



SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

this page = 1902 935 301

this page is updated each Wednesday, usually by 5pm



SOI MESSAGE -21 April 1999

SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE

January 99	*	+14.7
February 99	*	+7.1
March 99	*	+7.6

Last 30 days		+ 15.3
Last 90 days (b)		+ 11.8

SOI trend (b) during February-March 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

SOI climate forecasting systems indicate that rainfall probability values in most parts of the eastern States of Australia during the April to June period vary little from the long-term 'normal' values for that time of year. Exceptions are most coastal districts of NSW and southern Queensland where probabilities are 60-80%; and parts of central Queensland and central-western Queensland, northern Cape York Peninsula and parts of north-eastern Tasmania where probabilities are 60-70%.

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

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

We are now in autumn when the sea-surface temperature pattern and the SOI can change rapidly. However, while the La Niña pattern has weakened, currently the SOI and sea-surface temperatures suggest continuation of that pattern.

The current seasonal outlook is indicating increased activity of sorghum ergot, particularly in late-planted crops in the Central Highlands; increased leaf diseases in summer crops; and rain may interfere with cotton harvesting. Burning wheat stubble before planting this year's crop may be necessary to control yellow spot.

The likelihood of above-average pasture growth during the April-June period is low for much of Queensland, as pasture growth has already reached its potential in many regions.

The next passage of the 30- to 50-day Oscillation is due about the second week of May.

The average SOI over the previous 30 days has increased to +15.3 . Currently the SOI and sea-surface temperatures suggest continuation of the La Niña pattern. Thus the probabilities of exceeding median rainfall during the April to June period are about normal, or slightly above normal, in most of the eastern States.

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:
28th April 1999

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 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