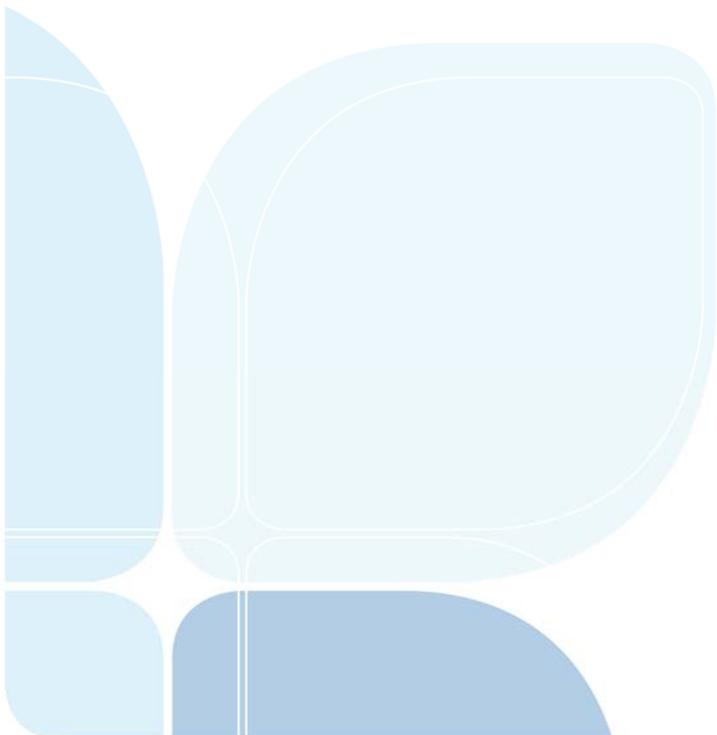




Local Land
Services

On-ground Seasonal Conditions Report

February 2016



Published by the Local Land Services
On-ground Seasonal Conditions Report
First published March 2016
ISBN

More information

www.lls.nsw.gov.au

Acknowledgments

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing March 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 - Five regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Greater Sydney, Hunter, North Coast and South East. Central West, Murray, Northern Tablelands, North West, Riverina and Western have reported a decline in conditions from last month. See the table below for an overview of the regional seasonal conditions elements.

Regional Infrastructure Overview - Seven regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Central West, Greater Sydney, Murray, North Coast, Riverina and South East. Hunter and North West have reported a decline in infrastructure conditions from last month. Northern Tablelands and Western didn't report on infrastructure.

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

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

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

Condition Score	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Poor
Average Regional Property Score		Greater Sydney and Hunter	Central Tablelands, North Coast and South East	Central West, Murray, North West and Riverina	Northern Tablelands and Western	
Regional Infrastructure Score	Greater Sydney	Hunter, Murray, North Coast and South East	Central Tablelands, Central West, North West and Riverina			
Regional Water Score	Greater Sydney	Hunter and North Coast	Murray, South East, Riverina and Western	Central Tablelands, Central West and North West	Northern Tablelands.	
Regional Agronomics Score		Greater Sydney and Hunter	North Coast and South East	Central Tablelands, Murray, North West and Riverina	Central West	Northern Tablelands and Western
Regional Livestock Score		Greater Sydney, Hunter and South East	Central Tablelands, Murray, North Coast, North West and Riverina	Central 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: Wyong, Hawkesbury, Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen, Kyogle, Richmond Valley Council, Bombala, Bega, Cooma-Monaro, Snowy River and Yass Valley.

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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 March 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	December 2015	January 2016
State Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four regions reported no change from last month, including Central Tablelands, Greater Sydney, Hunter and Western. Murray, North Coast, Riverina and South East have reported a decline in conditions from last month. Northern Tablelands and North West have reported an improvement in conditions from last month. Central West was not able to provide a report for this month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Regional Ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very Good – Greater Sydney and Hunter. Good – Central Tablelands, North Coast, Riverina and South East. Reasonable – Murray, Northern Tablelands, North West and Western. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very Good – Greater Sydney and Hunter. Good – Central Tablelands, Central West, Murray, North Coast, North West, Riverina, South East and Western. Reasonable – 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: Cowra, Hume, Corowa, Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle, Richmond Valley Council, Tamworth, Jirilderie, Bombala and Snowy River.	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.

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. 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 December 2016.

Table 3: Surveyed Property Numbers

Region	Number of properties surveyed		
	December	January	February
Central Tablelands	40	40	39
Central West	-	54	48
Greater Sydney	15	15	15
Hunter	14	13	14
Murray	40	50	48
North Coast	47	47	46
Northern Tablelands	32	30	34
North West	29	27	27
Riverina	12	16	20
South East	63	46	57
Western	18	19	18
TOTAL	310	357	366

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	December			January			February		
	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	Good (3)	Cowra – Very Good	Lithgow, Oberon - Reasonable Cabonne – Below Requirements	Good (3)	Cowra and Mid-Western – Very Good	Oberon - Reasonable Cabonne – Below Requirements	Good (3)	-	Oberon - Reasonable Cabonne – Below Requirements
Central West				Good (3)	Narromine – Very Good	Bogan, Gilgandra, Warrumbungle – Reasonable Coonamble – Poor	Reasonable (4)	Narromine and Lachlan - Good	Dubbo, Bogan, Gilgandra, Warren, Warrumbungle and Forbes – Below Requirements Coonamble - Poor
Greater Sydney	Very Good (2)	-	Penrith and Liverpool - Good	Very Good (2)	Wyong and Hawkesbury - Excellent	-	Very Good (2)	Wyong and Hawkesbury - Excellent	-
Hunter	Very Good (2)	-	Gloucester and Greater Taree - Good	Very Good (2)	Singleton – Excellent	-	Very Good (2)	-	Upper Hunter , Maitland and Cessnock - Good
Murray	Reasonable (4)	Jirilderie - Good Hume and Corowa – Very Good	Berrigan – Below Requirements Wakool - Poor	Good (3)	Corowa – Very Good	Albury, Conargo, Deniliquin and Wakool - Reasonable Berrigan – Below Requirements	Reasonable (4)	Hume, Corowa, Urana, Jerilderie, Deniliquin, Murray and Wakool - Good	Berrigan and Conargo – Below Requirements

Region	December			January			February		
	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)
North Coast	Good (3)	Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – Very Good	-	Good (3)	Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – Very Good	-	Good (3)	Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen, Kyogle and Richmond Valley Council – Very Good	-
Northern Tablelands	Reasonable (4)	-	Uralla, Armidale Dumaresq and Guyra – Below Requirements	Reasonable (4)	-	Uralla and Tenterfield – Below Requirements	Below Requirements (5)	-	Uralla, Guyra and Inverell – Poor
North West	Reasonable (4)	Tamworth – Very Good Narrabri and Liverpool Plains – Good	Walgett - Poor	Good (3)	Gwydir and Tamworth – Very Good	Walgett, Moree Plains, Narrabri and Liverpool Plains - Reasonable	Reasonable (4)	Moree Plains, Tamworth and Liverpool Plains - Good	-
Riverina	Good (3)	Jirilderie – Very Good	-	Good (3)	Young, Temora and Wagga – Very Good	Tumut, Jerilderie - Reasonable	Reasonable (4)	Young, Temora, Coolamon, Lockhart and Narrandera - Good	Cootamundra – Below Requirements
South East	Good (3)	Bombala – Excellent Snowy River – Very Good	Goulburn/Mulwaree, Eurobodalla – Reasonable Pallerang – Below Requirements	Good (3)	Bombala – Excellent Cooma-Monaro, Snowy River and Yass Valley – Very Good	Pallerang - Reasonable	Good (3)	Bombala – Excellent Bega, Cooma-Monaro, Snowy River and Yass Valley – Very Good	Pallerang and Boorowa - Reasonable
Western	Reasonable (4)	Bourke - Good	Balranald - Poor	Good (3)	Bourke – Excellent	-	Below Requirements (5)	Brewarrina and Cobar - Reasonable	-

3. Average Regional Property Score

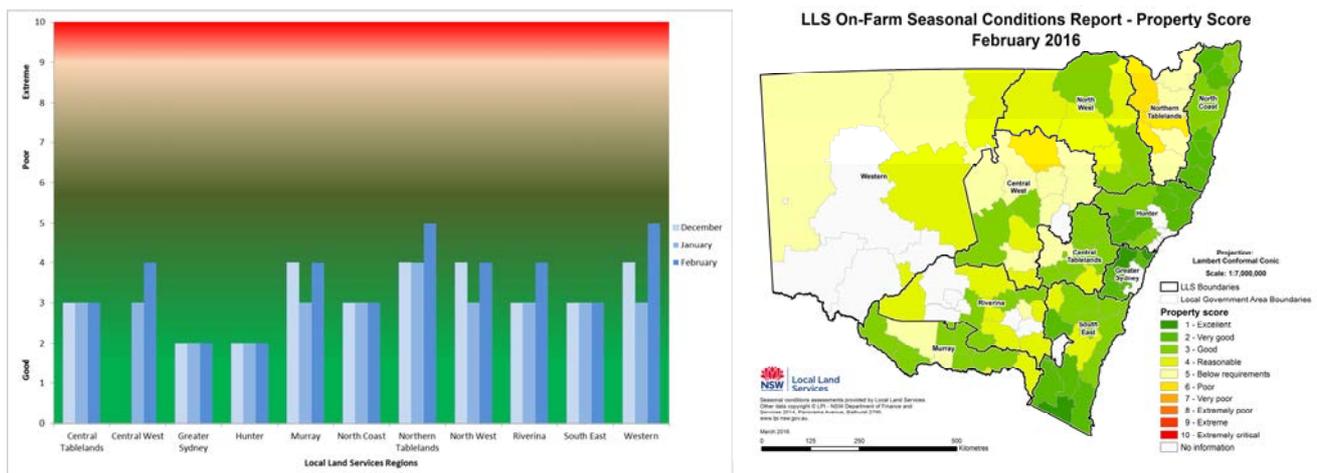
The average regional property score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 5. This score includes an average score of the water, agronomic and livestock categories across the regions local government areas.

Table 5: The average regional property score

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

The average regional property score for the 11 regions for the past three months is also shown graphically in Figure 1. Along with the graphical 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

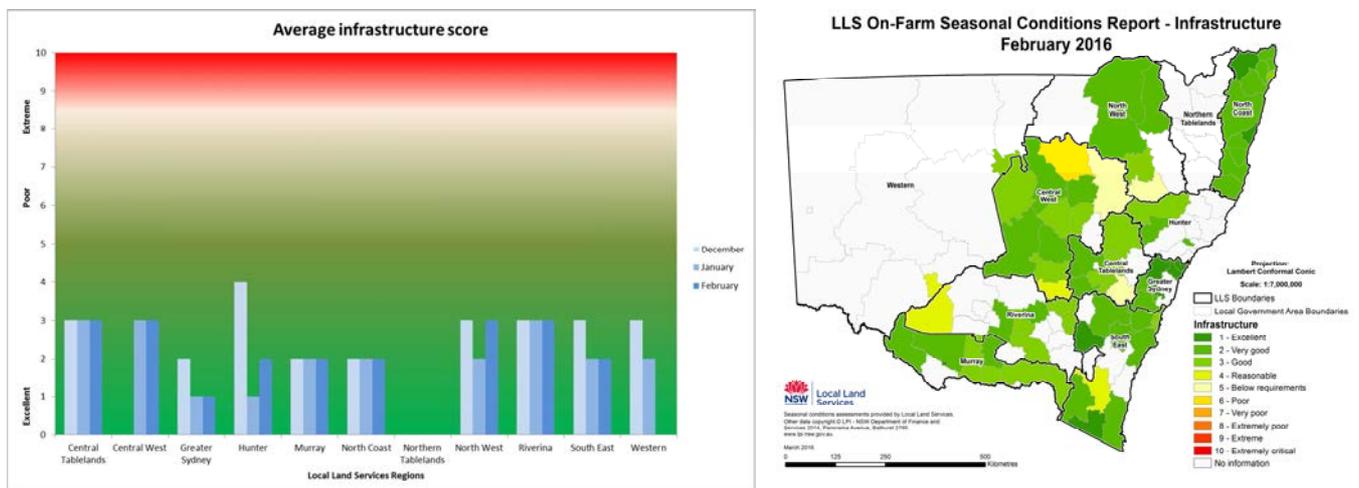
The average regional infrastructure score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 6. This score is for the condition of regional infrastructure including bores, tanks, troughs and piping. The infrastructure score is used to capture information for the Regional Assistance Advisory 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. Western did not measure water infrastructure this month as well.

Table 6: The average regional infrastructure score

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

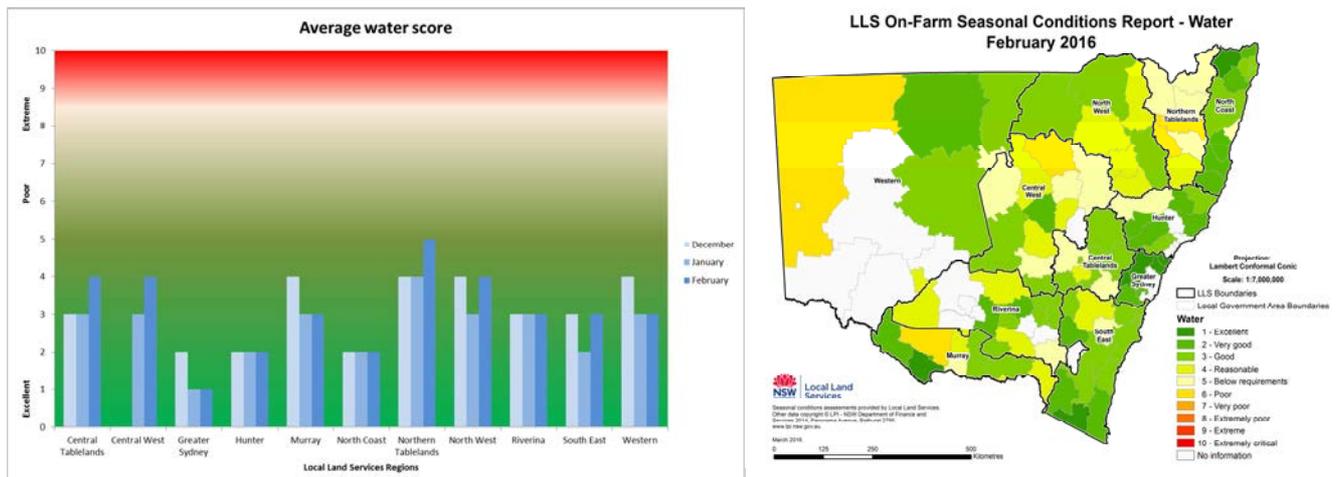
The average regional water score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 7. This score is for the condition of regional water including surface water, dams and stock accessed rivers, creeks and springs.

Table 7: The average regional water score

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

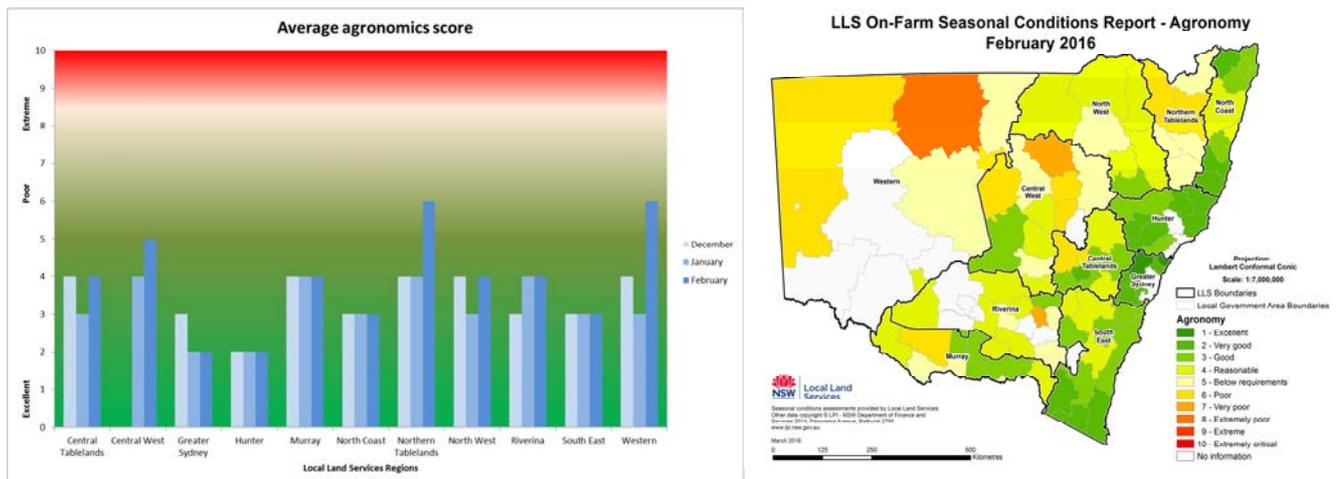
The average regional agronomics score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 8. This score is for the condition of regional agronomics including native pastures, improved pastures and cropping.

Table 8: The average agronomics score

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

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

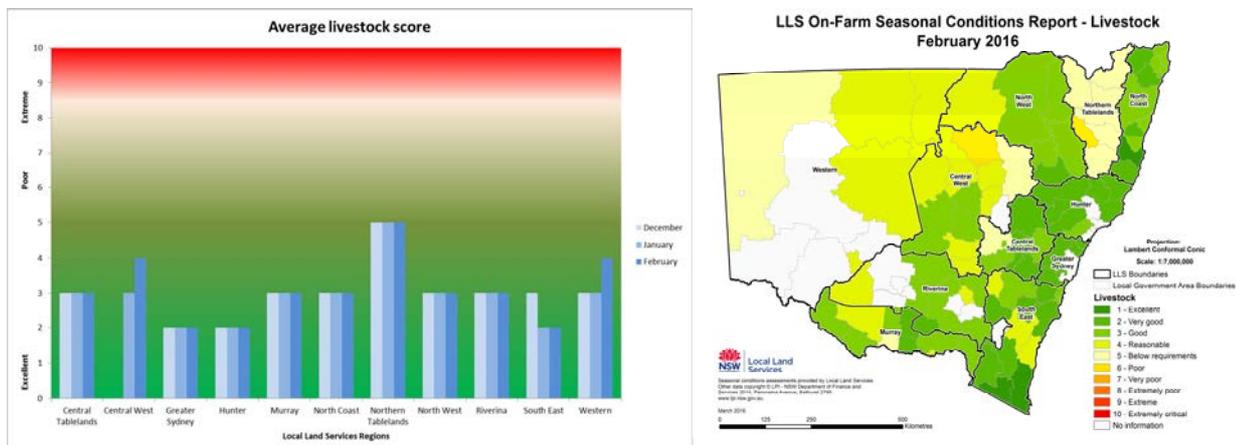
The average regional livestock score for the 11 regions for the past three months is shown in Table 9. This score is for the condition of regional livestock including beef, sheep and other.

Table 9: The average livestock score

Region	Average scores for regions		
	December	January	February
Central Tablelands	Good	Good	Good
Central West		Good	Reasonable
Greater Sydney	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Hunter	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Murray	Good	Good	Good
North Coast	Good	Good	Good
Northern Tablelands	Reasonable	Below Requirements	Below Requirements
North West	Good	Good	Good
Riverina	Good	Good	Good
South East	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Western	Good	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 graphically 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	December	January	February
Central Tablelands	<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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Across the Cowra and Cabonne Slopes regions, sub-tropical pasture species have been growing well and remaining in good quality when grazed. Summer annuals</p>	<p>Small comments were that dam water was evaporating at a rapid rate, A lot of isolated storm activity, some are hand feeding but the average had a dry month and are hoping for rain.</p>

Region	December	January	February
		<p>have already gone to seed and are of poor quality. Lucerne crops have generally been poorer quality because 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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Central West		<p>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.</p>	<p>Livestock conditions are slipping due to low ground cover in the majority of regions. As there has been no follow up rain and the temperature has increased feed has hayed off considerably. In some areas to the North where there has been little to no rain conditions are quite dire and landholders are hand feeding stock, ground water is very low in these areas. Landholders are cautiously preparing cropping paddocks in anticipation for Autumn rain. There has been reports of storms but over a very isolated area. In the southern areas conditions are still stable with relative good feed and groundwater.</p>
Greater Sydney	<p>Central coast is wetter with substantial rainfall throughout December whereas southern LGAs have very little rain resulting dryness and slowed pasture growth in the region. Dam's water level has been slightly down but still enough water for whole summer season. Northern LGAs especially Gosford and Wyong has shown excellent condition of water reservoirs,</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>While a much drier month off the back of a relatively wet January, conditions remained relatively unchanged throughout the region. Pastures were still largely benefiting from last month's rains with the proceeding warmer weather having a positive impact on pastures, promoting rapid growth in early February. Reservoir and dam levels remained high with a positive outlook for water</p>

Region	December	January	February
	<p>dams and creeks.</p> <p>The couple of short heatwave combined with little rainfall in mid-December days slowed pasture recovery where the soil moisture for both pastures and crops ranges from good to excellent. Dual purpose crops, Lucerne pastures and annual pastures have all provided green feed through this early summer. 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>flowing toward downstream where rain water harvesting tank and reservoir also excellent.</p> <p>Pasture growth has been excellent throughout the region. Grazing field showed very good quality green lushes and 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>	<p>availability heading into autumn. Pasture growth continued strongly throughout the region softening slightly towards the latter part of the month due to fewer rainy days being experienced. Grazing fields continued to be of good quality with retained soil moisture providing for sustained high levels of crop and vegetable cultivation. Cattle and sheep health conditions have remained high from January's peak pasture growth and availability throughout the region. Consequently, many of livestock producers have continued restocking throughout the region, taking advantage of solid market prices found locally. The continued mix of warm and wet weather over recent months has kept stock owners on the lookout for worm infestations or bacterial infections (such as footrot in sheep). Owners are urged to remain vigilant in the surveillance of their herd health and drench stock if they are yet to do so. Landholders appear optimistic about local conditions going into the cooler months, given current pasture quality and quantity on the back of what is normally the harshest time of the year – summer</p>
Hunter	<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.</p> <p>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>Conditions are extremely variable across the Upper Hunter due to the scattered nature of the summer storms and lack of any significant run-off rainfall events. February has offered a final burst of extremely hot weather with dams and water storage low on many properties. Paddock feed varies from excellent in the Singleton area to below average, east of Scone and Murrurundi. The bulk of dry feed on some properties is presenting a fire hazard. Low rainfalls of 5-10mm recorded for the month offer no improvement for properties missing storm patterns.</p> <p>Gloucester has received 250mm of rain since Christmas filling the hay sheds for the first time in 10years with dams full and cattle in good condition. The excellent season has resulted in cases of Three Day Sickness in cattle and lots of buffalo fly.</p> <p>A good fall at Taree of 24mm has improved the outlook as the season was beginning to dry off towards the coast. Cattle are in excellent condition and feed is plentiful although water is a concern and is dropping back. The</p>

Region	December	January	February
		<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. Generally conditions very good.</p>	<p>Great Lakes area is also looking for a good fall of rain after receiving over 330mm in January, only 44mm fell in February.</p>
Murray	<p>In Murray West some limited response from perennials to the low and sporadic rainfall received mid-December/early January. Some of Central Murray doing extremely well with some pastures allowing stock to gain weight. Most of Eastern Murray received an adequate spring that will be boosted by late Dec / Jan rain event.</p> <p>Harvest of winter crops generally finished early December - overall, yields and quality generally below average, with some disappointing results.</p> <p>Livestock condition remains generally good-very good for this time of year, even where the season was tough - generally landholders have been able to off-load at good prices before stock went backwards. Only limited supplementary feeding - livestock grazing on crop residues and native pastures. Minimal summer cropping.</p> <p>Many ground tanks reliant on surface inflows are dry or best part of - water being pumped in and via creeks and irrigation channels remains in good supply and quality.</p> <p>Low irrigation water allocation is having a major impact in the district and Murray irrigators will have a cash flow drought over the next year due to low or no summer crop plantings.</p> <p>Still ongoing excessive kangaroo issues in the eastern Murray.</p>	<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</p>	<p>Basically no rainfall recorded across the entire area for the month - most of what was recorded was flow over from the end of January. Those late January falls did replenish some ground tanks / dams.</p> <p>Subsoil moisture levels remain fairly dry across most of the Western and Central areas and paddock feed is basically exhausted, with graziers mostly now trying to maintain some ground cover. The Eastern area was looking good but has slipped considerably with the high temperatures and low follow-up rainfall. Overall growth of native perennials and lucerne has slowed over the month as expected with these weather conditions.</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. Many producers currently anticipating a 'typical' winter cropping program.</p> <p>General security irrigation allocations remain low and there has been considerable discussion over the economic feasibility of irrigating pastures and the majority considers water too expensive to water pastures. The current hot weather has delayed the commencement for those who will irrigate.</p> <p>Stock condition remains very good - supplementary feeding has commenced, particularly for autumn lambing flocks. Little remains of the stubbles from last years crops.</p> <p>The majority of cattle in the mid-east area are in very good condition due to an overall good year in these areas. Things will get very tight if a good break does not occur. There is concern about high levels of blue green algae being reported in major waterways, and within the Murray Irrigation supply network. There is currently a red alert in</p>

Region	December	January	February
		<p>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. In some areas livestock production is significantly down due to high water and stock replacement prices.</p>	<p>parts of the Murray system and Lake Mulwala.</p>
North Coast	<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>	<p>Although February has been drier than normal for this Region our producers are still very happy. Many producers are well advanced with their fodder making in preparation for the annual winter feed gap.</p> <p>The hot weather finally arrived with many centers recording above average daytime temperatures on numerous days throughout the month and near normal temperatures for the remainder. Humidity levels were also high but not many storm events eventuated. The Grafton LGA area has browned off due to these high temperatures, high evaporation rates and very little worthwhile rainfall during the period.</p> <p>Three (3) day sickness and Buffalo Fly remain the dominant animal health issues that producers are reporting.</p> <p>Livestock markets are still very strong with re-stockers competing strongly with processors for the limited numbers available. Processors are scaling back shifts as a result of reduced numbers being available for slaughter.</p>
Northern Tablelands	<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.</p> <p>Stock numbers generally remain below average with</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</p>	<p>A hot dry month with some quite strong winds has wreaked havoc with water supplies and pastures throughout the Northern Tablelands. Quite large areas are moving back to critical for water with creeks and springs drying rapidly.</p> <p>The promise of early plantings and good early growth for fodder crops has evaporated with most paddocks remaining fallow for the moment. The window for planting of fodder crops and pastures remains open into early</p>

Region	December	January	February
	<p>many producers preferring to breed up their numbers rather than competing in the buoyant market for replacement animals.</p> <p>Commercial and forage summer crops (mainly in the Inverell LGA) are progressing very favorably, with the possibility of some late plantings of mung beans still to occur. Preparations for forage crops such as oats and high performance rye grass are well under way in the other LGAs and it is expected that plantings will occur over the next 6 to 8 weeks, subject to ongoing rains.</p>	<p>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>	<p>April, so good rains over the next month will still see widespread plantings.</p> <p>Summer crops in the Inverell LGA are showing some stress and yields be reduced.</p>
<p>North West</p>	<p>Walgett – North West of Lightning Ridge still dry very isolated rainfall. Rainfall will benefit Mitchell grass seeding. Rainfall in early January created some runoff. Lighter country is responding but heavy soil requires sig more rain.</p> <p>Gwydir – No Rainfall till end of December - so no improvement, should improve with 56mm already in January.</p> <p>Gunnedah - Isolated storms late in December increased rainfall totals but did not change conditions for this report. Limited dryland summer crop planted. May still see late mung beans go in.</p> <p>Tamworth - Agronomic - 2 and improving after the rain, Livestock - 2 and improving after a drench.</p>	<p>Walgett - Fly strike starting to occur in sheep. North of Colli has only had 30-40mm.</p> <p>Narrabri - 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>Tamworth - Patchy rainfall across Manilla area however.</p>	<p>Walgett - The south of Walgett is still quite dry, no rain recorded for the month of February, Haying off to the north of Walgett, but still in good shape from January/December rain. Ground cover is an issue, need some rain in all areas of the district broadly speaking before thinking about crop.</p> <p>Moree Plains - East and south Moree pasture and feed wise is good, haying off a bit with the hot weather but still good quality. Dams are still good. Mungindi and North Star pastures and cattle are below average, some are turning off stock.</p> <p>Gwydir - Everything has hayed off now and good dry standing feed but quality is probably below average due to lack of rain this month and hot weather. This place is good relative to many areas. Neighbours are carting water and old landholders are commenting that water holes are dropping and there is a notable lowering of creeks. Concern with getting oats in and winter feed is going to be poor. Is early weaning. Some late sorghum crops are declining.</p> <p>Narrabri - Early weaning and preparation for supplementing. Pastures some body but haying off. Isolated rain event not even over the shire. Pastures are all very dry, now supplementing stock with oaten hay and a protein based lick. Water is holding out at the moment, we've had a couple of our shallow dams dry out so we've taken the opportunity to clean them out but our main dam is still sufficient. Haven't been able to do by further prep on the paddocks for winter crops because the ground has been too hard. Cattle are holding condition well but only</p>

Region	December	January	February
			<p>because we are supplementing. Some cotton crops declining due to hot windy conditions, stock being supplemented.</p> <p>Gunnedah - No rain has caused pastures to struggle and crops to stress. Zero recent runoff and high temps has lowered on farm water supplies.</p> <p>Tamworth - Hot, drying winds have had a substantial impact.</p> <p>Liverpool Plains - Native pastures haying off quickly as a result of hot conditions and windy weather but still good quality. Sorghum crops good despite persistently hot weather.</p>
Riverina	<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>	<p>The majority of producers in the Riverina have had a hot and dry February. Evaporation rates were high and dam levels have dropped by 0.5-1.0 metre. Livestock condition across the region is still above average, benefiting from exceptional growth in lucerne pastures in preceding months, stubble grazing and annual pasture residues on the slopes. Rangeland pastures have deteriorated in quality now and groundcover is lower than a month ago. There has been grazing of a mixture of green and dead material on offer to livestock in greater quantities than most summers but feed value is now falling in quality and supplementary feeding is just starting. Stock health issues have included ongoing treatment for foot scald in response to the January rainfall, monitoring of algal blooms in dam water and the risk of Photosensitisation in stock grazing problematic summer weeds such as Witchgrass. Mixed farmers and dryland croppers have now grazed most stubbles and or sprayed a summer weed burden from the January rains. Pre-season planning in winter cropping areas is well underway and there is likely to be increased plantings of oats and dual purpose wheat early in autumn. Interest in pulse crops is higher than for many years and interest in high-yielding barley varieties is also strong. Irrigated croppers are getting ready for the harvest of rice in March, and then corn and cotton in late April.</p>
South East	Coastal - The majority of the coastal area received	Coastal - The coastal section of the South East LLS had	Coastal - The coastal strip was quite variable for the

Region	December	January	February
	<p>between 25 to 50mm for the month of December. Due to this the coastal area is still reasonably green and there has been some limited growth over the month as well. Water supplies are still in good condition throughout the area. Livestock are doing well.</p> <p>Highlands - The Highlands area for rainfall was quite variable for the month of December. Some areas received from 25 to 50mm for the month, while other areas to the west only received 10 to 25mm and a small area received below 10mm for the month. There has been limited pasture growth for the period and some areas have very little available pasture available. Water supplies decreased during the month due to warmer conditions. Livestock are still in reasonable condition.</p> <p>Tablelands - The majority of the area received only 10 to 25 mm for the month of December. A small area towards the ACT received between 25 to 50mm. Pasture availability has declined throughout the month. There are also large populations of wingless grasshoppers in some areas which are also reducing available feed. Water supplies reduced during the month of December as well, and are becoming a concern in some areas. Livestock are still doing well in current conditions.</p> <p>Monaro - The majority of the Monaro region received 25 to 50mm during December and a smaller area to the South received between 50 to 100mm for the month. This rainfall has sustained pasture quality and quantity in the area. Livestock are in excellent condition across the area. Feed availability exceeds livestock requirements at present. Water supplies are also good in most areas.</p>	<p>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>Highlands - 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>Tablelands - 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 February. The eastern side will be able to hold on for a little longer.</p> <p>Monaro - 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>	<p>month of February. A small area received 50 to 100mm, while other areas only received only 5 to 50 mm. This variability was mainly due to storm activity across the area. Generally the coastal area is still green, but growth has reduced this month.</p> <p>Water supplies are still in good condition throughout the area. Livestock are also doing well in most areas.</p> <p>Highlands - Generally the Highlands area received between 10 to 50 mm for the month of February. As with the coastal area, this was dictated by storm activity. There has been limited pasture growth for the period and some areas pasture availability is quite low. 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 - The majority of the area received only 10 to 50 mm for the month of February. A small area towards the ACT received between 50 to 100mm. Pasture availability has declined throughout the month due to lack of moisture. As per previous month, there are still quite large populations of grass hoppers in some areas. Water supplies reduced during the month of February as well, and are still a concern in some areas. Most livestock are still doing well considering current conditions.</p> <p>Monaro - The Monaro region was generally drier during February than previous months. Majority of the Monaro region received 10 to 50mm during February, with some small areas receiving only 5 to 10mm for the month. Due to the lack of moisture, most pastures have declined during the month. Livestock are in excellent condition across the area. Even though feed availability has declined during the month, it still exceeds requirements at present. Water supplies are also good in most areas.</p>
Western	<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>Brewarrina LGA - Livestock Conditions are holding well due to the continuing storm activity over a wide area of the LGA & 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</p>	<p>Bourke LGA - Water is becoming critical in some areas. Darling river is stated to flow this past month mainly coming from the Culgoa river. The Paroo & Warrego Rivers have also had a reasonable flush. Some landholder who have taken stock on Agistment have started to requested them to move off due to the dryer than expected month. Also with the high prices for stock,</p>

Region	December	January	February
	Bourke LGA - As above.	<p>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>	<p>stock owners are taking advantage and culling all substandard stock. And are preparing to start feeding i.e. scrub cutting. Conditions have deteriorated severely over the past month with little to no rain recorded in the area. The hot windy conditions haven't helped. And could do with more steady, heavy rain in March/April.</p> <p>Brewarrina LGA - Most property's that are relying on surface water for stock are starting to worry about the lack of heavy rain or thunder storms over the past few months. Landholders have reported ground tanks (dams) are very low, with some stock bogging. The Barwon River has had a low level flow through Brewarrina for the past 3 week. The Culgoa/Balonne river system has started to flow, mainly down the Culgoa & Narran Rivers, but little down the Birrie & Bokhara rivers as yet. Sheep & cattle condition have held on well, due to landholders not over stocking & spreading them out. Some landholder who have taken stock on Agistment have started to requested them to move off due to the dryer than expected month. Also with the high prices for stock, stock owners are taking advantage and culling all substandard stock. The country side around Weilmoringle & Goodooga looks good & green, but not a lot of natural grasses have grown, there seems to be a lot of Copper burr & salt bush types of ground cover, and could do with more steady, heavy rain in March/April. The rest of the LGA also could do with the same rain as it has dried off considerably since December.</p> <p>Cobar LGA - Water is becoming critical in some areas. Some landholder who have taken stock on Agistment have started to requested them to move off due to the dryer than expected month. Also with the high prices for stock, stock owners are taking advantage and culling all substandard stock. And are preparing to start feeding. Conditions have deteriorated severely over the past month with no rain recorded in the area. The hot windy conditions haven't helped. And could do with more steady, heavy rain in March/April.</p>

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