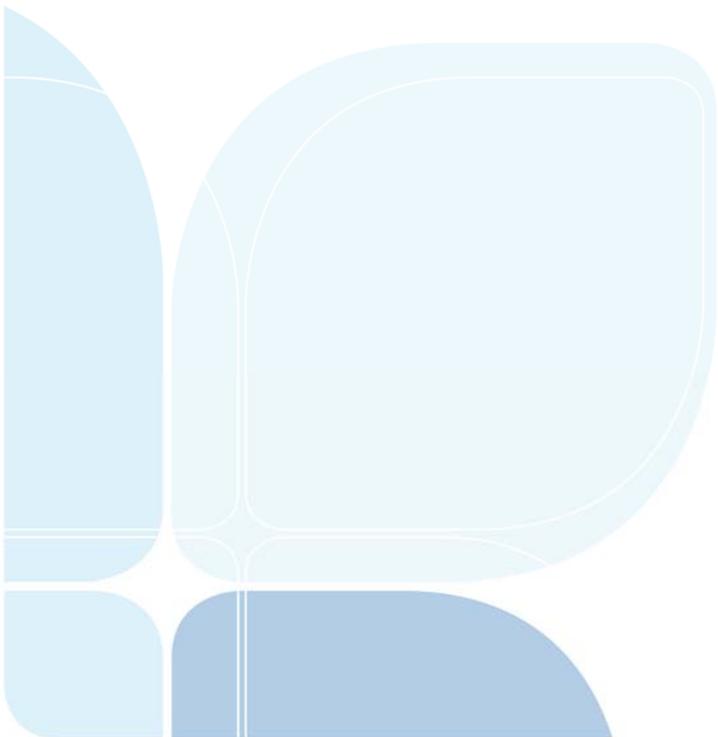




Local Land
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On-ground Seasonal Conditions Report

December 2015



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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing February 2016. 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	October 2015	November 2015	December 2015
State Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine regions reported no change from last month including, Central Tablelands, Central West, Hunter, Murray, North Coast, Northern Tablelands, North West, Riverina and South East. • Greater Sydney and Western have reported a decline in conditions from last month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Murray, Northern Tablelands, Riverina, South East and Western. • Central West and North West have reported a decline in conditions from last month. • Greater Sydney, Hunter and North Coast have reported an improvement in conditions from last month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Greater Sydney, Hunter and Western. • Murray, North Coast, Riverina and South East have reported a decline in conditions from last month. • Northern Tablelands and North West have reported an improvement in conditions from last month. • Central West was not able to provide a report for this month.
Regional Ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Good – Riverina and South East. • Good – Central Tablelands, Central West, Greater Sydney, Hunter, Murray, North Coast and North West. • Reasonable – Western. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Good – Greater Sydney, Hunter, North Coast, Riverina and South East. • Good – Central Tablelands and Murray. • Reasonable – Central West and Western • Below Requirements – Northern Tablelands and North West. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Good – Greater Sydney and Hunter. • Good – Central Tablelands, North Coast, Riverina and South East. • Reasonable – Murray, Northern Tablelands, North West and Western.

Details	October 2015	November 2015	December 2015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below Requirements – Northern Tablelands 		
LGA Scores – Extremely Poor, Extreme or Extremely Critical	There are no LGAs within this scale.	There are no LGAs within this scale.	There are no LGAs within this scale.
LGA Scores – Excellent or Very Good	The following LGAs: Bathurst, Cowra, Narromine, Weddin, Wollondilly, Dungog, Cessnock, Hume, Urana, Bellingen, Tweed Shire, Kyogle, Tamworth, Coolamon, Bombala and Snowy River.	The following LGAs: Bathurst, Cowra Orange, Weddin, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Gloucester, Greater Taree, Great Lakes, Hume, Urana, Deniliquin, Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle, Richmond Valley Council, Tamworth, Young, Wagga Wagga, Jerilderie, Bombala, Yass Valley, Bourke and Central Darling.	The following LGAs: Cowra, Hume, Corowa, Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle, Richmond Valley Council, Tamworth, Jirilderie, Bombala and Snowy River.

Data Analysis

Table 2: Surveyed Property Numbers

Region	Number of properties surveyed		
	October	November	December
Central Tablelands	40	40	40
Central West	51	47	- ¹
Greater Sydney	15	16	15
Hunter	24	22	14
Murray	53	53	40
North Coast	47	47	47
Northern Tablelands	36	33	32
North West	25	29	29
Riverina	26	17	12
South East	60	54	63
Western	38	30	18
TOTAL	415	388	310²

¹ Central West Local Land Services were not able to provide a report for this month.

² The number of properties surveyed for December is lower due to Local Land Services staff and landholders being on leave during the survey period.

Table 3: Seasonal Conditions Reporting Scale

Scale	Regional description	Regional description of seasonal conditions	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	Excellent	Previous 12 months above average seasonal conditions	Water security established on the property for a 12 month period exceeding demands and without any further infrastructure improvements.	2 nd 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	Very Good	Previous 6 months above average seasonal conditions	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	Good	The current season is average	Water supply meets demands.	Crops and pasture growth meeting demands plus silage and hay storage observed on farm.	Average carrying capacity.
Level 4	Reasonable	The current season is below average	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	Below Requirements	The current season has failed	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	The past 6 months have been below average	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	Consecutive failed seasons	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	NSW DPI trigger event (1 in 5 years 20 th percentile for rain, pasture, soil moisture) expected to be flagged	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. ³
Level 9	Extreme	NSW DPI trigger event 3 consecutive months	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	12 months of failed seasons	No surface water supplies.	No improved pastures, native pasture depleted. Bare ground.	

³ Please see the following guide for more information - A national guide to describing and managing beef cattle in low body condition - Meat & Livestock Australia Limited website <http://www.mla.com.au/News-and-resources/Publication-details?pubid=6198>

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

Region	October			November			December		
	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)
Central Tablelands	Good (3)	Bathurst and Cowra – Very Good	Cabonne, Mid-Western and Lithgow - Reasonable	Good (3)	Bathurst, Cowra and Orange – Very Good	Cabonne, Lithgow, Mid-Western and Oberon- Reasonable	Good (3)	Cowra – Very Good	Lithgow, Oberon - Reasonable Cabonne – Below Requirements
Central West	Good (3)	Narromine and Weddin – Very Good	Wellington, Warrumbungle and Parkes – Reasonable Coonamble – Below Requirements	Good (3)	Weddin – Very Good	Wellington, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Coonamble – Reasonable Warrumbungle – Below Requirements			
Greater Sydney	Good (3)	Wollondilly – Very Good	-	Very Good (2)	-	-	Very Good (2)	-	Penrite and Liverpool - Good
Hunter	Good (3)	Dungog and Cessnock – Very Good	Gloucester - Reasonable	Good (3)	Muswellbrook, Singleton, Gloucester, Greater Taree and Great Lakes – Very Good	-	Very Good (2)	-	Gloucester and Greater Taree - Good
Murray	Good (3)	Hume and Urana – Very Good	Berrigan, Conargo, Deniliquin and Wakool - Reasonable	Good (3)	Hume, Urana and Deniliquin – Very Good	Albury, Berrigan and Wakool - Reasonable	Reasonable (4)	Jirilderie - Good Hume and Corowa – Very Good	Berrigan – Below Requirements Wakool - Poor

Region	October			November			December		
	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	Good (3)	Bellingen, Tweed Shire and Kyogle – Very Good	-	Good (3)	Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – Very Good	-	Good (3)	Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – Very Good	-
Northern Tablelands	Below Requirements (5)	Walcha - Reasonable	-	Below Requirements (5)	-	-	Reasonable (4)	-	Uralla, Armidale Dumaresq and Guyra – Below Requirements
North West	Good (3)	Tamworth – Very Good	Moree Plains and Narrabri - Reasonable	Reasonable (4)	Tamworth – Very Good Gwydir and Liverpool Plains - Good	Walgett – Very Poor	Reasonable (4)	Tamworth – Very Good Narrabri and Liverpool Plains – Good	Walgett - Poor
Riverina	Very Good (2)	Coolamon - Excellent	Tumut, Young, Cootamundra, Lockhart, Bland and Hay - Good	Very Good (2)	Young, Wagga Wagga and Jerilderie – Excellent	Cootamundra, Coolamon, Lockhart and Hay - Good	Good (3)	Jerilderie – Very Good	-

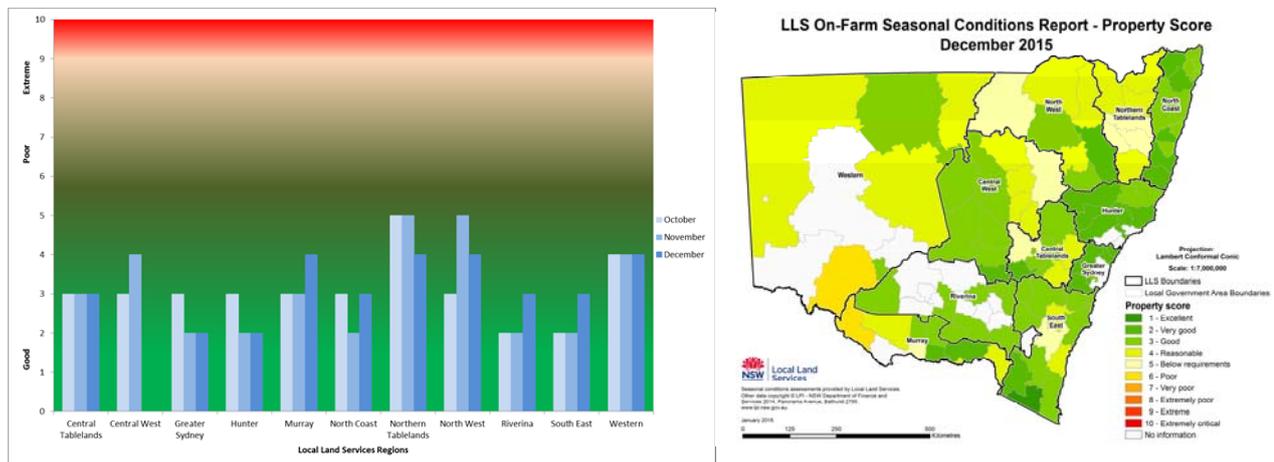
Region	October			November			December		
	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Positive (LGAs)	Negative (LGA's)
South East	Very Good (2)	Bombala and Snowy River - Excellent	Illawarra and Eurobodalla – Good Pallerang - Reasonable	Very Good (2)	Bombala and Yass Valley - Excellent	Illawarra, Boorowa and Eurobodalla – Good Pallerang – Below Requirements	Good (3)	Bombala – Excellent Snowy River – Very Good	Goulburn/Mulwaree, Eurobodalla – Reasonable Pallerang – Below Requirements
Western	Reasonable (4)	Balranald, Central Darling and Wentworth - Good	Bourke, Cobar and Unincorporated – Below Requirements Brewarrina - Poor	Good (3)	Bourke – Excellent Central Darling – Very Good	Balranald, Brewarrina, Cobar and Wentworth – Reasonable Unincorporated – Below Requirements	Reasonable (4)	Bourke - Good	Balranald - Poor

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		
	October	November	December
Central Tablelands	Good	Good	Good
Central West	Good	Good	
Greater Sydney	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Hunter	Good	Good	Very Good
Murray	Good	Good	Reasonable
North Coast	Good	Good	Good
Northern Tablelands	Below Requirements	Below Requirements	Reasonable
North West	Good	Reasonable	Reasonable
Riverina	Very Good	Very Good	Good
South East	Very Good	Very Good	Good
Western	Reasonable	Good	Reasonable

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



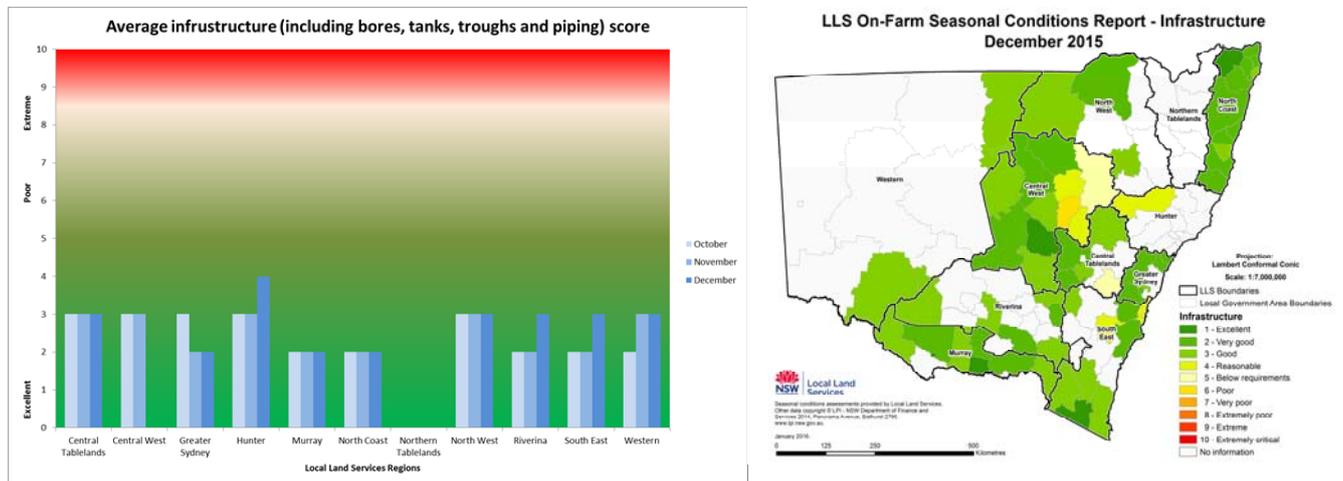
Average Regional Score for Infrastructure

The infrastructure score is used to capture information for the Regional Assistance Advisory Committee (RAAC) to use for the emergency water infrastructure grants in 2014.

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

Region	Average scores for regions		
	October	November	December
Central Tablelands	Good	Good	Good
Central West	Good	Good	
Greater Sydney	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Hunter	Good	Good	Reasonable
Murray	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
North Coast	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Northern Tablelands ⁴	-	-	-
North West	Good	Good	Good
Riverina	Very Good	Very Good	Good
South East	Very Good	Very Good	Good
Western	Very Good	Good	Very Good

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



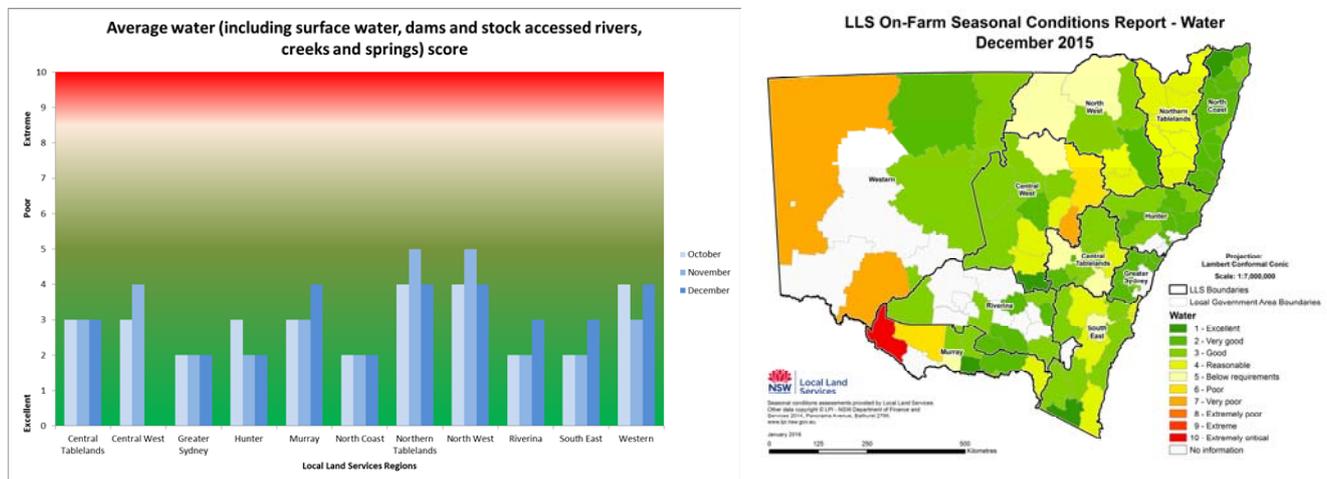
⁴ Northern Tablelands do not measure/score the water infrastructure in the region.

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		
	October	November	December
Central Tablelands	Good	Good	Good
Central West	Good	Reasonable	
Greater Sydney	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Hunter	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Murray	Good	Good	Reasonable
North Coast	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Northern Tablelands	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Reasonable
North West	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Reasonable
Riverina	Very Good	Very Good	Good
South East	Very Good	Very Good	Good
Western	Reasonable	Good	Reasonable

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

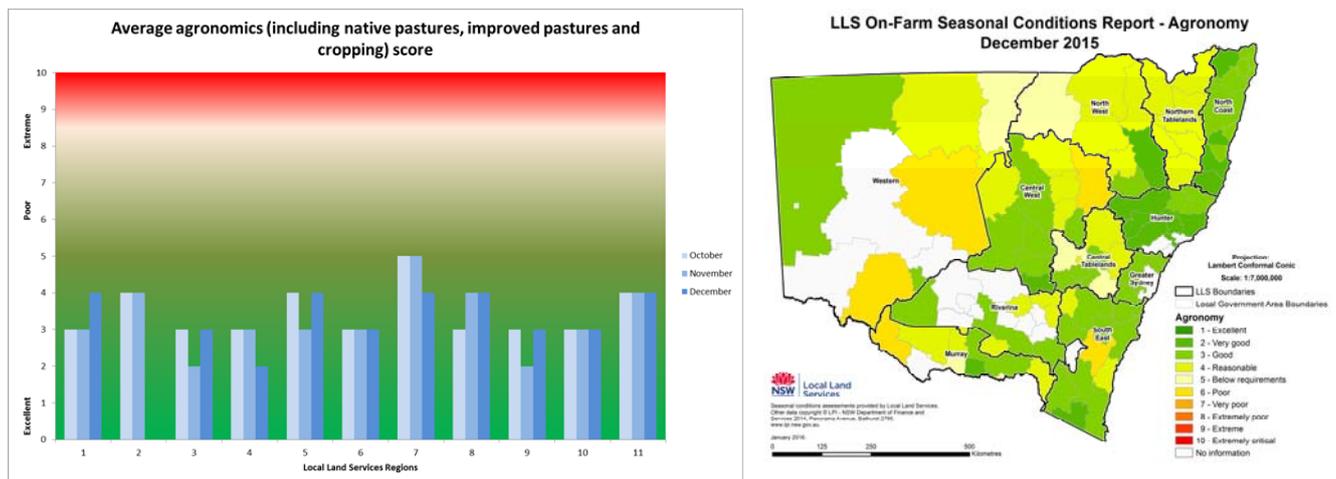


Average Regional Agronomics (including native pastures, improve pastures and cropping) Score

Table 8: The average agronomics score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	October	November	December
Central Tablelands	Good	Good	Reasonable
Central West	Reasonable	Reasonable	
Greater Sydney	Good	Very Good	Good
Hunter	Good	Good	Very Good
Murray	Reasonable	Good	Reasonable
North Coast	Good	Good	Good
Northern Tablelands	Below Requirements	Below Requirements	Below Requirements
North West	Good	Reasonable	Reasonable
Riverina	Good	Very Good	Good
South East	Good	Good	Good
Western	Reasonable	Reasonable	Reasonable

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

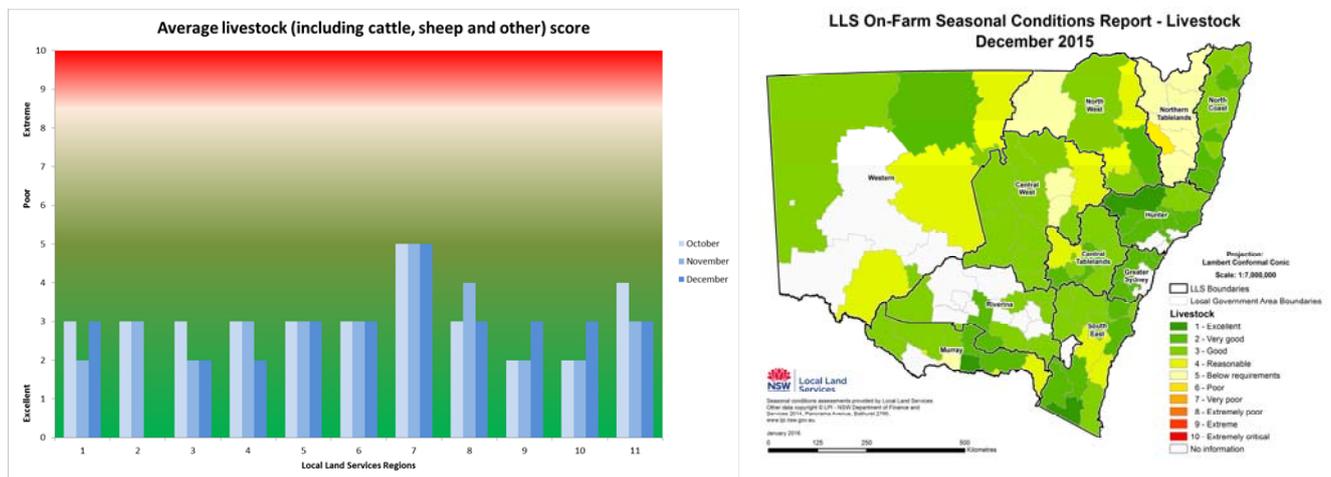


Average Regional Livestock (including beef, sheep and other) Score

Table 9: The average livestock score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	October	November	December
Central Tablelands	Good	Very Good	Good
Central West	Good	Good	
Greater Sydney	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Hunter	Good	Good	Very Good
Murray	Good	Good	Good
North Coast	Good	Good	Good
Northern Tablelands	Below Requirements	Below Requirements	Reasonable
North West	Good	Reasonable	Good
Riverina	Very Good	Very Good	Good
South East	Very Good	Very Good	Good
Western	Reasonable	Good	Good

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



Regional Comments on Seasonal Conditions

Region	October	November	December
<p>Central Tablelands</p>	<p>Rainfall distribution and run-off has been highly variable across the region with water supplies good on some properties and very poor on others. The Mid Western and Cabonne Local Government areas are where the most properties are affected at present, and water carting, or pumping from other infrastructure has been required as a result due to the little or no water in dams. Pasture quality has generally been good as rainfall late in the month has helped to keep grass growing and will help to ensure that pasture supplies are maintained over the next few months or so, depending upon future rainfall. Once again agronomic conditions have been affected more in the Cabonne council area where a prolonged period of low rainfall in the western half has resulted in pastures running to seed prematurely. The eastern and southern sections of the council area have maintained conditions better with more pasture availability and higher rainfall easing pressure overall. The Mid Western council area is another where there has been some variation in pasture quality as certain pockets of land near Mudgee have been hit harder by drier conditions with supplementary feeding occurring in some situations, whilst locusts have also damaged pastures and crops around the Gulgong area.</p> <p>Regionally pastures on granite soils have declined in quality and are only at maintenance values, whilst those on basalt and alluvial soils are experiencing better quality and quantity.</p> <p>Livestock condition has remained good across the region although many landholders have already lightened stocking numbers to ease pressure on pastures and water availability.</p>	<p>Good widespread rain fell across most of the region at the start of the month helping to ease some of the pressure on landholders after a dry October. Little or no rainfall during the latter half of the month combined with hot dry conditions has meant that water and pasture concerns are becoming more prevalent again. Some properties in the east of the region still remain with very poor water availability which will only worsen with continued dry conditions. Storms passing through the area were highly variable with some properties receiving large dumps of rainfall in very short periods, and others little or no rain. This has meant that some properties were able to receive run-off if they were lucky enough to be under these storms.</p> <p>Pastures had generally been responding well to rainfall across the district, however continued hot temperatures combined with strong winds have meant that pastures have hayed off very quickly within the last week. Whilst there still remains a reasonable quantity of feed for many producers, the speed with which the conditions have changed has caused concern over the deteriorating quality of available feed. This will continue to provide an issue if conditions throughout December carry on in the same vein. Harvest is continuing throughout the region with reports of oil levels down in Canola but yields remaining high. Crops in the central area of the region are still some weeks from harvest and were less effected by the storm events than crops on the slopes due to a later maturity.</p> <p>Locusts continue to remain a threat around the Mudgee region with some properties suffering from widespread activity. Adults laying again will likely decimate available summer feed in these areas.</p> <p>Livestock across the region remain in good condition overall, although some landholders may choose to reduce stocking rates if a hot dry summer eventuates</p>	<p>Rainfall across the region during December was generally lower than average, with the exception of the Mudgee area which had higher rainfall amounts due to large storms passing through. Despite this heavy rainfall falling during various storms across the district, many landholders haven't seen their creeks or dams start to flow more freely or fill sufficiently. One surveyed property has had to destock due to no water availability whilst some others are still in an extreme category due to very poor water levels in their dams and creeks.</p> <p>Pastures have responded well to the rain over the past month but there still remains a higher proportion of dry feed as opposed to green matter across the higher country in the east of the region, as well as throughout the Cabonne district. Warmer temperatures throughout the month have also meant that pasture growth has been slower than average whilst some landholders have been supplementary feeding livestock to maintain their condition over summer and to finish animals prior to sale.</p> <p>Livestock condition remains good across the region although on those properties where pastures haven't received or responded to rainfall, livestock condition still remains a concern.</p>

Region	October	November	December
		and whilst stock prices remain high.	
Central West	<p>As always a fair variance across the region ranging from ordinary to very good. Some reports of grain crops being baled or eaten off due to lack of rain and that of others being devastated on Friday by 100 mm of rain and hail. Rainfall has varied from 5 to 85 mm spread over 2 to 7 days. A great proportion of this fell in the last two days of the month. This will have an impact on the grain harvest which had commenced in the western areas of our region. With more wet weather forecast for the week signs are not promising for grain quality beyond this week.</p> <p>The northern areas have missed out again, with the southern areas faring the best with rainfall for the month. Water storage has improved in most areas and with the current storms about the hope is this may improve further before summer.</p> <p>Feed conditions over all are about average for this time of year, with stock doing well on the available dry feed and improved pasture where available. As harvest progresses stubbles will become available and storms will generate some pasture growth.</p> <p>Locust hatchings have had an impact on pasture and some crop in the eastern areas, from Dubbo, Dunedoo to Coonabarabran. This is being managed by landholders and LLS staff. There have been approximately 150 reports so far. At this stage there is a low risk of locust migration from the north over the coming months.</p>	<p>Once again variable conditions across the region ranging from very good to ordinary. The region has had some good rain with falls ranging from 7mm to 125mm though the southern area has reported the heaviest falls. Northern areas have not been as lucky with the amount of rain falling. Landholders reporting reduced yield and quality in crops due to weather, some reports of isolated storm damage prior to harvest with crops being affected by heavy rain and hail. The condition of stock is good due to the available feed and stubble paddocks that have become available.</p> <p>Water could be an issue heading into the hotter months as groundwater is still an issue in some regions. The wind is also drying conditions out rapidly.</p>	
Greater Sydney	<p>Water and rainfall: Average rainfall was decreased in October across the region where a significant decrease in central coast region. In the south western LGA rainfall was significantly low which has affect pasture and livestock condition in the area. However, reservoir and dams still almost full and farmers are expecting there will no shortage of water in the next few months. In the Blue mountain area there was a good amount of rain last month which has effect on filling all reservoir and dams.</p> <p>Pasture and crops: Pasture and crop condition has been deteriorate over the last month. Pasture growth is</p>	<p>Water and rainfall: Average rainfall was excellent across the region especially first half of the month where a remarkable positive improvement has occurred during the month. Almost all reporting LGA had more than 100ml rainfall in the first half of the month resulting improved condition for pasture and livestock. Moreover, reservoir and dams very full and farmers are expecting that it is enough water to run up to the end of this summer.</p> <p>Pasture and crops: Pasture and crop condition has been improved dramatically within first half of</p>	<p>Central coast is wetter with substantial rainfall throughout December whereas southern LGAs have very little rain resulting dryness and slowed pasture growth in the region. Dam's water level has been slightly down but still enough water for whole summer season. Northern LGAs especially Gosford and Wyong has shown excellent condition of water reservoirs, dams and creeks.</p> <p>The couple of short heatwave combined with little rainfall in mid-December days slowed pasture recovery where the soil moisture for both pastures and crops</p>

Region	October	November	December
	<p>being slowed down and started to fade out. Some of the low lying flood plain area still showing very good pasture condition. In the Blue mountain area pasture showing more growth compared to last reporting month whereas Camden and Wollondilly LGA shows fade out growth. Overall pasture condition is reasonable across the region.</p> <p>Stock: Livestock condition has been slightly declined in the reporting month mainly due to lack green grasses. Carrying capacity remains unchanged but supplementary feed supply has been increased in the area. Stock in Blue Mountain LGA has shown improved condition compared to las month. Due to declining pasture condition in some south western LGA farmers started to using a good amount of silage and hay.</p>	<p>November and still showing excellent growth. Good rainfall early in the month and consistent southerlies throughout the month have helped to regrow grasses and reduce the impacts of the hot, dry conditions despite some early signs of drying in some parts of the region.</p> <p>Stock: Livestock condition has been improved in the reporting month across the region mainly due to heavy rainfall and green grasses. Carrying capacity increased and supplementary feed supply has been decreased in the region. Due to improved pasture condition and water storage restocking has been reported among farmers in the region.</p>	<p>ranges from good to excellent. Dual purpose crops, Lucerne pastures and annual pastures have all provided green feed through this early summer.</p> <p>Cattle and sheep health condition ranges from very good to excellent resulting many of livestock producers have now started restocking although in the Southern LGAs are bit behind of restocking. Many landholders have commented that they are currently sufficient for feed and expecting to continue same good condition through the summer.</p>
Hunter	<p>Some good rainfall has been recorded over the district – some light but some substantial.</p> <p>This rainfall has seen pastures respond favorably. The chances of more rain being predicted over the next couple of months is good news, and eases the probability of a dramatic El Nino event – as usual with these predictions – time will tell.</p>	<p>Good spring rainfall broadly across the Hunter region - best spring conditions in a long time in many areas. Patchy falls west of Gloucester and north of Muswellbrook with these areas receiving very little runoff rain to top up water storages and creeks. Great Lakes experiencing good conditions across the board for water, pastures and livestock. Plenty of water stored in dams and creeks in Taree and Cessnock areas. Early summer storms and hail bands moved across Hunter from coast and central-west. Associated early burst of hot temperatures and winds dropping groundwater back quickly in Upper Hunter and Muswellbrook and haying off pastures. Elevated protected country along ranges fresher as experiencing a later spring burst of growth. All classes of livestock improving in forward store to fat condition.</p>	<p>Summer storms rolled across the Upper Hunter region from the north-west and central-west of the State in mid to late December bringing welcome relief to some areas after five relatively dry weeks and predictions for a long dry summer ahead. Hayed off pastures have come to life with most of the region receiving 100mm on average followed by relatively mild growing conditions. Most rivers and streams have seen a good fresh while a few dams are looking for a top-up with good soaking rain but limited general runoff. Fodder supply is generally reported as very good with prime conditioned livestock. Generally conditions are very favorable but some areas of the Hunter are a bit patchy and looking for more rain in the new year.</p>
Murray	<p>Across the region virtually no useful rainfall for the month (not counting rains that commenced on 31 Oct).</p> <p>Combined with very hot weather early in the month, heat stress damage to winter crops occurred and pasture quality and quantity deteriorated, resulting in a reduced growing season in the West and far East. Conversely, much of Central and some eastern areas of Murray remain excellent with well above average pasture growth and crops / livestock doing well.</p>	<p>Good early November rainfall in most areas has generated good response to native grasses and areas with lucerne in the Western and Central areas. In the Eastern areas most mid-lower slopes recovered enough to provide a good to excellent spring recovery. A small region of the far Eastern (around Tooma) received less rainfall and consequently received a below average spring. Many central areas had a well above average spring. With the onset of hot and windy</p>	<p>In Murray West some limited response from perennials to the low and sporadic rainfall received mid-December/early January. Some of Central Murray doing extremely well with some pastures allowing stock to gain weight. Most of Eastern Murray received an adequate spring that will be boosted by late Dec / Jan rain event.</p> <p>Harvest of winter crops generally finished early December - overall, yields and quality generally below</p>

Region	October	November	December
	<p>Low water allocations still a major concern for growers (and the local communities). Stock water from ground tanks reliant on rainfall runoff continues to be a significant issue as we move into summer in most circumstances - many are either dry or close to dry.</p> <p>Stock condition remains good - however due to reduced bulk of feed compared to a 'typical' spring and with a dry summer ahead, some producers already considering options (e.g. selling, purchasing feed, early weaning etc.) or have already lightened stock numbers. In the far East there was a severe reduction in silage or hay made this year.</p> <p>Good crop growth in some areas (above average), particularly pre-irrigated and spring irrigated crops - still showing good yield potential. However many areas to the West are struggling - canola crops around average, cereals below average. Barley crops seem to have handled the dry finish far better than other cereals (but unsure of grain quality) whilst canola and field pea yields are looking to be well below average. More crops than normal cut for hay/silage and/or turned stock onto crops which were unlikely to finish.</p> <p>Little likelihood of any significant summer cropping program for those on the Murray system</p>	<p>conditions, soil moisture levels are drying rapidly, and much of the growth generated will 'burn-off' without follow-up rains.</p> <p>Livestock condition in most areas remains good-excellent for this time of year and in general stock condition is mostly holding due to lightening off with numbers or supplementary feeding. Good prices enabled landholders to reduce numbers without high penalties. Most crop stubbles will be grazed immediately by livestock and in general producers are generally comfortable with the feed situation, with the exception of the small area in the far East and some of the Western areas. Higher than normal summer feeding will be employed in these areas.</p> <p>Irrigated cereals have mostly performed well, good protein, reasonable yields. Dryland cereal yields well below long term average. Screenings have been very high in both wheat and especially barley. Importantly, there was minimal widespread winter crop losses or downgrades (isolated hail damage).</p> <p>Irrigation allocations remain low - 15% in the Murray Valley, 31% in Murrumbidgee (+ carryover in both Valleys). Minimal areas of summer cropping in the Murray, rice and cotton areas also down in the Murrumbidgee.</p>	<p>average, with some disappointing results.</p> <p>Livestock condition remains generally good-very good for this time of year, even where the season was tough - generally landholders have been able to off-load at good prices before stock went backwards. Only limited supplementary feeding - livestock grazing on crop residues and native pastures. Minimal summer cropping.</p> <p>Many ground tanks reliant on surface inflows are dry or best part of - water being pumped in and via creeks and irrigation channels remains in good supply and quality.</p> <p>Low irrigation water allocation is having a major impact in the district and Murray irrigators will have a cash flow drought over the next year due to low or no summer crop plantings.</p> <p>Still ongoing excessive kangaroo issues in the eastern Murray.</p>
North Coast	<p>The weather has been all over the place this month. Ranging from very hot to very windy to cooler thrown in with some storm activity that has generated useful rainfall for those lucky enough to be under the right cloud.</p> <p>Hail damage has again been reported to the blueberry crop in the Corindi area in the northern part of the Coffs Harbour LGA. LLS staff are undertaking surveys to determine the extent of the damage and to do damage report to DPI.</p> <p>Most producers are looking to the predicted widespread rain event next week to really generate pasture growth and hopefully some run off into steam, creeks, rivers and on farm storages.</p>	<p>Overall the season across the region could only be described as being very good with some producers describing the recent rainfall events and warm weather as the best "spring break" that they have had for probably ten (10) years.</p> <p>This combined with the long overdue very good prices for livestock, producers are all on a high at the moment. The only dark cloud on the horizon has been the damage caused in some areas by severe storm events. Natural disaster funding has been approved for affected producers in the Corindi (Coffs Harbour LGA) area from the hail storm in October.</p> <p>A further damage report has been compiled by LLS staff for producers in the Northern sector of the Coffs Harbour LGA and submitted to NSW DPI. Reports of</p>	<p>A summary of the overall situation is that everybody is happy, rainfall has been good, temperatures on the milder side, cattle prices are way up on this time last year, livestock are holding condition well and there are not too disease or pest issues that are out of the norm for this time of year.</p>

Region	October	November	December
		significant damage have also been received of damage in the Lismore LGA from severe storm events on 29-30th November 2015, information is being collated by LLS staff for submission of an Agriculture & Fishing Industry damage report.	
Northern Tablelands	<p>Rainfall for the month has been from storms only, with reasonable falls across some of the area, good falls in small isolated pockets and inadequate falls in other areas.</p> <p>Overall little has changed on an LGA wide basis with Walcha the only LGA showing improved conditions. Water supplies still remain sub-optimal across most of the Northern Tablelands with stock numbers generally well below average.</p> <p>While stock numbers will improve with calves and lambs coming on strength, many producers are selling what they can in preparation for the predicted dry El Nino summer.</p> <p>Until there is a widespread general rainfall event of 50mm or more, conditions will remain difficult.</p>	<p>The benefits of an excellent wide spread rain event at the beginning of November evaporated with a hot dry windy final two weeks of the month.</p> <p>Overall, not a lot of change, however the hot dry finish and lack of run-off from the rain event has continued to put pressure on ground water, particularly in parts of Uralla and Armidale Dumaresq LGAs. Pastures in these areas are also showing significant deterioration. Harvesting of commercial winter crops in the Inverell LGA is virtually complete with some down grading of grain from weather damage. Significant areas of summer crops have been planted into fallow country and these crops are "up and away" and will be needing rain through December and into the new year. Further plantings into stubble will be dependent on sufficient rain early in December.</p>	<p>Wide spread good storm rains and warm weather through December has brought significant improvements to both water supplies and pastures in most of the Northern Tablelands district. As always with storm rains there are some pockets which have not fared as well, the major deficient being in run-off and so some producers still have below average dam levels. Stock numbers generally remain below average with many producers preferring to breed up their numbers rather than competing in the buoyant market for replacement animals.</p> <p>Commercial and forage summer crops (mainly in the Inverell LGA) are progressing very favorably, with the possibility of some late plantings of mung beans still to occur. Preparations for forage crops such as oats and high performance rye grass are well under way in the other LGAs and it is expected that plantings will occur over the next 6 to 8 weeks, subject to ongoing rains.</p>
North West	<p>Moree Plains - Insufficient rain to start summer pasture growth. Dry August and September in some areas combined with heat in October reduced crop potential significantly. Barley and Faba beans have been best performers overall, some wheat on short fallow has high screenings. Some sorghum was planted on limited profile moisture and will need good summer rain.</p> <p>Gwydir - Some significant fall in areas of up to 120mm. 50% of areas planted to dryland sorghum. Only irrigated cotton in. Harvest 50% complete with hold ups due to weather.</p> <p>Liverpool Plains - Hot spell in October has reduced yield potential on most crops. Good surface moisture for sorghum sowing. Rain this week may downgrade some winter cereals but benefit summer grasses both native and introduced. Yields likely to be average to slightly</p>	<p>Walgett - failed crops across the LGA have provided some spring feed and groundcover. Very patchy rainfall across the LGA. Some storms recorded in town but no significant rain in surrounding areas. Lightning Ridge area has received significantly less rain than other areas in the LGA. Mitchell grass has responded to rain but does not present significant feed supply at this stage.</p> <p>Reduced stock numbers have reduced the need for supplementary feeding.</p> <p>Moree Plains - barley went very well, early sown sorghum travelling well. Rain very variable across the region, little summer crop to the west. Grain quality variable but generally down due to rain at harvest. Mungindi continues to be very poor crops yielded poorly and stock feed very limited.</p>	<p>Walgett – North West of Lightning Ridge still dry very isolated rainfall. Rainfall will benefit Mitchell grass seeding. Rainfall in early January created some runoff. Lighter country is responding but heavy soil requires sig more rain.</p> <p>Gwydir – No Rainfall till end of December - so no improvement, should improve with 56mm already in January.</p> <p>Gunnedah - Isolated storms late in December increased rainfall totals but did not change conditions for this report. Limited dryland summer crop planted. May still see late mung beans go in.</p> <p>Tamworth - Agronomic - 2 and improving after the rain, Livestock - 2 and improving after a drench.</p>

Region	October	November	December
	above.	<p>Gwydir - November has been a month of extremes. We have had 88mm of rain for the month which fell in the one event earlier in the month. Since then it has been pretty hot and so grass is really drying off but cattle still look good and feed is adequate. We made hay from some of our oats and harvested about 30acres as well so we have a full silo of oats and full hay shed but things are certainly trending towards a big dry spell.</p> <p>Narrabri - Occurred in 6 falls, with the main fall 56mm on the 13/11. Very hot and dry since. Some dryland cotton planted but very risky, nil river flow and all pastures setting seed following dry hot conditions. Rainfall 95mm in 1 fall, followed by 5mm. Everything is starting to dry out considerably with the hot days and evaporation rates.</p> <p>Gunnedah - small area of hail damage around Curlewis in early November. Most crops harvested without weather damage. Minimal summer crop planted at this stage. Dam levels dropping due to hot windy weather and limited runoff. Stock numbers still reduced due to high prices.</p> <p>Tamworth - Dry off substantially, Average annual rainfall is still 100mm above long term average!</p>	
Riverina	<p>The Riverina LLS region has finished a very dry month with rainfall on the last weekend as October ended and November began. Most cereal crops are at various stages of grain development with some nearly ripe. Canola crops have been windrowed and windy conditions before the rainfall of the 30 and 31 October moved windrows around. Rain delayed canola harvest as it was about to begin. Stock health issues have included ongoing foot scald (benign foot-rot) and foot abscess issues but a notable health concern of veterinarians is the worm burdens of Black scour worms and the potential for Barber's Pole worms in warm and wet conditions. The topsoil dried out in October and subsoil moisture was drawn upon by crops and pastures. For most land-holders there is little to no pressure on stock water and stock are in excellent condition. Two dry months and a</p>	<p>The Riverina LLS region has finished spring with a wet month causing delays to shearing, hay-making and harvest. Some producers in the Riverina have benefited with dams being topped up and perennial pastures remaining in better condition for longer. Stock condition across the region has benefited from pastures that offered both quantity (tonnes Dry Matter/Ha) and quality (digestibility, crude protein and energy). Stock health issues have included grass seed injuries resulting in conjunctivitis and blindness, foot scald, skin irritations and body injury. Worm burdens of Black scour worms are continuing to be a threat to production particularly for winter lambs after weaning. Harvest has been a mixed bag across the region ranging from disappointing yields and quality in localities where a late break was received, to many</p>	<p>Some producers in the Riverina have benefited with dams being topped up by falls just after Christmas and stock condition across the region has benefited from stubbles after harvest and a mixture of green and dry feed in paddocks. Stock health issues have included grass seed injuries, worm burdens of Black scour worms, flies, algal blooms in dam water after storms and the question of adequate livestock nutrition of stubbles for lambs.</p> <p>The winter crop harvest finished in December across the Riverina LLS region, with an earlier start and finish to the harvest than usual. Harvest reports continue to describe a mixed bag of yields and grain quality across the region. With regards to the summer crop, while rice areas are down and cotton areas are up, there has been little else to report on the crop condition.</p>

Region	October	November	December
	drying soil profile didn't result in run-off events for dams and creeks.	average yielding crops that lost yield potential in the drier months of September and October, to some excellent crop yields with low levels of canola and wheat disease present this season. Winter crops with high yield potentials (both irrigated and dryland) lodged during the week of storms in November (high winds and heavy rainfall) resulting in a slower harvest. Harvest is still continuing. The summer crop has been planted with rice areas down and cotton proving to be a popular choice again for those set up for the crop.	
South East	<p>Coastal - Coastal parts of the South East generally received between 25mm to 100 mm during October. This rainfall has allowed pastures to grow during this period. Soil moisture has slightly decreased during the months and water storages are satisfactory in most areas.</p> <p>Highlands - The highlands areas received lower rainfall than the coastal area for the month, but pasture growth has still occurred in most areas. West of the Hume Highway conditions are not as good, being drier overall and pastures starting to dry off. Good general rainfall is needed to kick along pastures and replenish water storage. Livestock are in good condition.</p> <p>Tablelands - Pasture growth for the month was limited by the available moisture. Rainfall was patchy and light for the month of October. Some pastures are starting to dry off, particularly on the tops of hills. Higher elevation country needs rainfall now to promote pasture growth. Rainfall in the next 2-3 weeks is needed. Livestock are still doing very well in current conditions.</p> <p>Monaro - All though there has been limited rainfall during October, pasture growth has been sustained by sub soil moisture in most instances. Livestock are in excellent condition across the area. Feed availability exceeds livestock requirements at present.</p>	<p>Coastal - Some isolated areas of the coast received between 50 100mm for October. Generally the rest of the area received 25 to 50mm for the month. This rainfall combined with warmer weather allowed some more pasture growth to occur. Water storages remain satisfactory in most areas, but have reduced over the month due to warmer conditions.</p> <p>Highlands - The Highlands areas mostly received between 25 to 50mm for the month. Some small areas recorded lower figures and an area to the north received between 50 to 100mm. Some pasture growth continued with this rainfall. Water supplies decreased during the month due to warmer conditions.</p> <p>Tablelands - The majority of the area received between 25 to 50 mm for the month of October. One smaller area only received between 10 to 25mm rainfall for the same period. Limited pasture growth occurred after the rainfall and these pasture are now drying off. Water supplies reduced during the month of October. Livestock are still doing very well in current conditions.</p> <p>Monaro - The majority of the Monaro region received 25 to 50mm during October. This rainfall has sustained pasture growth in the area. Livestock are in excellent condition across the area. Feed availability exceeds livestock requirements at present. Water supplies are also good in most areas.</p>	<p>Coastal - The majority of the coastal area received between 25 to 50mm for the month of December. Due to this the coastal area is still reasonably green and there has been some limited growth over the month as well. Water supplies are still in good condition throughout the area. Livestock are doing well.</p> <p>Highlands - The Highlands area for rainfall was quite variable for the month of December. Some areas received from 25 to 50mm for the month, while other areas to the west only received 10 to 25mm and a small area received below 10mm for the month. There has been limited pasture growth for the period and some areas have very little available pasture available. Water supplies decreased during the month due to warmer conditions. Livestock are still in reasonable condition.</p> <p>Tablelands - The majority of the area received only 10 to 25 mm for the month of December. A small area towards the ACT received between 25 to 50mm. Pasture availability has declined throughout the month. There are also large populations of wingless grasshoppers in some areas which are also reducing available feed. Water supplies reduced during the month of December as well, and are becoming a concern in some areas. Livestock are still doing well in current conditions.</p> <p>Monaro - The majority of the Monaro region received 25 to 50mm during December and a smaller area to the South received between 50 to 100mm for the month. This rainfall has sustained pasture quality and quantity in the area. Livestock are in excellent condition across</p>

Region	October	November	December
			the area. Feed availability exceeds livestock requirements at present. Water supplies are also good in most areas.
Western	No report provided.	A bit of a mixed bag this month. Combined with bio-staff on leave and landholders very busy. Good rainfall early November but quite dry in the second half of the month combined with higher temperatures. Early November rains were sufficient to run water into ground tanks in north west and stock have held condition and some landholders have sold stock to take advantage of high prices and potential impact of El Niño impact forecast. River flows in the Darling and tributaries have been very low and without inflows will continue to remain that way.	Brewarrina LGA - No significant fall of rain in December, some thunder activity produced isolated pockets of greenery. Livestock conditions are still holding well due to the lack of numbers per property. Ground water, seems to be a problem in areas where these been a lack of storm activity for run off, Rivers are low, needing a good flush. Bourke LGA - As above.

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