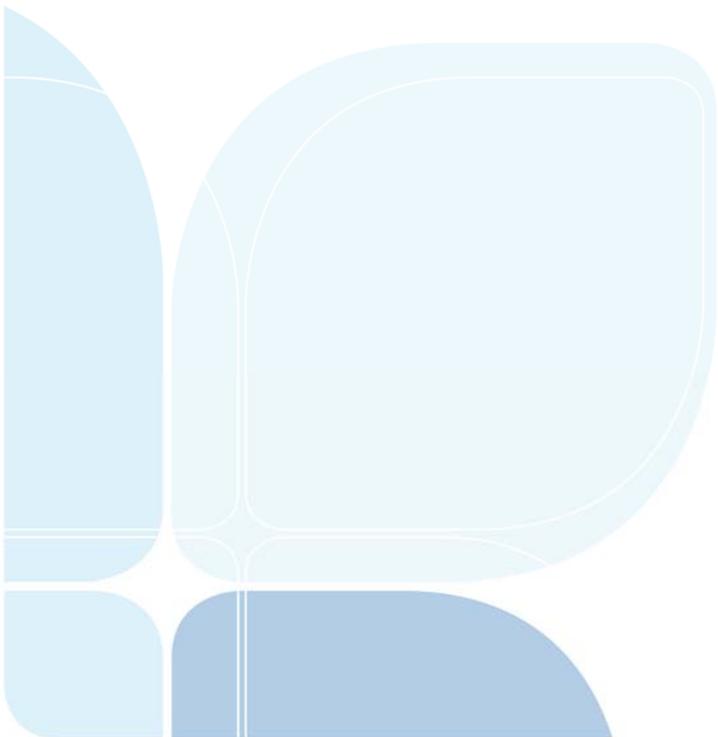




Local Land  
Services

# On-ground Seasonal Conditions Report

January 2016



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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 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.

## Executive Summary

**Regional Property Overview** - Seven regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Greater Sydney, Hunter, North Coast, Northern Tablelands, Riverina and South East. Central West, Murray, North West and Western have reported an improvement in conditions from last month. See the table below for an overview of the regional seasonal conditions elements.

**Regional Infrastructure Overview** - Five regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Central West, Murray, North Coast and Riverina. Greater Sydney, Hunter, North West, South East and Western have reported an improvement in infrastructure conditions from last month. Northern Tablelands do not report on infrastructure.

**Regional Water Overview** - Five regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Hunter, North Coast, Northern Tablelands and Riverina. Central West, Greater Sydney, Murray North West, South East and Western have reported an improvement in conditions from last month.

**Regional Agronomics Overview** - Five regions reported no change from last month, including Central West, Hunter, Murray, North Coast, Northern Tablelands and South East. Central Tablelands, Greater Sydney, North West and Western have reported an improvement in conditions from last month. Riverina have reported a decline in conditions from last month.

**Regional Livestock Overview** - Ten regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Central West, Greater Sydney, Hunter, Murray, North Coast, Northern Tablelands, North West, Riverina and Western. South East has reported an improvement in conditions from last month.

Condition Score	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Reasonable	Below Requirements
<b>Average Regional Property Score</b>		Greater Sydney and Hunter	Central Tablelands, Central West, Murray, North Coast, North West, Riverina, South East and Western	Northern Tablelands	
<b>Regional Infrastructure Score</b>	Greater Sydney and Hunter	Murray, North West, South East and Western	Central Tablelands, Central West, North Coast and Riverina.		
<b>Regional Water Score</b>	Greater Sydney	Hunter, North Coast and South East	Central Tablelands, Central West, Murray, North West, Riverina and Western	Northern Tablelands.	
<b>Regional Agronomics Score</b>		Hunter	Central Tablelands, Greater Sydney, North Coast, North West, South East and Western	Central West, Northern Tablelands and Riverina	
<b>Regional Livestock Score</b>		Greater Sydney, Hunter and South East	Central Tablelands, Central West, North Coast, North West, Riverina and Western		Northern Tablelands

**LGA Scores – Extremely Poor, Extreme or Extremely Critical** - There are no LGAs within this scale.

**LGA Scores – Excellent or Very Good** - The following LGAs: Cowra, Mid-Western, Narromine, Corowa, Young, Temora, Wagga, Gwydir, Tamworth, Bourke. All LGAs in the Greater Sydney and Hunter regions are rated as excellent or very good.

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## 1. 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.

The seasonal conditions reporting scale that has been adopted by the Local Land Services seasonal condition reporting team is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: 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 <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	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.

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 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	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. <sup>1</sup>
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.	

<sup>1</sup> 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>  
Local Land Services February 2016

## 2. Data Analysis

An overview of the seasonal conditions for last two months before this reporting period is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Seasonal Condition Report Overview**

Details	November 2015	December 2015
<b>State Overview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Murray, Northern Tablelands, Riverina, South East and Western.</li> <li>Central West and North West have reported a decline in conditions from last month.</li> <li>Greater Sydney, Hunter and North Coast have reported an improvement in conditions from last month.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Greater Sydney, Hunter and Western.</li> <li>Murray, North Coast, Riverina and South East have reported a decline in conditions from last month.</li> <li>Northern Tablelands and North West have reported an improvement in conditions from last month.</li> <li>Central West was not able to provide a report for this month.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Ranking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very Good – Greater Sydney, Hunter, North Coast, Riverina and South East.</li> <li>Good – Central Tablelands and Murray.</li> <li>Reasonable – Central West and Western</li> <li>Below Requirements – Northern Tablelands and North West.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very Good – Greater Sydney and Hunter.</li> <li>Good – Central Tablelands, North Coast, Riverina and South East.</li> <li>Reasonable – Murray, Northern Tablelands, North West and Western.</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.
<b>LGA Scores – Excellent or Very Good</b>	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, Jerilderie, Bombala and Snowy River.

The number of properties surveyed for seasonal condition reporting from each of the 11 regions are shown in Table 3. The number of properties surveyed for December is lower due to Local Land Services staff and landholders being on leave during the survey period. Central West Local Land Services were not able to provide a report for January 2016.

**Table 3: Surveyed Property Numbers**

Region	Number of properties surveyed		
	November	December	January
Central Tablelands	40	40	40
Central West	47	-	54
Greater Sydney	16	15	15
Hunter	22	14	13
Murray	53	40	50
North Coast	47	47	47
Northern Tablelands	33	32	30
North West	29	29	27
Riverina	17	12	16
South East	54	63	46
Western	30	18	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>357</b>

The average regional property score and the local government areas whose average property scores were either above or below the average for each of the 11 regions are identified in Table 4 for this reporting period and the two months prior.

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

Region	November			December			January		
	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)
<b>Central Tablelands</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Bathurst, Cowra and Orange – <b>Very Good</b>	Cabonne, Lithgow, Mid-Western and Oberon- <b>Reasonable</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Cowra – <b>Very Good</b>	Lithgow, Oberon - <b>Reasonable</b> Cabonne – <b>Below Requirements</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Cowra and Mid-Western – <b>Very Good</b>	Oberon - <b>Reasonable</b> Cabonne – <b>Below Requirements</b>
<b>Central West</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Weddin – <b>Very Good</b>	Wellington, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Coonamble – <b>Reasonable</b> Warrumbungle – <b>Below Requirements</b>				<b>Good (3)</b>	Narromine – <b>Very Good</b>	Bogan, Gilgandra, Warrumbungle – <b>Reasonable</b> Coonamble – <b>Poor</b>
<b>Greater Sydney</b>	<b>Very Good (2)</b>	-	-	<b>Very Good (2)</b>	-	Penrith and Liverpool - <b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good (2)</b>	Wyong and Hawkesbury - <b>Excellent</b>	-
<b>Hunter</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Muswellbrook, Singleton, Gloucester, Greater Taree and Great Lakes – <b>Very Good</b>	-	<b>Very Good (2)</b>	-	Gloucester and Greater Taree - <b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good (2)</b>	Singleton – <b>Excellent</b>	-
<b>Murray</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Hume, Urana and Deniliquin – <b>Very Good</b>	Albury, Berrigan and Wakool - <b>Reasonable</b>	<b>Reasonable (4)</b>	Jirilderie - <b>Good</b> Hume and Corowa – <b>Very Good</b>	Berrigan – <b>Below Requirements</b> Wakool - <b>Poor</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Corowa – <b>Very Good</b>	Albury, Conargo, Deniliquin and Wakool - <b>Reasonable</b> Berrigan – <b>Below Requirements</b>

Region	November			December			January		
	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)
<b>North Coast</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – <b>Very Good</b>	-	<b>Good (3)</b>	Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – <b>Very Good</b>	-	<b>Good (3)</b>	Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – <b>Very Good</b>	-
<b>Northern Tablelands</b>	<b>Below Requirements (5)</b>	-	-	<b>Reasonable (4)</b>	-	Uralla, Armidale Dumaresq and Guyra – <b>Below Requirements</b>	<b>Reasonable (4)</b>	-	Uralla and Tenterfield – <b>Below Requirements</b>
<b>North West</b>	<b>Reasonable (4)</b>	Tamworth – <b>Very Good</b> Gwydir and Liverpool Plains - <b>Good</b>	Walgett – <b>Very Poor</b>	<b>Reasonable (4)</b>	Tamworth – <b>Very Good</b> Narrabri and Liverpool Plains – <b>Good</b>	Walgett - <b>Poor</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Gwydir and Tamworth – <b>Very Good</b>	Walgett, Moree Plains, Narrabri and Liverpool Plains - <b>Reasonable</b>
<b>Riverina</b>	<b>Very Good (2)</b>	Young, Wagga Wagga and Jerilderie – <b>Excellent</b>	Cootamundra, Coolamon, Lockhart and Hay - <b>Good</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Jirilderie – <b>Very Good</b>	-	<b>Good (3)</b>	Young, Temora and Wagga – <b>Very Good</b>	Tumut, Jerilderie - <b>Reasonable</b>
<b>South East</b>	<b>Very Good (2)</b>	Bombala and Yass Valley - <b>Excellent</b>	Illawarra, Boorowa and Eurobodalla – <b>Good</b> Pallerang – <b>Below Requirements</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Bombala – <b>Excellent</b> Snowy River – <b>Very Good</b>	Goulburn/Mulwaree, Eurobodalla – <b>Reasonable</b> Pallerang – <b>Below Requirements</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	Bombala – <b>Excellent</b> Cooma-Monaro, Snowy River and Yass Valley– <b>Very Good</b>	Pallerang - <b>Reasonable</b>

Region	November			December			January		
	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)	Average Regional Score	Above Average (LGAs)	Below Average (LGA's)
Western	Good (3)	Bourke – Excellent Central Darling – Very Good	Balranald, Brewarrina, Cobar and Wentworth – Reasonable Unincorporated – Below Requirements	Reasonable (4)	Bourke - Good	Balranald - Poor	Good (3)	Bourke – Excellent	-

### 3. Average Regional Property Score

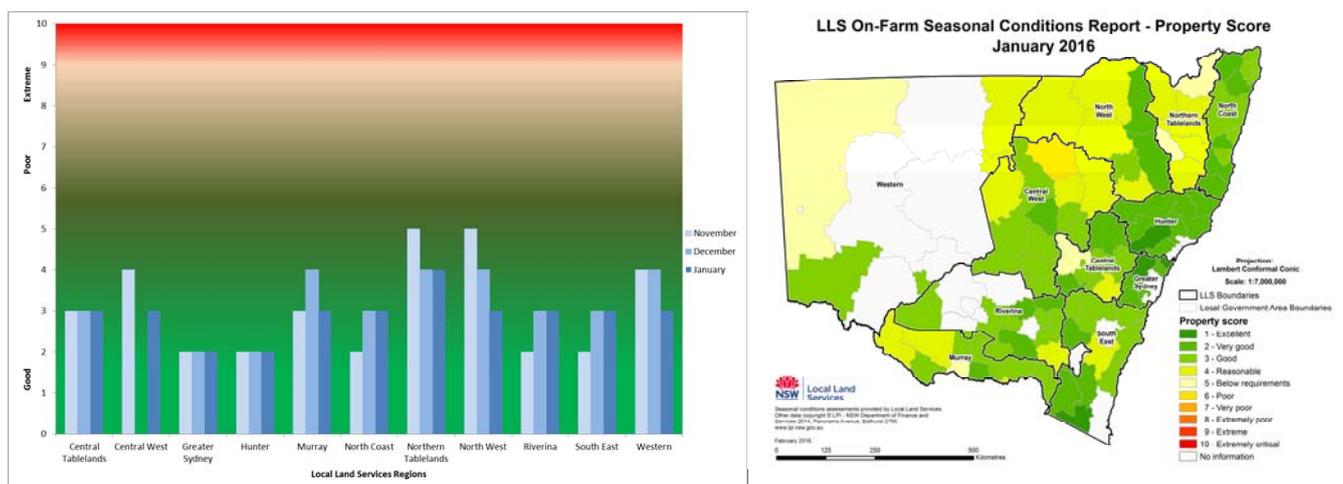
The average regional property score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 5. This score includes an average score of the water, agronomic and livestock categories across the regions local government areas.

**Table 5: The average regional property score**

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

The average regional property score for the 11 regions for the past three months is also shown graphically in Figure 1. Along with the graphically representation in Figure 1 is the geographical representation of the average regional property score across local government areas.

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



## 4. Average Regional Score for Infrastructure

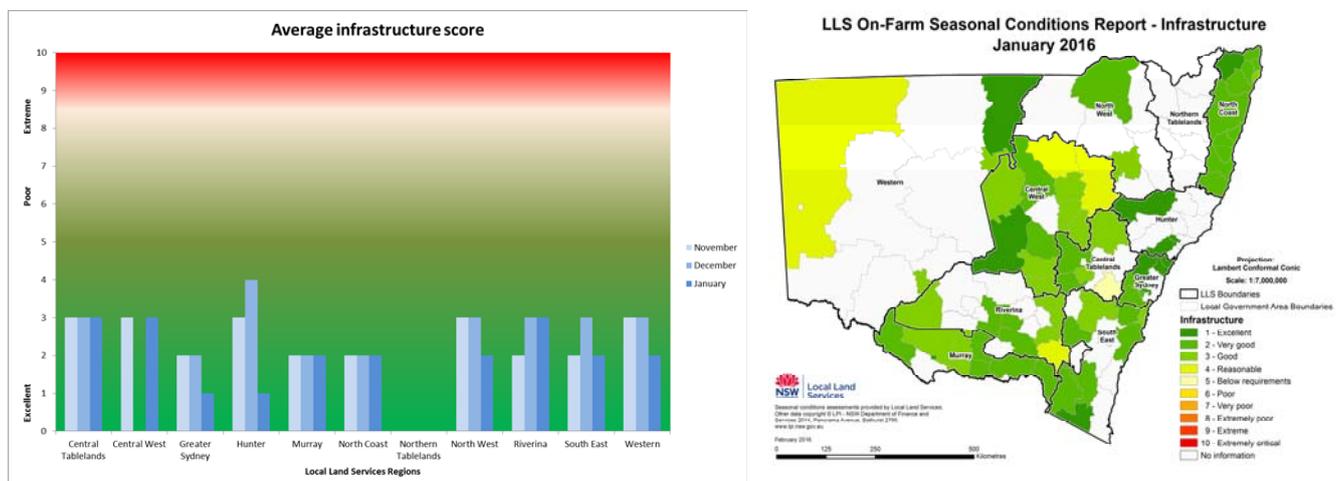
The average regional infrastructure score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 6. This score is for the condition of regional infrastructure including bores, tanks, troughs and piping. The infrastructure score is used to capture information for the Regional Assistance Advisory Committee (RAAC) to use for the emergency water infrastructure grants in 2014. It is important to note Northern Tablelands do not measure/score the water infrastructure in the region.

**Table 6: The average regional infrastructure score**

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

The average regional infrastructure score for the 11 regions for the past three months is also shown graphically in Figure 2. Along with the graphical representation in Figure 2 is the geographical representation of the average regional infrastructure score across local government areas.

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



## 5. Average Regional Water Score

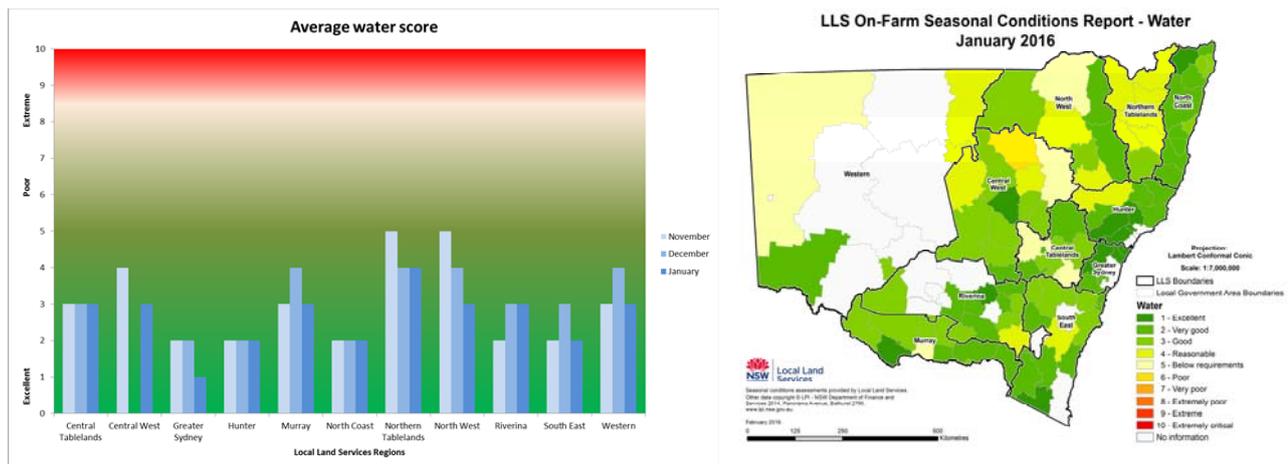
The average regional water score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 7. This score is for the condition of regional water including surface water, dams and stock accessed rivers, creeks and springs.

**Table 7: The average regional water score**

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

The average regional water score for the 11 regions for the past three months is also shown graphically in Figure 3. Along with the graphically representation in Figure 3 is the geographical representation of the average regional water score across local government areas.

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



## 6. Average Regional Agronomics Score

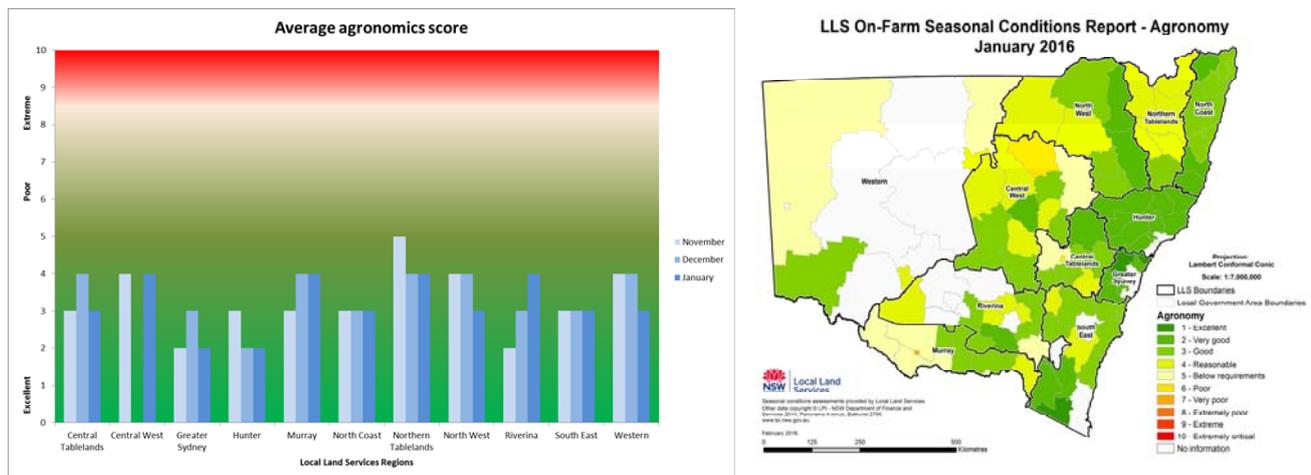
The average regional agronomics score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 8. This score is for the condition of regional agronomics including native pastures, improved pastures and cropping.

**Table 8: The average agronomics score**

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

The average regional agronomics score for the 11 regions for the past three months is also shown graphically in Figure 4. Along with the graphically representation in Figure 4 is the geographical representation of the average regional agronomic score across local government areas.

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



## 7. Average Regional Livestock Score

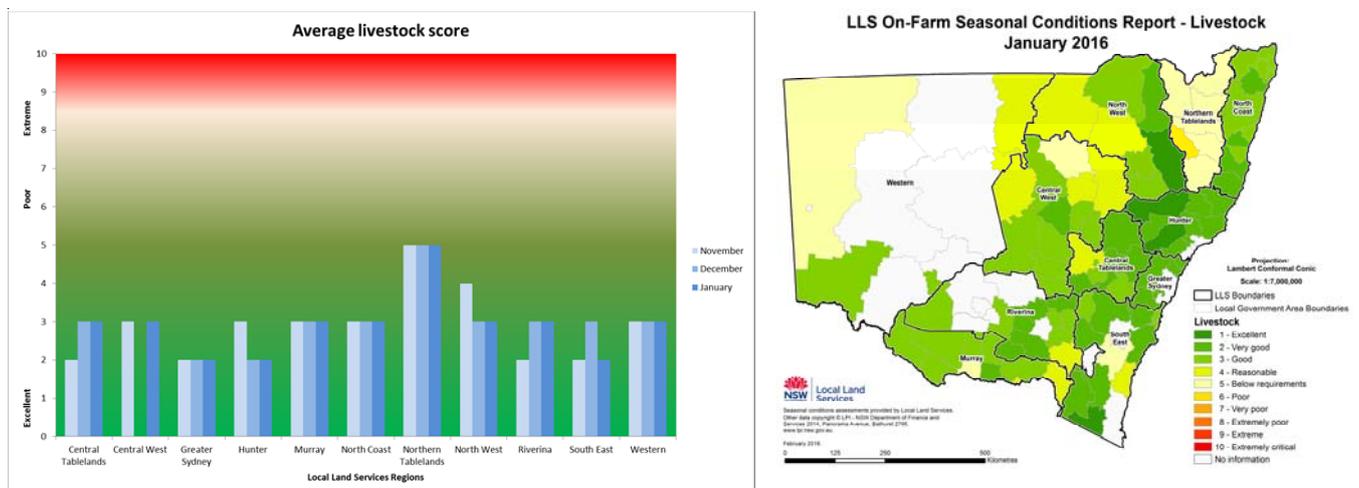
The average regional livestock score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 9. This score is for the condition of regional livestock including beef, sheep and other.

**Table 9: The average livestock score**

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

The average regional livestock score for the 11 regions for the past three months is also shown graphically in Figure 5. Along with the graphical representation in Figure 5 is the geographical representation of the average regional livestock score across local government areas.

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



## 8. Regional Comments on Seasonal Conditions

The 11 regional seasonal condition comments for the last three months are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Regional commentary on seasonal conditions**

Region	November	December	January
<b>Central Tablelands</b>	<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><b>Livestock across the region remain in good condition</b></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>	<p>The Central Tablelands region has received above average rainfall during January across nearly all areas. Some areas, especially throughout the Lithgow and Mudgee districts have received twice their average January rainfall and as a result have seen some improvements to dam levels and creek flows on properties. Whilst water concerns have generally eased, the Cabonne region and some other individual properties are still suffering water shortages which have required changes to regular management practices.</p> <p>Pasture growth has been good to very good throughout the Mudgee, Lithgow, Oberon and Bathurst regions and reflects positive soil moisture levels. Temperate pastures in higher altitudes have recorded very high pasture growth rates, whilst conditions have also remained very good around lower altitudes and on native tropical pastures. Unfortunately many pastures have been going to head and are losing quality as a result, whilst summer weeds are also continuing to pose a problem.</p> <p>Throughout the Cabonne, Orange and Blayney Tablelands regions, pastures are still actively growing in the milder temperatures, whilst perennial ryegrass is providing high quality feed in the higher altitude areas. Some paddocks are being prepared for sub-clover germination by reducing the biomass before Autumn to avoid establishment issues in dense perennial grass pastures. Fodder crops in higher altitudes have stated to be sown already with more planting happening soon. In lower altitudes growers will likely wait until late February/early March before sowing. Across the Cowra and Cabonne Slopes regions, sub-tropical pasture species have been growing well and remaining in good quality when grazed. Summer annuals have already gone to seed and are of poor quality. Lucerne crops have generally been poorer quality because</p>

Region	November	December	January
	overall, although some landholders may choose to reduce stocking rates if a hot dry summer eventuates and whilst stock prices remain high.		of rain and late cuts, whilst lucerne prices have also been down and water entitlements tight or non-existent. Spraying of weeds on the winter crop fallows during early February should occur if conditions permit to prevent fallow weeds robbing soils of Nitrogen and moisture. Livestock have continued to do well across the region and prices have been maintained, although some producers had previously lightened stock numbers to ease pressure prior to an anticipated hot and dry Summer.
<b>Central West</b>	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 being 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. 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.		There have been very patchy storms throughout the Central West though the majority of the rain has fallen towards the end of the month so any improvement in pasture growth will be evident over the next month or so. The rain has sparked some pasture growth although short and will need follow up rain to keep it coming along. For landholders who have being under the storms there has being enough runoff to fill dams though areas that have missed the rain are still looking for rain and need good runoff rain to fill dams. In the south localised flash flooding has occurred and landholders are now repairing fences etc. The rain has provided an increased soil moisture profile for the upcoming cropping season with landholders starting to work up some ground in preparation. Stock condition is maintaining at an average though if no follow up rain to encourage pasture growth condition could slip back rapidly. In the north some landholders are still feeding or are preparing to feed in the coming months if no follow-up rain.
<b>Greater Sydney</b>	<b>Water and rainfall:</b> 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. <b>Pasture and crops:</b> Pasture and crop condition has been improved dramatically within first half of	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. 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 ranges	There was substantial rainfall across the region throughout the month of January resulting very short term flash flooding in some area. Some area like Central coast had highest rain fall in last 15 years. Although flood water clear away within few hours. Dam's water level has been excellent and stored more than enough water for rest of the season. All river and creek has plenty of water flowing toward downstream where rain water harvesting tank and reservoir also excellent. Pasture growth has been excellent throughout the region. Grazing field showed very good quality green lushes and

Region	November	December	January
	<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><b>Stock:</b> 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>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>	<p>soil moisture also very good and appropriate for crop and vegetable cultivation now. Dual purpose crops, Lucerne pastures and annual pastures have all provided excellent 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 throughout the region. As a result of high rainfall warm infestation is more likely and stock owners have been advised to drenching now. Many landholders have commented that they are currently sufficient for feed and expecting to continue same good condition through the summer.</p>
<b>Hunter</b>	<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>	<p>Seasonal conditions have been very favourable, with plenty of feed and water in most parts of the region.</p> <p>Upper Hunter - Good rainfall of 100-200mm across the region with outstanding fresh summer pasture feed and crops. Good soil moisture top-ups for fallow cropping paddocks. Patchy storms have seen flash flooding in some areas. Conversely, many properties missing heavy storms have now had minimal runoff for prolonged period and dams and watercourses are very low on water supply.</p> <p>Muswellbrook - Above average rainfall and abundant pasture feed. Patchy storms have still left some properties low on dam storage levels with limited runoff in some areas. Minor flooding in other areas.</p> <p>Singleton - Highest monthly rainfall since 1951 for January for large part of Singleton area. Excellent pastures, prime stock and water storages at capacity.</p> <p>Gloucester - Good rainfall over most districts through January. Water levels in creek and dams good. Some flash flooding in the Stroud area. Cattle in good condition.</p> <p>Upper Manning catchment areas i.e. Curricabark and Giro still recovering from dry conditions and have missed storms other areas were receiving on a more regular basis.</p> <p>Maitland - Flooding in the Lower Hunter caused some concerns with inundation. After the April floods, producers were more alert and responded quickly to warnings.</p> <p>Generally conditions very good.</p>

Region	November	December	January
<b>Murray</b>	<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 conditions, soil moisture levels are drying rapidly, and much of the growth generated will 'burn-off' without follow-up rains. 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>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. Harvest of winter crops generally finished early December - overall, yields and quality generally below 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. 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. 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>	<p>Mixed feelings from respondents this month in regards to the rainfall - some valuing the green growth (weeds, native, improved) over the lost dry feed and weed problem. Some areas received isolated summer storms early in the month, and widespread rains at the end of the month were fairly widespread with most areas receiving between 20 and 80, to a top of 140mls for the month. Across the board these rains, combined with cooler conditions has seen good responses to native perennial grasses and herbs, and improved pastures such as lucerne. The rains have also resulted in prolific weed germination which, despite the associated issues, will at least allow for early weed control program in cropping areas. The rains and hail also stripped some summer crops in the East although many producers in the East are commenting it looks like early spring now.</p> <p>In the central areas where around 55mls were recorded, some rainfall runoff was generated however not enough to fill groundtanks reliant on surface flows, and most are which are still dry and/or exceedingly low (and have been for a long time). Most landholders however have access to irrigation, river or ground water, so stock water is not a problem. Subsoil moisture levels remain very dry across many Central and Western areas.</p> <p>The small number of producers with summer crops are reasonably pleased with how they are progressing - with yields looking to be at least average at this point. General security irrigation allocations remain low - in the Murray Valley unchanged on 19%, whilst in the Murrumbidgee allocations increased 3% to 35%.</p> <p>It is not clear how graziers with access to irrigation will handle the autumn. Some are committed to watering annual pasture, others think the high price of water means this is not an economic proposition. Many will be looking to sow winter wheat as soon as conditions allow to gain some late autumn - winter grazing.</p> <p>Stock condition remains very good - normal supplementary feeding occurring, however the warm and wet condition have resulted in fast flystrike in some areas. Stubbles have mostly been exhausted so autumn feed pressures are on.</p>

Region	November	December	January
			In some areas livestock production is significantly down due to high water and stock replacement prices.
<b>North Coast</b>	<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 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 &amp; Fishing Industry damage report.</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>	<p>Producers are very happy at the moment, conditions have been ideal, timely rainfall, late onset of really warm weather, pasture is growing, silage is being made and stored, livestock are in good condition, calves are growing and livestock markets are maintaining the strong prices that were set prior to Christmas.</p> <p>The only downside is the prevalence of three day sickness (3) in both Beef and Dairy herds across the Region with some deaths reported. Buffalo Fly has made their presence felt strongly in the past fortnight with the warm humid conditions. Fly numbers have prompted producers into taking a number of treatment options, pour on chemicals, back rubbers or ear tags to reduce the impact on cattle.</p>
<b>Northern Tablelands</b>	<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</p>	<p>Continuing good storm rains over the whole area, combined with warm weather and little wind has seen a continued improvement in both pastures and water supplies. A large number of our properties are still running well below average on stock numbers for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the continued high prices of replacement animals.</p> <p>Isolated pockets, particularly in the Uralla and Armidale Dumaresq LGAs are still very low on ground water and have only minor flows in their creeks.</p> <p>Summer crops in the Inverell LGA are progressing well and have the potential for excellent yields if they continue to receive some rain.</p> <p>Wide spread areas are being prepared for the planting of fodder crops with early oats due for planting before the end of February with most plantings expected in March and early April.</p>

Region	November	December	January
		over the next 6 to 8 weeks, subject to ongoing rains.	
<b>North West</b>	<p><b>Walgett</b> - 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><b>Moree Plains</b> - 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><b>Gwydir</b> - 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><b>Narrabri</b> - 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><b>Gunnedah</b> - 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><b>Tamworth</b> - Dry off substantially, Average annual rainfall is still 100mm above long term average!</p>	<p><b>Walgett</b> – 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><b>Gwydir</b> – No Rainfall till end of December - so no improvement, should improve with 56mm already in January.</p> <p><b>Gunnedah</b> - 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><b>Tamworth</b> - Agronomic - 2 and improving after the rain, Livestock - 2 and improving after a drench.</p>	<p><b>Walgett</b> - Fly strike starting to occur in sheep. North of Colli has only had 30-40mm.</p> <p><b>Narrabri</b> - Rainfall small amounts - biggest fall 15mm, pastures not growing as well as they should be. West of Wee Waa better rainfall, has improved the condition of dryland crops, irrigated crops really good. Pastures slow to recover.</p> <p><b>Tamworth</b> - Patchy rainfall across Manilla area however.</p>

Region	November	December	January
<b>Riverina</b>	<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.</p> <p>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 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.</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>	<p>Some producers in the Riverina have benefited with dams being topped up by medium to heavy falls from thunderstorms. Livestock condition across the region has benefited from grazing stubbles after harvest and feed-on-offer including a mixture of green and dry feed in paddocks. Stock health issues have included grass seed injuries, worm burdens of Black scour worms, severe worm burdens of Barber's Pole worms, flies, ongoing treatment for foot scald, algal blooms in dam water and the risk of Photosensitisation in stock grazing pastures or stubbles infested with problematic summer weeds. Mixed farmers and dryland croppers are spraying summer weeds and preserving soil moisture and soil nitrogen in preparation for the 2016 season. There is likely to be increased plantings of oats and dual purpose wheat early in autumn, after heavier than usual summer rainfall.</p>
<b>South East</b>	<p><b>Coastal</b> - 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><b>Highlands</b> - 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><b>Tablelands</b> - The majority of the area received between</p>	<p><b>Coastal</b> - 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><b>Highlands</b> - 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</p>	<p><b>Coastal</b> - The coastal section of the South East LLS had exceptionally good rain for January. Together with mild temperature pasture is growing at tremendous rate. Water supply and feed have been described as good as it gets for this time of year.</p> <p><b>Highlands</b> - The highlands have experienced similar conditions to the coast. Good rain through the area in January. Feed and water supply is very good for this time of year.</p> <p><b>Tablelands</b> - The majority of the tableland has also received good January rain. The eastern side much better off than the western side. Although the western side did receive good rain towards the end of January it will be important for this area to get follow up in the early</p>

Region	November	December	January
	<p>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><b>Monaro</b> - 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>conditions. Livestock are still in reasonable condition.</p> <p><b>Tablelands</b> - 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><b>Monaro</b> - 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 the area. Feed availability exceeds livestock requirements at present. Water supplies are also good in most areas.</p>	<p>February. The eastern side will be able to hold on for a little longer.</p> <p><b>Monaro</b> - The majority of the Monaro region received significant rain through January and the Monaro district is looking good for this time of year. Good water and feed leading into the autumn.</p>
<b>Western</b>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Bourke LGA - As above.</p>	<p>Brewarrina LGA - Livestock Conditions are holding well due to the continuing storm activity over a wide area of the LGA &amp; also due to low-Medium numbers of livestock Agriculture conditions. There seems to be plenty of ground cover over all the LGA except for the country to the north, which has only just received some very good falls since Xmas. (Up to 100mls). 90% of the LGA has a good green color to it, the first time for a long time Water. The Culgoa river has had some run through in Jan, but is not expected to last for long.</p> <p>Barwon river at Brewarrina has a push through of water from the Walgett area but none of the fresh (muddy water) has got here yet.</p> <p>Unincorporated LGA - Grant reports that the country along the Darling river flats north of Menindee look good But landholders have had to move stock away from it to stop livestock from crossing large sections of dry river bed. The country north of Broken Hill vary's from plenty of dry ground cover, too large green flats the farther north you go. Livestock are holding their own, as numbers had been reduced towards the end of last year due to drying conditions.</p>

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