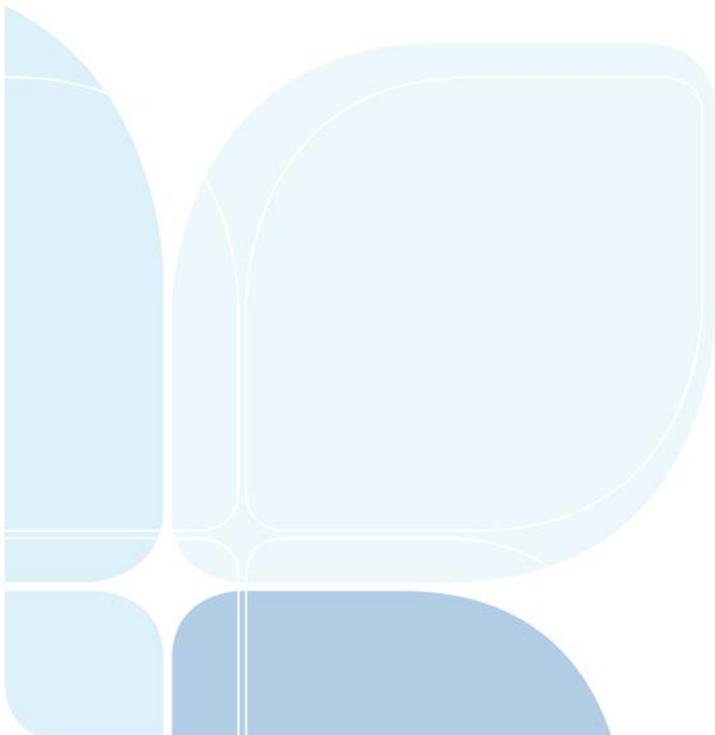




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On-ground Seasonal Conditions Report

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing June 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 - Six regions reported no change from last month, including Greater Sydney, Hunter, Northern Tablelands, North West, South East and Western. North Coast has reported a decline in conditions from last month. Central Tablelands, Central West, Murray and Riverina 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 - Six regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Central West, Greater Sydney, North Coast, Riverina and Western. Hunter and South East have reported a decline in infrastructure conditions from last month. Murray and North West have reported an improvement in infrastructure conditions from last month. Western has started reporting infrastructure condition this month. Northern Tablelands didn't report on infrastructure.

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

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

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

Condition Score	Very Good	Good	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Poor
Average Regional Property Score		Greater Sydney, Murray and Riverina	Central Tablelands, Central West, Hunter, North Coast, North West, South East and Western		Northern Tablelands
Regional Infrastructure Score	Murray and North Coast	Central Tablelands, Central West, Greater Sydney, Riverina, South East and Western	Hunter and North West		
Regional Water Score		Greater Sydney, Murray and Riverina	Central Tablelands, Central West, Hunter, North Coast and South East	North West and Western	Northern Tablelands
Regional Agronomics Score		Greater Sydney, Murray and Riverina	Central West, North Coast, North West	Central Tablelands, Hunter, South East and Western	Northern Tablelands
Regional Livestock Score		Greater Sydney, Murray, North Coast, Riverina and South East	Central Tablelands, Central West, Hunter, North West 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: Corowa, Urana, Murray, Kyogle, Richmond Valley Council, Narrandera, Jerilderie, Hay and Bombala.

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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 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.

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 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. ¹
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.	

¹ 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 June 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	March 2016	April 2016
State Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven regions reported no change from last month, including Greater Sydney, Murray, North Coast, North West, Riverina, South East and Western. Central Tablelands, Central West, Hunter and Northern Tablelands 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 West, Hunter, Murray, North Coast, Northern Tablelands and North West. Central Tablelands, Greater Sydney, Riverina and South East have reported a decline in conditions from last month. Western has reported an improvement in conditions from last month. See the table below for an overview of the regional seasonal conditions elements.
Regional Ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very Good - Greater Sydney Good - North Coast and South East Reasonable - Central Tablelands, Hunter, Murray, North West and Riverina Below Requirements - Central West and Western Poor - Northern Tablelands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good - Greater Sydney, North Coast Reasonable - Hunter, Murray, North West and Western Below Requirements - Central Tablelands, Riverina and South East Poor - Central West and Northern Tablelands
LGA Scores – Extremely Poor, Extreme or Extremely Critical	There are no LGAs within this scale.	There are no LGAs within this scale.
LGA Scores – Excellent or Very Good	The following LGAs: Singleton, Kempsey, Kyogle, Richmond Valley Council, Snowy River, Bega and Bombala.	The following LGAs: Dungog, Kempsey, Kyogle, Richmond Valley Council, Narrandera and Bombala.

2.1 Number of Properties Surveyed

The number of properties surveyed for seasonal condition reporting from each of the 11 regions are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Surveyed Property Numbers

Region	Number of properties surveyed		
	March	April	May
Central Tablelands	40	40	40
Central West	34	35	30
Greater Sydney	9	13	9
Hunter	19	18	15
Murray	39	54	44
North Coast	46	44	45
Northern Tablelands	35	33	35
North West	32	33	36
Riverina	17	22	16
South East	59	44	47
Western	27	29	33
TOTAL	357	365	350

2.2 Average Regional Property Scores

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	March			April			May		
	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)
Central Tablelands	Reasonable	Bathurst and Cowra - Good	Cabonne and Oberon - Poor	Below Requirements	Bathurst and Blayney – Good Cowra, Lithgow and Mid Western - Reasonable	Cabonne, Oberon and Orange - Poor	Reasonable	Bathurst, Blayney and Cowra - Good	Lithgow – Below Requirements Cabonne, Oberon and Orange - Poor
Central West	Below Requirements	Weddin, Lachlan - Reasonable	Gilgandra, Coonamble, Forbes - Poor	Poor	Narromine – Good Warren – Below Requirements	Warrumbungles – Very Poor	Reasonable	Bogan and Lachlan - Good	Forbes – Below Requirements Gilgandra and Coonamble – Poor
Greater Sydney	Very Good	-	-	Good	-	-	Good	-	-
Hunter	Reasonable	Singleton – Very Good Muswellbrook, Cessnock - Good	-	Reasonable	Dungog – Very Good Singleton, Gloucester, Maitland and Cessnock - Good	Upper Hunter – Below Requirements	Reasonable	Great Lakes - Good	Gloucester and Maitland – Below Requirements Cessnock - Poor Upper Hunter,

Region	March			April			May		
	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)
Murray	Reasonable	Urana and Murray - Good	Hume, Albury, Conargo, Deniliquin – Below Requirements Berrigan and Wakool - Poor	Reasonable	Urana, Murray and Wakool - Good	Tumbarumba, Albury, Berrigan and Conargo - Poor	Good	Corowa, Urana and Murray – Very Good	Berrigan – Reasonable Conargo and Wakool – Below Requirements
North Coast	Good	Kempsey, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – Very Good	Clarence Valley Council and Coffs Harbour - Reasonable	Good	Kempsey, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – Very Good	Port Macquarie Hastings and Clarence Valley Council - Reasonable	Reasonable	Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – Very Good Tweed Shire, Ballina, Lismore and Byron - Good	Port Macquarie Hastings and Coffs Harbour – Below Requirements
Northern Tablelands	Poor	-	-	Poor	-	-	Poor	-	Uralla – Very Poor
North West	Reasonable	Moree Plains - Good	-	Reasonable	-	Narrabri, Gunnedah and Tamworth – Below Requirements	Reasonable	Moree Plains - Good	Narrabri – Below Requirements Gunnedah - Poor
Riverina	Reasonable	Harden, Young, Narrandera and Jerilderie - Good	Cootamundra and Lockhart – Below Requirements Wagga - Poor	Below Requirements	Narrandera – Very Good Gundagai - Good Young and Temora - Reasonable	Wagga and Jerilderie - Poor	Good	Narrandera, Jerilderie and Hay – Very Good	-

Region	March			April			May		
	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)
South East	Good	Snowy River – Very Good Bega and Bombala - Excellent	Upper Lachlan - Reasonable Pallerang, Boorowa and Eurobodalla – Below Requirements	Reasonable	Bombala – Excellent Shoalhaven, Wingecarribee, Bega and Snowy River - Good	Boorowa, Eurobodalla, – Below Requirements Pallerang - Poor	Reasonable	Bombala – Very Good Shoalhaven, Wingecarribee, Upper Lachlan and Bega - Good	Boorowa – Below Requirements Pallerang and Eurobodalla – Poor
Western	Below Requirements	Brewarrina and Wentworth - Reasonable	Bourke, Central Darling and Unincorporated - Poor	Reasonable	Balranald, Central Darling and Cobar - Good	Brewarrina – Below Requirements Bourke - Poor	Reasonable	Central Darling and Wentworth - Good	Bourke, Brewarrina and Unincorporated – Below Requirements Cobar - Poor

3. Average Regional Property Score

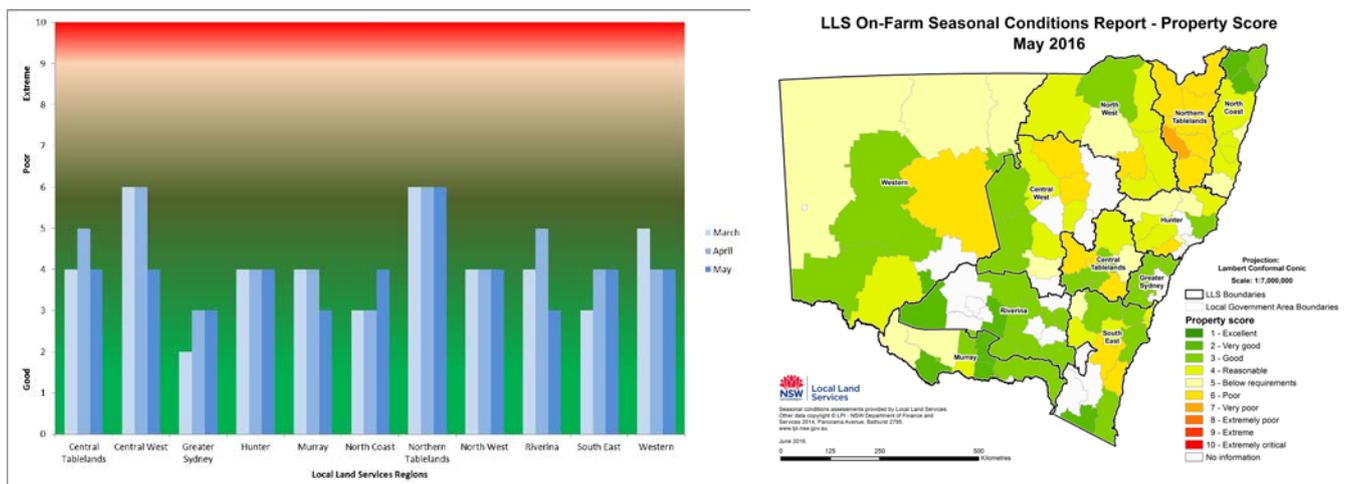
The average regional property score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 5. This score includes an average score of the water, agronomic and livestock categories across the regions local government areas.

Table 5: The average regional property score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	March	April	May
Central Tablelands	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Reasonable
Central West	Poor	Poor	Reasonable
Greater Sydney	Very Good	Good	Good
Hunter	Reasonable	Reasonable	Reasonable
Murray	Reasonable	Reasonable	Good
North Coast	Good	Good	Reasonable
Northern Tablelands	Poor	Poor	Poor
North West	Reasonable	Reasonable	Reasonable
Riverina	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Good
South East	Good	Reasonable	Reasonable
Western	Below Requirements	Reasonable	Reasonable

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

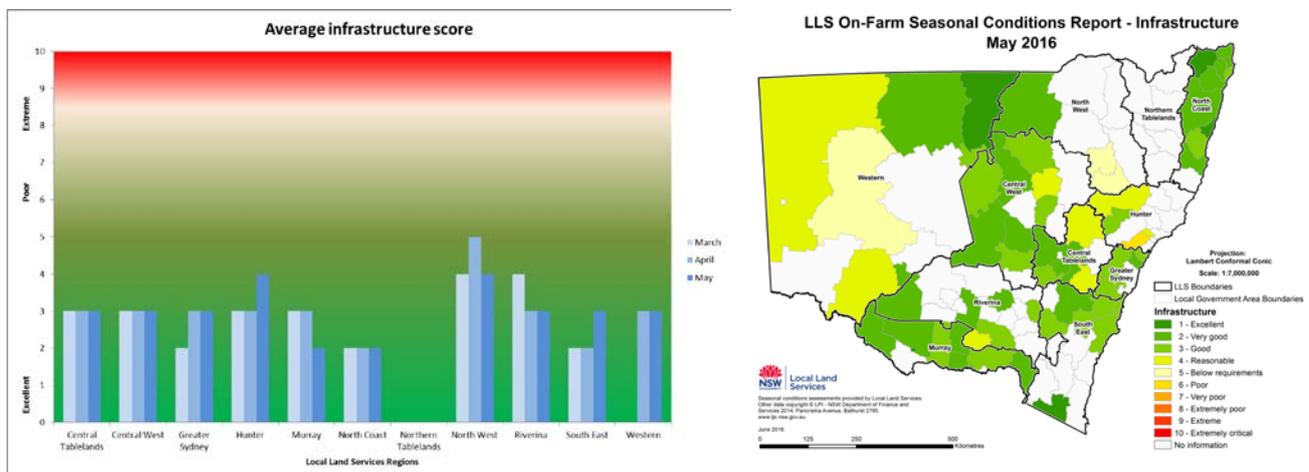
The average regional infrastructure score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 6. This score is for the condition of regional infrastructure including bores, tanks, troughs and piping. The infrastructure score is used to capture information for the Regional Assistance Advisory 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		
	March	April	May
Central Tablelands	Good	Good	Good
Central West	Good	Good	Good
Greater Sydney	Very Good	Good	Good
Hunter	Good	Good	Reasonable
Murray	Good	Good	Very Good
North Coast	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Northern Tablelands	-	-	-
North West	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Reasonable
Riverina	Reasonable	Good	Good
South East	Very Good	Very Good	Good
Western	-	Good	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

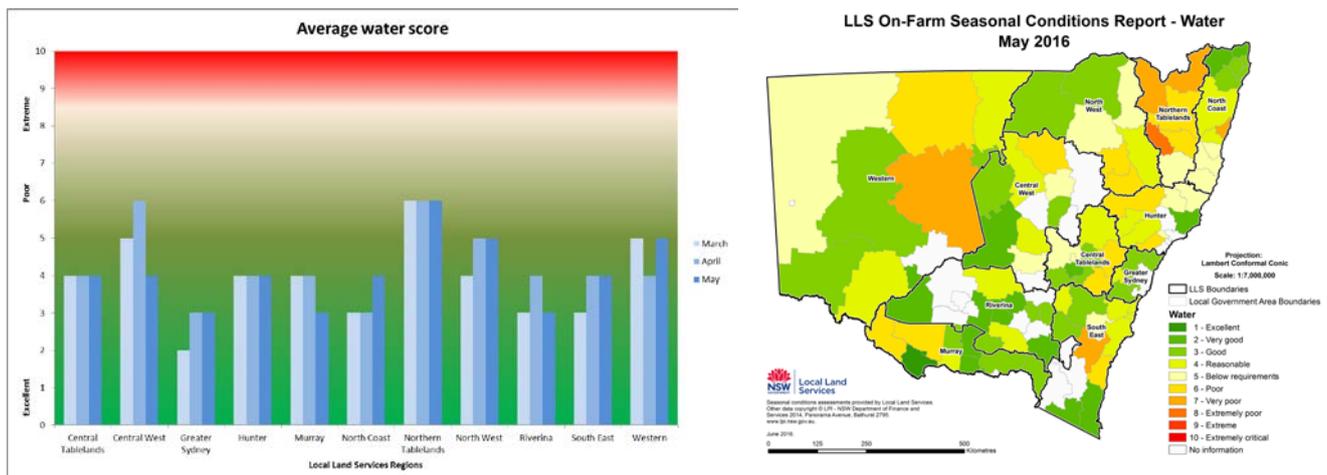
The average regional water score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 7. This score is for the condition of regional water including surface water, dams and stock accessed rivers, creeks and springs.

Table 7: The average regional water score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	March	April	May
Central Tablelands	Reasonable	Reasonable	Reasonable
Central West	Below Requirements	Poor	Reasonable
Greater Sydney	Very Good	Good	Good
Hunter	Reasonable	Reasonable	Reasonable
Murray	Reasonable	Reasonable	Good
North Coast	Good	Good	Reasonable
Northern Tablelands	Poor	Poor	Poor
North West	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Below Requirements
Riverina	Good	Reasonable	Good
South East	Good	Reasonable	Reasonable
Western	Below Requirements	Reasonable	Below Requirements

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

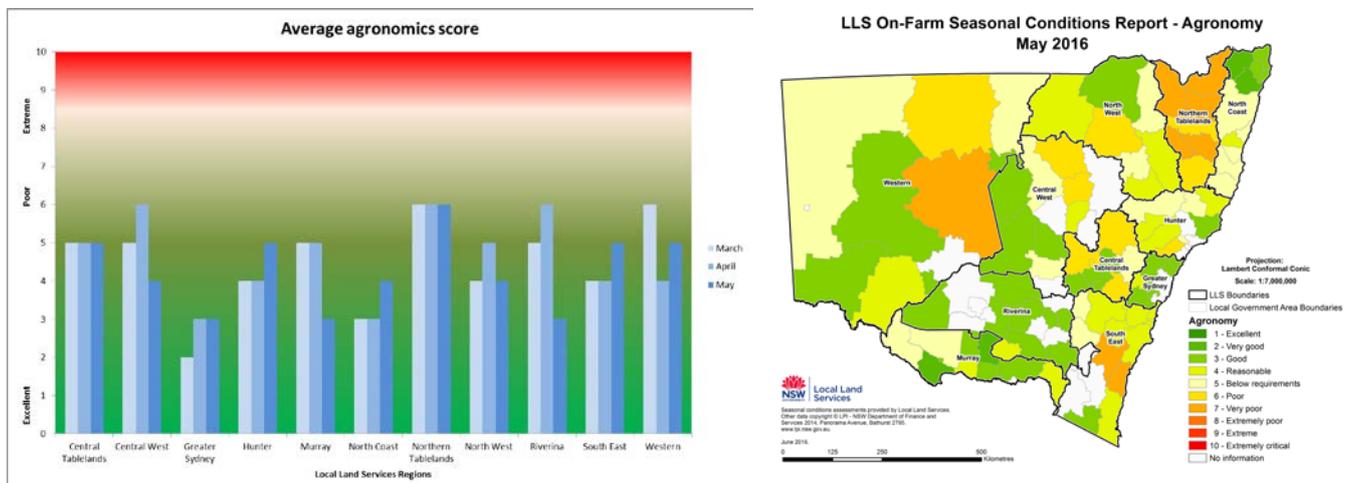
The average regional agronomics score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 8. This score is for the condition of regional agronomics including native pastures, improved pastures and cropping.

Table 8: The average agronomics score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	March	April	May
Central Tablelands	Below Requirements	Below Requirements	Below Requirements
Central West	Below Requirements	Poor	Reasonable
Greater Sydney	Very Good	Good	Good
Hunter	Reasonable	Reasonable	Below Requirements
Murray	Below Requirements	Below Requirements	Good
North Coast	Good	Good	Reasonable
Northern Tablelands	Poor	Poor	Poor
North West	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Reasonable
Riverina	Below Requirements	Poor	Good
South East	Reasonable	Reasonable	Below Requirements
Western	Poor	Reasonable	Below Requirements

The average regional agronomics score for the 11 regions for the past three months is also shown graphically in Figure 4. Along with the graphical 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

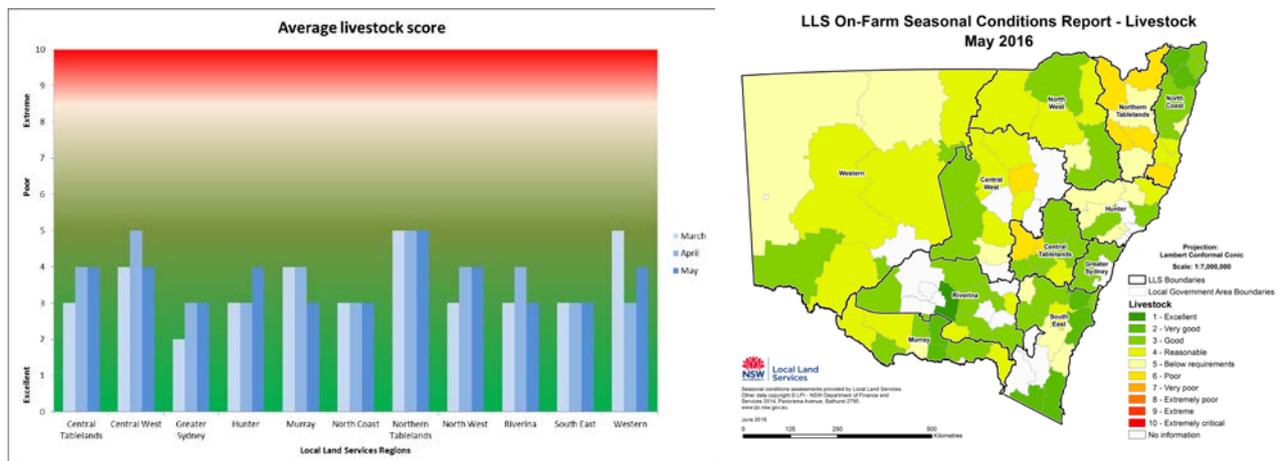
The average regional livestock score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 9. This score is for the condition of regional livestock including beef, sheep and other.

Table 9: The average livestock score

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

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	March	April	May
Central Tablelands	<p>Rainfall across the region was typically about half the March average. Most of this rain fell towards the start of the month, and as a result a drier latter half of the month resulted in diminishing water supplies. This effect has been partly reduced by lower livestock requirements as the weather cools.</p> <p>Pasture quality and quantity has been deteriorating quickly this month and not much growth is currently being maintained. With the prospect of coming frosts, this has meant that some landholders have begun supplementary feeding, whilst further landholders are expected to do the same soon. Crops within the area are also in desperate need of rainfall to help give them some growth before their growing period closes.</p> <p>Livestock condition generally continues to remain positive, although supplementary feeding will be required for some producers to maintain livestock numbers and overall condition.</p> <p>Unfortunately isolated cases of producers having to partially or completely destock their properties due to no water availability, and or little or no pasture availability, also signified the variable nature of seasonal conditions across the region as a whole.</p>	<p>Little or no rainfall fell across most of the region up until the end of April when widespread rains provided relief for most except for those in the Eastern areas. April's late rainfall followed on from a dry end to March and has unfortunately meant that for many, the rains have come too late to make a significant difference to pastures. The drier conditions have also meant that despite the recent rains, little or no run-off has occurred into dams.</p> <p>Pastures have continued to deteriorate over the month and supplementary feeding has become the norm as landholders try to maintain stock condition. For some with cereal crops in the ground recent conditions have been more positive and crops are improving.</p> <p>Livestock numbers have been reduced by many landholders to ease pressure on pastures and to limit the costs involved with supplementary feeding. As a result some landholders are running below average stocking rates but generally maintaining good livestock condition for remaining stock.</p>	<p>Good widespread rain fell across the region during May except for in the Eastern areas closer to the Mountains. This has helped improve water storage's and creek flows slightly for some, whilst for other producers primarily in the Western and Northern sections of the region water remains a concern with dams drying up, and landholders having to rely on other infrastructure to meet water needs.</p> <p>Pastures have generally improved slightly over the month as soil moisture levels improve although the onset of colder weather and heavy frosts towards the end of the month has started to limit or stop much new growth occurring. Most producers have been supplementary feeding livestock already, with others due to begin soon.</p> <p>For some of those that have already begun feeding, on farm supplementary supplies are being used up rapidly, resulting in the selling of excess livestock to ensure the maintenance of existing stock.</p>
Central West	<p>Overall Central West had little rainfall and warmer weather in March and is heading into April quite dry. Water is the biggest issue going into April. With little rainfall many surface dams and creeks are becoming low or dry. Northern areas worse than the south. However no farmers have reported to be carting water for stock as of yet.</p> <p>Some areas are holding on with some dry feed still available, but there are a few land holders who have little to no feed available and are currently feeding stock. This</p>	<p>Conditions still deteriorating in most areas in the Central West with little to no rain reported for April. Many landholders are taking a risk on dry sowing in the hope of coming rain in May. Most producers have little to no ground cover in all areas across the Central West, feed quality is very low quality and becoming scarce. Stock are holding condition though this is due to supplementary feeding. Many stock producers are handfeeding and if no substantial rain in the near future this will continue into the foreseeable future as if conditions turn cold pasture growth will be minimal. Water</p>	<p>Many areas in the central West are still struggling with little to no groundwater and minimal pasture. Sowing has being completed in most areas a lot of crops were dry sown or sown into low soil moisture profiles. Some areas are supplementary feeding lactating or pregnant stock due to slow pasture growth and/ or low quality feed. Ground water very low in most areas even with rainfall need substantial follow up rain for runoff so groundwater storage's can fill. Follow up rain is needed to continue pasture</p>

Region	March	April	May
	<p>is also very patchy and inconsistent across the region. Stock numbers are ok and still look good. Many are starting to minimise numbers though to reduce grazing pressures.</p> <p>Central West farmers have managed through March but are looking for some substantial rainfall for April. Sorry for the few reports that were returned, hopefully it is enough information for you.</p>	<p>levels are reported to be low in most areas with most producers requiring good rain to top up groundwater supplies. Cotton harvest is nearly finished in the cotton growing areas both in the South and the North.</p>	<p>growth.</p>
Greater Sydney	<p>Despite nominal amount of rainfall most of the dams and reservoir remain high level. Farmers are assertive with this level of water. Pasture quality slightly deteriorate due to lack of moisture in soil but looks sufficient for grazing stock for another couple of month. Farmers are expecting raining in April and recovery of soil condition/moisture. Cattle and lamb price still high which encouraging farmer to restock or retain stock for more profit. Overall condition of the region is above average.</p>	<p>Most of the pasture land has been started to drying out. It will be difficult winter months for farmer if there will no rain in next few weeks. Water level in dam and reservoir are down up to medium full still enough water for next couple of months. Farmers are expecting rain in next month or so and recovery of soil condition/moisture. Cattle and lamb health condition still good but need forage to improve this condition. Overall condition of the region is in boarder line of average to below average.</p>	<p>Greater Sydney for the month of May was unusually warm and dry. Well above average temperatures and low levels of rainfall have allowed the pasture quality within the region to remain dry. Despite such climatic conditions, most of the reservoirs and dams remain half full or above. In the upper part of the region, pasture quality and growth is poor. Dam water supplies within this area are well below half full. Producers have stated that it is the driest they have seen their properties to date. Overall, the condition of livestock across the region appears good.</p>
Hunter	<p>The Upper Hunter and parts of Gloucester are being tested with the erratic summer storms with some areas missing out completely with summer rainfall. Surface water is running low in some of these areas due to the limited runoff over the summer months.</p> <p>The rest of the district has a bulk of dry feed but is in need of rain to ensure adequate winter feed</p>	<p>Rain is generally needed across the Hunter region to boost winter feed and crops and fill water courses and dams. Again the district is represented by extremes. North-east of Scone and north-west of Gloucester have consistently missed scattered showers and many livestock producers are feeding supplements and full rations. Creeks and dams are very poor in these areas and generally very low across the Upper Hunter with no significant run-off rainfall for months. Taree, parts of Gloucester and Maitland have received favorable summer and late autumn falls resulting in good pasture feed availability and germination of winter crops. Substantial rain is still required to top up stock and irrigation water. Good to reasonable dry paddock feed features in the lower Singleton/Muswellbrook area but quality is depleting and supply tightening. As the cooler weather settles in, the season hangs in the balance with follow up rain required for a clover germination and growth. 45-60mm or rain on the final weekend in April for Merriwa-Cassilis is not fully reflected in these figures and has seen a flurry of tractor activity sowing winter crops and a welcome drink for dry-</p>	<p>May 2016 is widely reported across the Hunter region to have capped of one of the lowest autumn rainfall periods since 1969. Many dams in the Scone, Gloucester and Greater Taree areas are dry. Dry paddock feed is depleting in quantity and quality. Scattered storms have seen a short green pick and clover germination in some areas but predicted follow-up falls from the east coast low in early June are desperately needed. At Muswellbrook, rain at the start of May resulted in a good clover germination but winds and an extended dry have since brought growth to a halt. Scattered heavy storms west of Merriwa have kept crops and pastures ticking along but once again the ranges east of Scone have missed out with falls reducing as the system moved towards the coast. Stock water is a major problem in many areas and beef producers are production feeding livestock especially lactating cows. Many have sold cattle to maintain ground cover or at least weaned calves. Heavy frosts hit in the last week of</p>

Region	March	April	May
		sown oats.	May with snow falls on the Barrington Tops. The northern ranges around Scone and Gloucester are very bare and wintry. Farmers will be looking forward to some decent falls from June's predicted East Coast low minus the destructive floods of last year.
Murray	<p>Even though the overall property score for Murray LLS remained at 4 this month (simply due to the way the figures are rounded), the averages for water, agronomics and livestock have all dropped a score. This is a true reflection of the lack of rain across the LLS and unusually hot conditions during the first half of March. The next few weeks will need to see significant rainfall or conditions will start to slide quickly.</p> <p>Subsoil moisture levels remain fairly dry across most of the Western areas. Stock condition generally remains good - supplementary feeding has increased (with some full-on supp. feeding), particularly for autumn lambing flocks and calving herds. Little remains of the stubbles from last year's crops. Pasture and feed supplies are deteriorating quite quickly. Many producers have concerns with little feed going into autumn winter, and lack of opening autumn rainfall. Ground cover is very poor throughout much of the western half. The eastern areas are holding for now.</p> <p>Irrigation allocations remain very low, a higher proportion of water will be used on fodder than has been the case for the past decade or so</p> <p>The blue green algae outbreak continues to persist in many local waterways - rivers, creeks and irrigation corporation supply channels. Red alerts remain in place in many parts of the Murray (and to a lesser extent Murrumbidgee) system and Lake Mulwala. No report of livestock health issues due to BGA have been reported to date in the MLLS.</p>	<p>Very little rain recorded until 29th April when good falls will make a significant difference to the entire area in the next report. In many areas, this was the first effective rain since February. With quite a bit of sowing already undertaken and tractors now working overtime, this rain was extremely timely, but follow up will be needed to keep things going.</p> <p>Across the board supplementary feeding is high, but may reduce significantly within two weeks where enough moisture fell to get pastures up and running. Water quality has improved although BGA is still an issue in some areas. Stock condition generally remains very good considering the lack of pasture as most producers have supplementary fed to retain condition.</p> <p>Irrigation allocations remain unchanged - 23% of general security entitlement in the Murray Valley, and 37% of general security entitlement in the Murrumbidgee. Limited pre-irrigation for cereal crops occurring - some watering up of canola. Many producers using limited water resources on pastures.</p> <p>Feral animals are being noted as very high, especially in the west and far east.</p>	<p>Excellent (above average) rainfall has been experienced across the area since 29th April - recording averages of around 100mm across most areas. With excellent growing conditions the Autumn got a great boost to its late start (generally warm conditions experienced up until the 3rd week of May). Early sown crops and most pastures are looking very good with groundcover improving significantly across the whole region. The rain triggered a significant bout of tractorbumitus, and although most producers have recovered, some are still suffering through the last paddocks. Irrigated annual pastures are performing well - many producers had already commenced grazing. Irrigation allocations remain unchanged - 23% of general security entitlement in the Murray Valley, and 37% of general security entitlement in the Murrumbidgee. Small amount of pre-irrigated country is too wet to sow.</p> <p>Supplementary feeding is varied with many producers beginning to reduce the amount fed, but most are still feeding, especially lambing ewes or lambs. Stock are still doing well enough (especially sheep) but in most situations will need this break to pick back up before the cold weather sets in, however without a bulk of dry matter, many cattle producers are currently feeding to get cattle through the winter, while trying to let pastures build before winter.</p> <p>Water quality has improved, although blue green algae are still an issue in some areas.</p> <p>Pest issues; Onset of cooler conditions in last week of May has seen significant numbers of crop pasture pests - in particular red legged earthmite and blue oat aphid in central Murray. Deer and other feral animals</p>

Region	March	April	May
			are becoming more of an issue in the Upper Murray and some Western areas.
North Coast	It really is a tale of two (2) extremes up here at the moment, the Northern Rivers area seem to be getting all the rainfall they need and the southern areas are missing out. The LGA areas Clarence Valley south to the Hastings River (Port Macquarie Hastings LGA) have missed out in the last three (3) months and the result is that property scores have gone backwards.	A very similar story to last month with the Northern Rivers receiving good rainfall and their season continuing to tick along nicely. The Coastal strip along the entire North Coast has also experienced a good month with timely rainfall and continued warm weather. Areas away from the Coast are starting to report low surface water volumes due to lack of rainfall, this lack of rainfall and the continued warmer than normal conditions have depleted pastures and has not allowed the winter feed gap pastures of Rye, Chicory and Clover to become established as you would expect for this time of year.	With exception of the far North East corner it has been a very ordinary month across all of the Local Government areas with little or no rainfall being recorded this month following from the past dry two (2) months. Averages are way down as is pasture growth (native and improved), water levels in some areas are severely depleted, while livestock condition is still good most producers are reporting an unseasonal drop in condition across all categories. On a brighter note is the forecast for this weekend and into next week with an East Coast low predicted to form over the weekend and dump plenty of rain in the northern part of the state.
Northern Tablelands	Another hot dry month has seriously affected water supplies and pastures. There were some patchy storm rains bringing relief to small areas, but overall there has been a significant deterioration across the entire Northern Tablelands region. Stock numbers remain well below normal and generally stock are still in good condition. Summer crops in the Inverell LGA returned good yields for sorghum and corn however the results for later crops, mung beans and soy beans, have been less favorable. Prospects for autumn and winter appear bleak without significant April rains and while large areas have been prepared for fodder crops and pasture renewal, very little has been planted and the oats which are in the ground are struggling to survive.	Overall, little change across the Northern Tablelands for the last month, however this is not the full story. As in previous months, rainfall has been mostly from storms and consequently both patchy and inadequate to generate run-off except on a few properties. Fortunately evaporation has dropped as we move towards winter but some properties, particularly in the Uralla LGA are critical for surface water. The month has remained warmer than average with no frosts recorded yet, and so, where there has been rain there has also been some pasture growth. Fodder crops range from fantastic to disastrous, again depending on whether they have caught the rain or not and winter grain crop preparation is well under way with plantings starting.	Modest rainfall over the whole area has done nothing to ease the significant water deficit, with continuing critical water levels particularly in Uralla LGA. With the advent of frosts late in the month, pastures have deteriorated somewhat and except for some small pockets, fodder crops have failed to provide expected yields with most still waiting for sufficient growth to allow the first grazing. Winter crop plantings are in full swing with the early plantings struggling with the low moisture levels and large areas being planted "dry" in anticipation of the predicted rainfall in early June.
North West	Isolated rain across the region has not provided enough moisture to maintain pasture conditions and this has resulted in more livestock feeding than normal. However, groundcover levels are being maintained. Small areas of winter forages have been planted but the vast majority of area is still left to be sown and the emerging crops are struggling. Stock water conditions continue to worsen with high evaporation and limited runoff across the region.	Warmer weather across the region, coupled with limited rainfall has resulted in poor pasture growth, minimal runoff and very few planting opportunities. Sowing of winter crops has commenced but the forecasted area is still very small at this stage. Some areas around the south were dry sown in the expectation of rain and while there has been sufficient rainfall to get crops established, significant follow up rain is required. Almost all summer crop is harvested with good yields and quality, despite the dry	Despite rainfall throughout late April and early May, on-farm water reserves continue to worsen as there has been no runoff. Winter crop planting has been staggered with chickpeas and faba beans being deep planted to reach the limited soil moisture. Small areas of Canola and cereals have been planted onto marginal moisture and there is a large area still left to sow. Livestock numbers are still significantly reduced and recent rainfall has depleted quality of dormant

Region	March	April	May
	<p>Limited winter crop potential at this stage without significant rainfall to refill subsoil.</p> <p>Summer crop yields have been at least average despite the dry conditions and grain quality is good.</p> <p>Wind erosion in western areas with limited groundcover is causing farmers to till paddocks to increase surface roughness to reduce erosion. Even if subsoil moisture levels are low, some farmers may still plant a crop, purely to increase groundcover.</p>	<p>summer.</p> <p>Stock numbers are reducing across the region with significant offloading on the slopes around Baraba and Bingara due to limited water and pasture. Remaining stock are in good condition but require supplementary feeding to maintain/increase weight as pasture quality degrades. Late rain will increase forage crop planting and providing warmer weather prevails, pasture growth will occur.</p>	<p>summer pasture but has generated small amounts of winter forage, however most stock are still receiving supplementary feed to maintain condition.</p>
Riverina	<p>The majority of producers in the Riverina have had a dry and warm March, with temperatures now cooling at the end of the month. Evaporation rates were lower than in February but still high. Dam water supplies range from adequate to empty, but are generally low and there have been several calls regarding Blue-green algae in dams with only one known to result in sheep deaths. Most producers have helped to prevent fatalities through frequent stock water checks. The Red Alert for Blue-green algae on the Murrumbidgee River was in place for three weeks in the Hay area. Livestock condition across the region was above average at the end of February but has now slipped. Rangeland pastures have also deteriorated rapidly in quality now and groundcover is lower than a month ago. Feed on offer is lower in quantity and quality than in previous months.</p> <p>Supplementary feeding has been occurring. Stock deaths from grain toxicity associated with feeding have been investigated, occurring mainly where stock have been introduced to grain rations too quickly. Some cases of Pregnancy toxemia have already been reported in sheep. Reports of red gut occurring in lambs on lucerne have been sporadic. Barber's pole worm has caused some issues where summer storms occurred. Very few stubble paddocks have any level of useful feed remaining for livestock.</p> <p>Grain-growers are ordering new seed for the season and taking delivery of fertiliser. The autumn break is required for the sowing of oats, dual purpose wheat, lupins and canola to commence, with only small areas already sown. Interest in pulse crops and canola this season is</p>	<p>The majority of producers in the Riverina have had a drier April that followed on from a dry March, with warm afternoon temperatures and cooler autumn nights. Evaporation rates declined further since March but were still high compared to the rainfall received; Burrinjuck Dam received a monthly rainfall of 8.4mm and monthly evaporation was 84.4mm. Dam water supplies range from adequate to empty, but are generally low. Livestock condition across the region was above average at the end of February but has now slipped with producers supplementary feeding or feeding full rations to hold breeding stock in reasonable condition and to prevent Pregnancy toxemia occurring as ewes lamb. Rangeland pastures have deteriorated rapidly in quantity and quality and groundcover is very low. Feed on offer is lower in quantity and quality than in previous months and described by many as barely above zero.</p> <p>The Hay area is now regarded by local producers as being drought stricken (a seasonal drought).</p> <p>Stubble paddocks have been fed off in previous months and have been sown for the new season or are being prepared for sowing; some stubbles are retained and some have been burnt, depending on weed burdens and the use of disc or tyne seeders. There has been progress with the sowing of early options such as oats, dual purpose wheat, lupins and faba beans and substantial areas of canola. Crops sown to date have been sown dry or on marginal moisture with estimates of about third of the cropping program sown in the Riverina. Grain-growers are continuing with sowing preparation and dry-sowing of their cropping program while they wait for the proper autumn break (>40-50mm in one event). Growers are looking for the autumn break to bring up</p>	<p>Producers in the Riverina have now had wet conditions over the month of May that followed on from a very dry March and a dry April. While temperatures were above average for the month of May, they cooled off by the end of the month with chilly nights. Burrinjuck Dam received a monthly rainfall of 167.0 mm and monthly evaporation was only 60.4mm. Farm dam water supplies throughout the region are generally adequate to above.</p> <p>Supplementary feeding or maintenance rations to stock held their condition over dry autumn months but rations have reduced with new pasture growth. Breeding stock generally are in reasonable to good condition, averaging fat score 2.5. Growers are monitoring herd health with ewes lambing, lactating and with lambs at foot. In the western Riverina the rangeland pastures germinated at the start of the month and have been showing good growth rates, along with volunteer annual pastures. Elsewhere perennial pastures are growing well, and annual pastures are young and green, showing above average growth rates for May. Growers need to monitor stock for bloat in some lucerne and clover pastures. The quantity of Feed on Offer is still low with only four weeks of growth under grazing pressure.</p> <p>The Hay area has responded quickly to the welcome rainfall and rebounded from a very low base.</p> <p>The winter crop has largely been sown with only small areas remaining. Sowing of early options such as oats, pulses and canola is finished. Remaining</p>

Region	March	April	May
	<p>strong with wheat and barley prices down. Irrigated croppers have just about completed the rice harvest and nearly maize. The cotton picking will start in April, with the Hillston cotton area a little ahead of the southern growers.</p>	<p>their winter pastures and crop sown to date, renew perennial pastures, give confidence to cropping programs, provide relief from feeding stock and replenish farm dams. In Irrigation areas the maize harvest is complete while the cotton harvest commenced with reports of excellent yields and is still going.</p>	<p>late options include shorter season varieties of wheat and some new pastures. Grain-growers, mixed farmers and graziers have all welcomed the continuing May rainfall with regular and significant falls. Conditions have been as close to perfect for the month of May with respect to rainfall and temperature. In Irrigation areas the completion of the cotton harvest was delayed by rainfall in some areas. The Hay district experienced a wet month and producers are happy with new pasture growth and the condition and health of livestock.</p>
<p>South East</p>	<p>Coastal - The majority of the coastal area received average rainfall for the month of March. The remaining area received below average rainfall. Rainfall totals varied from 25 mm through to 200mm. One small area only received 10 to 25mm. With such a variation in rainfall across the area this is also starting to reflect the feed availability. Generally though, the coastal area is still green, but growth has reduced this month in areas where lower rainfall was recorded. Water supplies are still in good condition throughout the area. Livestock are also doing well in most areas.</p> <p>Highlands - The Highlands for March shows that the area received either average rainfall on the eastern side and below average to the west. Rainfall totals for the majority of the area for March was 25mm to 50mm. Pasture quality has been maintained in most areas, but there is little quantity. Water supplies decreased during the month due to warmer conditions and limited runoff. Livestock are still in reasonable condition throughout the area.</p> <p>Tablelands - Tablelands for the month of March received mainly average rainfall. Totals for the month were 25 to 50mm for most areas. Pasture availability has declined again for the month due to warm weather and limited rainfall. Water supplies further reduced during the month of March as well, and are becoming a concern in larger areas. Most livestock are still doing well considering the deteriorating conditions.</p>	<p>Coastal - The majority of the coastal area received below average rainfall for the month of April. Some areas are holding on better than others. Dam water is starting to disappear at an alarming rate in some areas, creeks and rivers are generally holding on well. Pasture is at a stage that without rain in the next couple of weeks will deteriorate quickly. The combination of lack of rain and an expected sharp drop in temperature over the next month is turning the outlook for the coast from good too bad.</p> <p>Highlands - The Highlands for April received below average rainfall. Dam water is starting to be effected due to the lack of rain and water quality is also an issue. Pasture growth in the area is lower than normal for this time of year due to the lack of rain. Like the coastal area the outlook for the winter is looking worse every day.</p> <p>Tablelands - Tablelands for the month of April received mainly well below average rainfall. Totals for the month in most areas were below 25mm. Pasture availability has declined again for the month due to warm weather and limited rainfall. Water supplies further reduced during the month of April to the point that many farm dams are now dry which is starting to force stock into the sale yards. Creeks and rivers in the area are generally good. Many producers are starting to hand feed for production reasons with their breeding stock. Night time temperatures are starting to drop and frosts are starting in many areas, which are having a detrimental effect on what pasture is left. The outlook for the Tablelands for the coming winter is very poor as the major</p>	<p>Coastal - The majority of the coastal area received below average rainfall for the month of May. Most areas are showing signs of the dry and frosts have started which is making what pasture that is left drop in quality. Dam water is still dropping at a very fast rate and creeks and rivers are still holding very well. Pasture is at a stage that without rain in the next couple of weeks will deteriorate quickly. The combination of lack of rain and the sharp drop in temperature is having a serious effect.</p> <p>Highlands - The Highlands for May received below average rainfall. Dam water is starting to be effected due to the lack of rain and water quality is also an issue. Pasture growth in the area is lower than normal for this time of year due to the lack of rain. Like the coastal area the outlook for the winter is looking worse every day.</p> <p>Tablelands - Tablelands for the month of May received below average rainfall in most areas. Some areas mainly in the North west Gundaroo through to Yass responded to some rain but is looking for follow up rain. Pasture availability has declined again for the month due to frost and limited rainfall. Water supplies further reduced during the month of May which has continued the trend started in April of selling stock. Creeks and rivers in the area are generally good. Many producers are starting to hand feed their breeding stock. Night time temperatures</p>

Region	March	April	May
	<p>Monaro - The majority of the Monaro area received average rainfall for the month of March. Totals were generally between 50 and 100mm. One small area shows rainfall totals of 25mm to 50mm and another area shows 100mm to 200mm. Generally this rainfall has freshened up the area after a drier February. Livestock are in excellent condition across the area. Water supplies are also good in most areas.</p>	<p>growth season is now behind us. Most producers will have to reduce numbers or plan to feed livestock this winter.</p> <p>Monaro - The majority of the Monaro area received below average rainfall for the month of April. Mostly totals were generally below 50mm. The Bombala area is better off than most however the onset of winter well see this area deteriorate. Given that rainfall for the Monaro has been below average this area has held on much better than the tablelands, a little rain at the right time makes a massive difference.</p>	<p>are starting to drop and frosts are starting to become cold down to minus 7 in many areas, which are having a detrimental effect on what pasture is left. The outlook for the Tablelands for the coming winter is very poor as the major growth season is now behind us. Most producers will have to reduce numbers or plan to feed livestock this winter.</p> <p>Monaro - The southern end of the Monaro around Bombala receives some good rain and did respond very well. Mostly totals were generally below 50mm. The Bombala area is better off than most. Given that rainfall for the Monaro has been below average this area has held on much better than the tablelands, a little rain at the right time makes a massive difference. As the frost get colder the pasture quality will drop off very quickly.</p>
Western	<p>Wentworth LGA: Comments: stock remain in good condition. Country has dyed off due to the warmer conditions in March.</p> <p>C/Darling LGA: Landholders along the Darling have started to off load stock or are starting to feed stock. There has been limited flow in the Darling river at Wilcanna. Agronomic conditions have slipped over the past month & any rain that has fallen has had little to no effect on growth</p> <p>Unincorporated Area: Darling River at Menindee has dried up more due to the lack of water coming down stream. Most landholders have also started to de-stock & in some places stock are too weak to transport. Agronomic conditions have rapidly deteriorating in all parts at the present time.</p> <p>Bourke LGA: Most stock are holding their condition, Land holders are taking advantage of the good prices and are off loading sale able stock. Ground water remains a topic of conversation, or the lack of it, good rain required asap.</p> <p>Brewarrina LGA: Around Goodooga & Weilmoringle the ground cover still looks green but its mainly poverty burr & salt bush verity's, Elsewhere the country has fallen away due to the hotter pass two months. Stock</p>	<p>All areas reports extremely dry conditions for April and landholders have either been hand feeding in the south or are considering selling livestock to reduce grazing pressure on natural pastures. This is compounded in some areas by higher kangaroo numbers.</p> <p>Rainfall has been patchy</p> <p>Cropping areas in the southern parts of the board area are looking for opening season rains during April but only minor falls were recorded on the last days of April. Much more rain will be required for cropping programs.</p>	<p>Generally a good month for rainfall across the region but low rainfall for April has left feed very short in many areas and landholders in some situations have de-stocked to maintain ground cover while others have chosen to hand feed.</p> <p>We expect good pasture growth from the May rains will change the outlook in many areas.</p> <p>Some wheat crops in the south were sown dry and will benefit from the rains in mid to late May.</p>

Region	March	April	May
	condition very from good to poor. Any stock on agistment are now being trucked off. Some landholders have started to feed lambing ewes.		

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