DNR/DPI SEASONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION SERVICE

SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

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this page is updated each Wednesday, usually by 5pm

SOI MESSAGE - 8 December 1998

SOI [a] AVERAGES / PHASE		
September 98	*	+12.1
October 98	*	+11.2
November 98	*	+13.3
Last 30 days		+ 9.3
Last 90 days [b]		+ 12.0

SOI trend [b] during October-November was Phase 2 (i.e. positive ▲).

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

Most climatic indicators suggest continued high rainfall probabilities.

Probabilities of exceeding median rainfall during the December-February period are generally over 50% in the eastern States of Australia, with areas exceeding 70-80% along the coast and adjacent inland regions, Cape York and the central west of NSW.

A La Niña pattern is now firmly established in the Pacific Ocean. In general terms a La Niña pattern means reduced rainfall for our trade competitors in south-western USA, Argentina and central Asia.

In the current situation, there is an above-average risk of rain interfering with winter crop harvesting, and causing losses. Commencing harvest when mature grain is about 15% moisture, followed by grain drying, is likely to pay dividends. Also in summer-cropping areas, where there is good soil moisture, consider planting some crop into winter crop residues after harvesting. There is a strong probability of high potential yields for dryland and irrigated cotton this year provided appropriate disease management can be achieved.

Colder-than-normal, equatorial sea-surface temperatures are now present from around the International Dateline to the eastern Pacific Ocean. In addition, temperatures are considerably warmer than normal in waters off northern Australia.

Above-average pasture growth is likely over much of Queensland during the December-February period. The favourable outlook may provide opportunities for burning native pasture, and sowing improved pastures.

The average SOI over the last 30 was +9.3 . The probabilities of exceeding median rainfall for the December to February period are 50% to 80% in most of Queensland and New South Wales.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It is difficult to identify the precise timing of the 30- to 50-day Oscillation at the moment, although there is some evidence suggesting it passed through eastern Australia during the third week of November. The next passage is expected around the fourth week in December.

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: 16th December 1998

Climate Impacts and Grazing Systems - Department of Natural Resources

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If you would like any further information, please contact Col Paull on (07) 389 69587, or one of the climate extension officers at the DPI in Charters Towers, Emerald, Gympie, Kingaroy, Longreach, Mackay, Mareeba, Roma and Toowoomba.

Some information courtesy Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, USA