network. This will</p>	<p>Reasonable rainfall across region in July, adequate for the moisture requirements during the cold weather, but not enough to replenish dry sub-soils in the west that will need good late winter-early spring rains. Frosts have been prevalent across the region but crop damage is unlikely because of stage of crop development. Cold conditions &amp; frosts have led to slow pasture &amp; crop growth. Some waterlogging of some crop areas and bogging of vehicles reported in the central and south eastern areas, while towards the west growers with sprinkler irrigators (centre pivots) and on-farm storage intend to commence watering next week with canola crops most adversely affected by cold, dry conditions.</p> <p>Major concern is poor outlook for irrigation supply and very high cost of temporary water. In the central, northern areas, surface runoff to ground tanks continues to be an issue as landholders move into warmer months.</p> <p>Pasture growth not keeping up with stock demand so supplementary feeding still going on. Graziers that reduced stock numbers in June are pleased they did and are still not in a position to purchase replacements. Some graziers reduced numbers further in July. Lamb losses have been high in some areas (frost, limited feed).</p> <p>Overall, continued deterioration of SOI, and outlooks from BoM are proving sobering for many producers and producers are mindful of the el Nino forecast.</p> <p>Increasing number of reports of high kangaroo numbers in</p>	<p>Overall, season progressing OK in some areas, and very good in others. Some areas in the Western districts are facing real concerns and some crops being sprayed out and stock turned onto them. Majority of these areas are surviving on rainfall event to rainfall event at the moment and water levels in groundtanks fed by rainfall runoff in these areas remains a critical issue as we move into spring and summer generally across the area.</p> <p>Other areas in the central and Eastern districts saw a significant boost in crop and pasture growth during August. Rainfall was very varied across the region and rainfall in the East has given landholders almost a guarantee for the next 6 weeks.</p> <p>With most canola flowering, and some early cereals in the booting stage, the potential for late season frost damage rates as a potential threat to crop production. Overall livestock condition remains good with less or no supplementary feeding occurring. Pastures (both native and improved) are generally meeting livestock requirements at this stage - but no generally no excess. Worms are a real threat to sheep this spring, particularly in the east.</p> <p>Irrigation water availability remains low - 0% GS in the Murray Valley, and 27% GS in the Murrumbidgee. Full access to carryover is available. Significant implications to irrigation productivity for the 2015/16 season at this stage.</p>

Region	June	July	August
	<p>have a major impact on local farmers. Kangaroos are in large numbers in the western areas.</p>	<p>the West now causing damage to crops, and deer and fox numbers in the East. On a positive note, livestock prices, and forward contracting for winter crops are a major positive at the moment - but there are significant production risks.</p>	<p>For most of the east, landholders have relaxed a little. For much of the west, the season could turn significantly either way and the next 4-6 weeks will dictate which way it turns.</p>
<b>North Coast</b>	<p>There is very little change since last month with the lower flood plain country still very wet and impossible in many instances for producers get a tractor on paddocks. While rainfall was only patchy it generally fell where it was not wanted i.e. the coastal strip. There has been a decrease in available feed volumes however, this is expected at this time of year, producers have usually off loaded their weaners and should now be looking after dry stock or those that have recently calved. Milk production levels are stable. Saleyard prices are very good at the moment with large numbers still being yarded and good returns being received by producers. As reported last month the severe weather event (East Coast Low) of early May resulted in damage across a small part of the region. A disaster declaration has now been approved for the Ballina, Bellingen, Byron, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Nambucca Local Government areas.</p>	<p>The late arrival of severe winter weather conditions has hit producers hard. Frosts have been very heavy on consecutive days and the strong winds took its toll on pastures. Water is still good in all areas except a portion of the Upper Macleay (McKenzie's Creek) who report an alarming drop in surface water availability. Rainfall was mainly confined to the Coastal beach strip, with producers west of the Pacific Highway looking for a top up. Livestock condition overall is still good and with record prices producers are taking full advantage of the money while it is on offer. Producers that have cows calving are putting additional rations out to compensate for slower growth rates in improved pastures and stable growth in native pastures.</p>	<p>Conditions have started to come back in the Southern parts of the Region. This can be attributed to these areas only receiving about one third of their average rainfall over the past couple of months and the later onset of winter with August frosts severely impacting on pastures both native and improved. Kempsey airport recorded 18.2mm for August compared to the ten (10 ) year average of 55mm, July 9mm compared to the long term average of 24mm and June 12mm compared to 136. Coffs Harbour also only recorded one third of their normal average rainfall in August 27mm compared to the 73 year average of 72.9, July 32.2mm compared to 73mm and June 55.8mm compared to 123mm. Grafton recorded 36.6mm for August compared to the 97 year average of 40.6mm, July 19.6mm compared to 44.44 and June 17.6mm compared to 68.4mm. Casino and Lismore have varying deficiencies but not quite to the extreme of their Southern counterparts. The statutory Busfire Danger Period (BFDP) has been introduced effective from 1st September 2015 in all Local Government Areas in recognition of the build of fuel, prevailing dry conditions and the predicted El Nino type conditions that are forecast for the coming months. While Spring on the North Coast is traditionally a dry period storm activity can generally be relied upon to provide some short term relief. Livestock producers have continued to take advantage of the very good prices and have continued to offload stock.</p>
<b>Northern Tablelands</b>	<p>Some heavy frosts have been recorded and pastures have suffered as a result. However this is to be expected on the tablelands at this time of year. Some areas of Uralla, Armidale Dumaresq and Guyra LGAs have still had little run-off and surface water</p>	<p>Rain throughout the region has been patchy with good falls on the western side but disappointing across some parts of our area. Consequently surface water is still limiting in parts of Uralla, Armidale Dumaresq and Guyra LGAs although the affected area has reduced significantly.</p>	<p>Most of August was dry, windy and with widespread frosts taking a toll on pastures and livestock across the region. Excellent widespread general rain came to the region in the last week of the month, giving much needed relief</p>

Region	June	July	August
	<p>continues to be a problem. Fodder crops continue to do well and are providing valuable feed for fattening stock. Some supplementation of breeding stock has commenced, but is still at a relatively low level. Commercial cropping in the Inverell LGA continues to have an excellent outlook. Stock generally continue in good condition, however numbers for both sheep and cattle remain below historical averages.</p>	<p>Frosts and snow falls have been widespread and pastures have generally deteriorated in line with expectations for July. Fodder crops have continued to do well and have been heavily utilised for breeding and fattening stock. Commercial crops continue to have a good outlook in the Inverell LGA. Stock numbers are still low and stock condition remains generally good with excellent prices being realised for most sale stock.</p>	<p>across all sectors. This rain was particularly timely for the commercial cropping enterprises in the Inverell LGA continuing an excellent start to their season. Most rivers and creeks have re-established good flows, however some areas still have below average storage in dams. Stock numbers generally remain below the long term average with producers reluctant to pay high re-stocker prices, particularly in the light of the predicted dry outlook for our region.</p>
<b>North West</b>	<p>Walgett - Some late wheat and chickpea plantings have occurred due to the rainfall in June. These crops are only being planted on 30-50cm of wet soil, nowhere near enough to meet crop requirements without follow up rain. This rain will also promote some winter pasture growth and several producers are moving stock back into the Shire after being on agistment for extended periods. Moree - Western parts of shire are opportunistically planting late winter crops in a similar manner to Walgett producers so follow up rain is essential. Reduced livestock numbers in the shire will allow some pasture recovery although it will be slow until spring. Crops in the eastern part of the shire show average potential. Gwydir - Good rainfall has improved pasture growth and caused enough runoff to fill most farm dams. Winter forages are in good condition and livestock utilising the pastures well. Some crops planted late in the cropping window but majority on track for average yields. Narrabri - Forage crops in good condition and livestock on hand remaining steady, allowing some pasture recovery. Farm dam levels have improved due to rainfall. Gunnedah - Farm dam levels improved and good winter pasture and forage growth. Livestock condition is improving, albeit with reduced numbers on hand compared to average conditions. Some late crops planted and several producers are replanting crops</p>	<p><b>Walgett</b> -surface water (ground tanks) 4 (some tanks would be 3, some 5 for quantity, and quality would be about 4). There is a lack of dry matter and has been a rapid growth of soft herbage in response to winter rain - nutritional value may be improving a bit, but certainly would be lacking to start with. Even without further rain, the pasture should last until about October. It would be adequate for dry stock, but insufficient for the lactating ewes). All areas have been sowed to barley now - late sowing, only just emerging - would typically be further along at this point. Still highly exposed to limited rain - yield potential low at this point until further rainfall occurs. Supplementary feeding some livestock only, they are selectively grazing from the feeders. <b>Moree</b> - Fallow soil water profiles near full in some areas. Excellent growth of legume pasture species. Winter crops have good soil moisture profiles. Some crops may flower earlier this year due to warmer conditions and be exposed to greater frost risk. <b>Gwydir</b> - Bloat issues in livestock, waterlogging of crops. Lack of runoff in some areas possible limitation in spring summer. <b>Narrabri</b> - Little runoff in some areas due to improved pastures. Poor subsoil moisture in western area for crops once weather warms up. Bloat concerns in livestock. <b>Gunnedah</b> - Good clover growth and limited roughage from dry native grass is increasing bloat risk in livestock. Dams getting limited runoff. Some waterlogging of crops. Winter forages performing very well. <b>Tamworth</b> -Bloat a massive issue as the clover comes</p>	<p><b>Walgett</b> - Some proudcers bringing stock back from agistment. Some winter herbage growing inc medics and turnip. Feed supplies West of Walgett could carry stock through to summer. Late sown crops ok but will need rain to harvest. Groundcover is better than last year. <b>Moree Plains</b> - Good subsoil moisture for summer crops in some areas (Croppa Ck) and very little in others. Rain ranges from 0-80mm depending, some hail damage. Limited strip rust and heliothis pressure. Fallow moisture varies greatly. <b>Narrabri</b> - Still lack of runoff is a concern for langterm water demand - could be about 3 months water in some dams. Still poor runoff on black soil. <b>Gunnedah</b> - Good runoff into farm dams. Pasture grasses starting to grow well, still small bloat risk. Crops performing well, minimal disease presence yet. Stock in good condition, but numbers still down due to high prices. <b>Tamworth</b> - Manilla and Barraba have not reached the start of spring yet like tamworth has. But it is on its way. Flush of clover proving to be an issue for grazing cattle in particular, stock losses experienced due to bloat. <b>Liverpool Plains</b> - Short green feed available but limited in quatity.</p>

Region	June	July	August
	<p>due to waterlogging.</p> <p>Tamworth - Forage crops in very good condition and winter pasture growth has improved with rainfall. Stock numbers still low compared to average. Farm dams levels have improved across the shire.</p> <p>Liverpool Plains - Some waterlogged crops being replanted along with some opportunistic late plantings occurring. Very good pasture and forage growth along with reduced livestock numbers has left remaining stock in good condition.</p> <p>General - Rainfall has been widespread across the region and has prompted some increased plantings on marginal soil moisture reserves in the west. These crops will require significant follow up rain to achieve even average yields. Further east in the region, crops are on track for only average yields at this stage due to the lateness of the planting and some waterlogging in the southern parts of the region. Pastures will be slower to respond to rain in winter but some winter feed and forage is filling the feed gap until spring. Livestock numbers are still below average for the region but this has left remaining stock in good condition. Farm dam water levels are improved due to minor runoff across the region, mainly in the east and south. However, runoff has been limited to farm scale, meaning creeks, rivers and major water storages across the region have not seen significant improvement.</p>	<p>after the rain especially in the face of reduced grass coverage/competition from grasses. Areas around Manilla that missed the heavier rainfall storms have lacked run off water, leaving dams etc. still low. Some issues around lambing present at the moment - hypocalcemia in ewes grazing crops &amp; ewes being in low BCS at point of lambing effecting both ewe &amp; lamb survival.</p> <p><b>Liverpool Plains</b> - Pasture legume producing well. Some recharge of dam water on some properties. Some winter cereals crops may flower earlier than ideal increasing frost risk.</p>	
<b>Riverina</b>	<p>The southern, central, and eastern Riverina are enjoying the results of the best rainfall received in a week for this season. Despite consistent temperatures less than 10 degrees, some frosts and fogs, the soil moisture for crops and pastures is excellent. Soil moisture in the profile has increased at depth and while temperatures are low, crops and pastures are using moisture in the topsoil, rather than roots moisture seeking at depth.</p> <p>Annual grasses, dual purpose winter crops and winter-active lucerne pastures are all providing some green feed. Dam levels are still low to medium. The</p>	<p>The southern, central, and eastern Riverina is wet with continued rainfall throughout July. The winter has been cold with cold days and nights and frosts ranging from light to severe. The soil moisture for crops and pastures ranges from good to excellent, with a proportion of paddocks now reaching water-logged status. Inflows into dams have been noticeable for many. The rangelands of the Riverina are in a better situation than before winter but patches south and west of Hay have missed out on rainfall. The drier areas of the Riverina are the western and northern parts of the Carathool Shire i.e. north of Rankin Springs and Bland Shires who need more rain for pastures, crops and stock</p>	<p>The southern, central, and eastern Riverina is even wetter with substantial rainfall throughout August. The cold winter combined with cloudy, overcast days slowed any pasture recovery although days are now longer and temperatures have warmed slightly in the last week. Stock health issues have included hypocalcaemia, photosensitisation, rickets in young sheep, bloat in cattle and worms in sheep. The soil moisture for both pastures and crops ranges from good to excellent, with even more paddocks now water-logged including low pastoral land, last season's rice country and some winter crops. The majority of dams have continued to fill with some</p>

Region	June	July	August
	<p>significant rainfall event of mid June was soft and steady rainfall, a nice soaking rain that has been taken up, with very little translating into run-off.</p>	<p>water. Land-holders all need a favorable spring. Dual purpose winter crops, forage crops, winter-active lucerne pastures and annual pastures are all providing some green feed. Dual purpose and forage crops were sown early to on time this season and have provided useful quantities of high quality feed. Annual pastures have shown very low growth rates this winter, limited by very cold temperatures not rainfall. Some native pastures are inactive, others are showing growth and their annual grass and weed component is providing some feed for stock. A lot of supplementary feeding (75% surveyed) to stock has been occurring across the district with pasture feed levels generally low and coinciding with peak nutritional demand and high energy requirements for lactating ewes and cows. Pastures are only growing slowly due to grazing pressure and cold temps. Some land-holders at Harden, Cootamundra and Lockhart have sold stock earlier than usual.</p> <p>Winter crops are growing well with cereal crops now between mid-late tillering unless late-sown where held back by frosts. Canola has progressed from vegetative leafy growth to stem elongation and early flowering. Pulse crops are generally growing well. Disease levels in pastures and crops are reported to be low but this could change in spring with high levels of soil moisture.</p> <p>Dam levels range from empty or very low where there has been rainfall but no run-off yet, to good and up to 50% capacity, to excellent and full. As the moisture profile has been added to, further rainfall has provided some runoff in paddocks and dams are slowly filling.</p> <p>In the Eastern Riverina from the South West Slopes to the Highlands some heavier falls have resulted in dams being nearly full to overflowing, to the delight of land-holders.</p> <p>Farms across the region (especially in Eastern Shires of Gundagai and Tumut) have felt the effects of the very cold temperatures with stock losing condition on farms where not supplementary fed or grazed on dual purpose and forage crops.</p> <p>Windmills are operating well in the MIA and CIA and dam inlet channels are working well from cleanout upgrades last</p>	<p>overflowing and creeks rising. Dams on flat to gently sloping country haven't all had run-off and range between 30-60% capacity which means the stock-water situation varies across the region. The drier areas of the Riverina continue to be the western and northern parts of the Carathool Shire and Bland Shires but they have improved. The Rangelands of the Riverina have changed markedly since mid-June with increasing available feed on native pastures and improving stock condition. Hay has had 35mm rain for the month and a milder winter than the cold temperatures experienced elsewhere. Some native pastures are showing good growth on lighter grass country and slower growth on bush country. Annual grasses and weeds are also providing feed for stock. Growth in the paddocks has resulted in ewes and lambs in excellent condition and there a cattle sale organised for Hay next month with fat cattle to sell.</p> <p>Ground cover on public lands in the MIA and CIA including TSRs in the west is in excess of 78%. Hillston had 36mm total rainfall for August, Griffith had 42mm, Yanco 79mm and Narrandera had 83mm. Despite good winter rainfall the Irrigators are looking at signals like the high price of water and require more certainty in irrigation supplies/allocations for forward planning.</p> <p>In the central Riverina seasonal conditions have continued to be good with above average rainfall for the last 3 months. Crop growth has been excellent. Feed supply is still good to excellent, although tapers off slightly as you move west into the Murrumbidgee and Jerilderie LGAs. Over the last few days growth has begun to improve with a few days of higher temperatures and sunny days. Many of the annual grasses under lower grazing pressure, including roadsides and fencelines are now setting seed. Since last month there is more water in dams for the majority of livestock producers in the Central Riverina.</p> <p>Dual purpose winter crops, forage crops, winter-active lucerne pastures and annual pastures have all provided green feed through winter. The majority of livestock</p>

Region	June	July	August
		<p>year. Northern parts of irrigation districts had a dry summer and autumn, but recent heavy rainfall events in winter have now helped ease the pressure on water storages including stock water. Hillston had a total of 40mm for July, Griffith had 66mm, Yanco and Narrandera had 56mm.</p> <p>Groundcover in the Rangelands and western Riverina remains patchy with pasture growth reliant on annual grass and weed species. Cold weather has increased energy and feed requirements so stock condition has slipped. Winter rainfall has helped on all fronts as some land-holders around Hay were experiencing drought conditions prior to June and July rainfall.</p>	<p>producers have now removed their stock from dual purpose crops which is normal timing in August. There is some supplementary feeding continuing due to very slow pasture growth rates and high energy requirements from stock in cold weather.</p> <p>Winter crops are growing well with cereal crops now at mid-late tillering through to jointing. There are many bulky crops with very good plant populations and high tiller numbers. Some paddocks show well above average yield potentials. Canola is now at 20-50% flowering across the region and fungicides for disease control are in short supply. Pulse crops are looking good except on waterlogged soils. There has been some yellowing of waterlogged cereal crops and trafficability has been an issue for spreading urea and post emergent weed control.</p> <p>In the Eastern Riverina from the South West Slopes to the Highlands more dams and creeks/streams and springs are full to flowing and also overflowing. Where they are not, one questions their dam placement and capacity for run-off after this wet winter. Farms across the region in the Eastern Shires of Gundagai and Tumut have continued to experience a very cold winter. Cattle-growers are starting to report bloat cases as the clover content of their pastures increases and will continue to supplementary feed to help manage bloat in some paddocks.</p> <p>Land-holders across the Riverina are becoming more confident of a favourable spring despite the El Nino forecasts. Winter rainfall has been above average, pasture growth is improving with warming temperatures and winter crops in a healthy condition have subsoil moisture in the profile.</p>
<b>South East</b>	<p>Rainfall across the region in June has been patchy in some locations of the Tablelands landscape but otherwise average to good in other areas. Winter cold snaps have delivered some heavy frosts across the Tablelands landscape impacting available feed and livestock conditions. Winter pasture and crops range from fair to good in most locations.</p>	<p>Areas of the tablelands including the Southern Highlands received a dumping of snow throughout the month of July. Some areas reporting over 200mm of snow.</p> <p>The rest of the tablelands have been suffering bleak conditions and little sunlight with rainfall ranging from 30-90mm.</p> <p>The coastal areas have had above average rainfall, but</p>	<p>It has been a long cold winter. Throughout August there has been substantial rainfall across a broad section of the South East region. The ranges are from 50-100 mm on the tablelands to over 300 mm on the coast. Flooding resulted in localised areas, causing minor stock evacuation in those areas. Because of the cold and wet weather livestock have suffered somewhat with reduced</p>

Region	June	July	August
		trending cooler than a normal year. Water storage and pasture are quite good.	condition and some illness. Looking forward to some warm sunny weather.
<b>Western</b>	<p><b>Unincorporated area</b> - In my travel's for the month I have noticed a wide spread of feed in all directions from Broken Hill and still a lot of water lying around from previous rains this month.</p> <p>They predicted a dry winter but it has certainly started of okay.</p> <p><b>Balranald area</b> - Overall we have had some much needed and welcome rain across the district Most landholders have received around the 25ml +. The native pasture has benefited well from this with trefoil's and grasses starting to come away nicely. However it still needs to progress to be any real benefit to stock. Have had the odd report of Pulpy kidney/bloat causing deaths in sheep due to the shortness of the vegetation and dewy mornings. These losses are only minimal at the moment and farmers are still hand feeding to combat this problem as well as vaccinations and the use of bloat oil in troughs. Crops are starting to poke their heads through nicely however the ground temp is still a bit cold to promote any significant growth from the recent rains. As usual its a wait and see what mother nature delivers in the next month or two.</p> <p><b>Brewarrina area</b> - There has been good falls of rain in the Brewarrina LGA particularly in the southern end of the shire south of the Karmilaroy Highway from Bourke to the eastern shire boundary of Walgett. With good response of growth (winter herbage). North of the highway has received good soaking rain, but little run off for ground tanks. Still little to no rain recorded around the Goodooga area.</p> <p>What rain there has been will make life easier for those that have benefited from it, it's looking like a wet winter &amp; will make for a great spring if follow up rain arrives in Aug/Sept.</p>	<p><b>Wentworth area</b> - July was a cooler than average month 3 - 15 degrees C against the average of 4-16 degrees C. Rainfall varied from 12 to 26 mm across the area. All places reporting good pasture and water supply (except for Darling River supply), stock in good condition and lamb marking percentages above average.</p> <p><b>Unincorporated area</b> - I have been far and wide this month from Tibooburra, where there still looks to be plenty of dry feed from rains earlier in the year and a lot of winter growth among-st that. I have also been up 120kms North of White Cliffs where there is an abundance of feed and water lying in the paddocks everywhere. The Broken Hill to Menindee area still looks okay with a lot of feed around but it is patchy in areas. Down towards Wentworth is probably the most in need of rain where there doesn't look to be much feed at all.</p> <p><b>Brewarrina area</b> - There has been good follow up falls throughout July, varying from just 12 ml up to 30+ml to the southern end of the shire. Goodooga area has had some falls of 25&gt;30 mls but due to the colder weather, not much growth so far. Reports of stock dying with poisoning from new growth, (Rape, Lams tongue etc.). Quite a lot of stock moving in, on agistment from Qld. Looks like we may get a great spring.</p> <p><b>Bourke area</b> - Country side getting dryer, haying off. Livestock in good condition. Reduced number of western regional landholders for July, many were unavailable.</p>	<p><b>Balranald</b> - Useful rainfall for period June - August feed reasonably good but beginning to change as temperatures increase and pasture growth increases.</p> <p><b>Bourke</b> - Variable rainfall has produced a variable growth during August. Evaporation rates increasing with higher ambient temperatures and increased wind velocities coming into spring.</p> <p><b>Brewarrina</b> - southern areas have benefited from rains but northern areas have been drier and this is reflected in pasture growth and stock condition.</p> <p><b>Cobar</b> - Very good rainfall has produced good perennial growth. Not much change from July seasonal conditions report.</p> <p><b>Central Darling</b> -Useful rainfalls around Wilcannia and White Cliffs have produced good pasture growth . Some areas south of Wilcannia have also received good rainfall.</p> <p><b>Unincorporated areas</b> - A range of conditions - Excellent in the North West to very dry in the North East.</p> <p><b>Wentworth</b> - Similar conditions to July however will see significant changes in September and October. Pasture growth is average to below average.</p> <p><b>Pt of Carrathool</b> not available this month.</p>

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