



SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

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this page is updated each Wednesday, usually by 5pm

PLEASE NOTE THE NEW FAX NUMBER !!



SOI MESSAGE - 4 February 1998

SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE		
November 97	*	-13.9
December 97	*	-10.8
January 98	*	-22.1

Last 30 days		-29.5
Last 90 days (b)		-16.1

SOI trend (b) during December - January was Phase 3 (i.e. falling ▲).		
NOTE : (a) SOI values calculated using mean barometric pressures from 1880 to 1992 - subject to revision by Bureau of Meteorology. * Preliminary value ** Revised value (b) See AUSTRALIAN RAINMAN for effects of SOI on rainfall at your location.		

REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

It should be noted that while climate forecasts indicate a high probability of below average rainfall in some areas, this does not mean that they will miss out on all rainfall events.

The probabilities of obtaining median rainfall for the total February - April period are about 60% over much of Queensland and northern NSW. That is, in years when the SOI trend was similar to the present one, median rainfall was received in about 6-in-10 years. This also means that from February onwards, the effect of the SOI in the current pattern becomes less significant.

The main exceptions in Queensland are parts of the central-west and south-western corner, where probabilities are about 35% (i.e. one year in three years). However, in inland areas of central and northern NSW, inland Victoria and eastern Tasmania the probabilities are 60-80% (that is median rainfall is exceeded in 6-in-10 to 8-in-10 years depending on location).

Sea-surface temperatures remain much warmer than normal in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. However, they are now normal in the Coral Sea and warmer-than-normal around most of the Australian coast, which may reduce the effects of the El Niño in some areas.

The 30- to 50-day Oscillation last passed by our longitudes between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, and its next passage is due about the first week of February.

A pasture growth model indicates that the chances of exceeding median pasture growth during the January - March period are about 30% in parts of central and south-eastern Queensland. However, the probabilities of obtaining average pasture growth in southern and western districts are quite high.

In view of the lack of rain in the North Burnett, Coastal Burnett and Central Queensland extending up to the Dalrymple Shire, we continue to recommend caution when making property management decisions. We also advise regular monitoring of the SOI, sea-surface temperature patterns and published seasonal climate outlooks.

The average SOI over the previous 30 days has decreased to -29.5, but there is little change in the rainfall outlook. The probabilities of exceeding median rainfall for the total February to April period are about 60% in Queensland, except for the central-west where they are about 35%.

THE BOTTOM LINE

To obtain more detailed information for your location, we recommend combined use of the AUSTRALIAN RAINMAN package and the Bureau of Meteorology's Seasonal Climate Outlook. Also a lot of additional information is available on our SOI Fax Hotlines, our Internet World Wide Web service called 'The Long Paddock', and on BoM's fax and Internet information services.

NEXT UPDATE of the SOI MESSAGE:
11th February 1998

Climate Impacts and Grazing Systems - Department of Natural Resources

Compiled by Col Paull and Dr Roger Stone, QDPI.

If you would like any further information, please contact Col Paull on (07) 389 69587, or one of the Climate Risk Co-Ordinators located at Longreach (076) 584 418 Charters Towers (077) 872 155, Emerald (079) 828 801, Kingaroy (071) 600 717 and Roma (076) 229 999

Some information courtesy Bureau of Meteorology,

CSIRO and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, USA