



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 March 1998

SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE		
December 97	*	-10.8
January 98	*	-22.1
February 98	*	-22.2

Last 30 days		-18.8
Last 90 days (b)		-18.3

SOI trend (b) during January - February was Phase 1 (i.e. negative ▼).		
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.		

corner of Queensland. However, the probabilities of obtaining median pasture growth for the next three month period are quite high in southern, south-eastern and northern Queensland.

Increased probabilities of receiving median rainfall over southern Queensland may have implications for the harvest management of summer crops. In addition, a relatively wet, humid autumn would have implications for the management of ergot disease in grain sorghum.

An initial appraisal suggests that the next passage of the 30- to 50-day Oscillation will be about the second to third week of March.

An initial assessment indicates that the probabilities of late frosts this year are slightly higher than normal. However, the probabilities regarding the date of first frost indicate no bias towards earlier or later than normal. This analysis will be updated at the end of May.

The average SOI over the last 30 days was -18.8. The probabilities of exceeding median rainfall for the total March to May period are about 60% in Queensland, except for the far north where they are about 35%.

THE BOTTOM LINE

REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

'Mixed Rainfall Outlook'

Use of Australian Rainman shows the probabilities of obtaining median rainfall for the total March - May 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 (see also note below).

The main exceptions in Queensland are parts of far north Qld, where probabilities are about 35% (i.e. one year in three years), and parts of south-west Queensland where probabilities are about 70%. However, in inland areas of NSW and most of Victoria 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 the NSW and southern Australian coastline, which may reduce the effects of the El Niño in some areas.

A pasture growth model indicates that the chances of exceeding median pasture growth during the February - April period are about 40% in parts of the central-west and the south-western

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.

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 March 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