

SEASONAL CONDITIONS REPORT

June 2000



OUTLOOK

Based on the latest values and trends of the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI), the probabilities of receiving above-median rainfall over the total July to September period are little different from the 'normal' for this time of year in most of the eastern States of Australia. Exceptions are the Sunshine Coast and adjacent sub-coastal districts of Queensland, where probabilities are 60-70%.

The cooler-than-normal sea-surface temperatures that have been present in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean (since 1998) have receded. However, there are still patches of cool anomalies, particularly from the International Dateline to the central Pacific. The strength of the atmospheric circulation, typical of a La Niña pattern, has also weakened, but not to the same extent. Most forecasts from experimental general circulation models are suggesting that neutral conditions will dominate at least until summer. Also some research suggests the sub-tropical ridge may again be further north than normal this winter, which tends to reduce winter rainfall from the Goondiwindi district through to the Central Highlands.

Frost risk this winter is detailed in a new DPI book: 'Frost Risk in Eastern Australia and the Influence of the Southern Oscillation' by Jacqui Willcocks and Roger Stone. There is a good probability that the frost season will finish 1-2 weeks earlier than normal for some towns in Queensland. Although the frost season may be shorter, the expected number of frosts is about the same as average, and the chance of getting at least one frost is similar to the average.

STATE OVERVIEW

Frost in many areas has impacted on pasture quality, cropping and horticulture. Pastures are haying off which is normal for this time of year. Stock are generally in good to excellent condition. Harvesting of cane is well under way and most mills have begun crushing. Individual Droughted Property (IDP) applications have increased in the Inglewood, Stanthorpe, Wambo and Chinchilla Shires where the feed and stock water situation has worsened. There are four new IDPs in the Taroom Shire (Wandoan district) but the excellent conditions in West Region are reflected in a number of IDP revocations, leaving only one property declared under State processes. Currently 96 properties in 12 shires are declared under IDP provisions. These declarations represent less than one percent of the land area of the State.

REGIONAL SUMMARIES

North Region: Unseasonally early frost occurred in several inland areas impacting on pasture quality for dairying and beef and on some cropping and horticulture. Above average rainfall continued a good year for the beef industry. Cane harvesting is well under way but showing the effects of the wet growing season.

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West Region: Western Queensland is experiencing above average conditions for this time of year. Although hayed off now, Flinders grass pastures have provided an abundance of bulk feed. Forbs are a

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ABG/340/000(105)

significant portion of pasture composition this year, with many responding to recent rainfall. Pastures also responded positively to June rainfall. Feed quality has declined in the north due to low rainfall during June. Cattle are in very good condition reflecting the season and maintaining strong prices.

Central Region: Some useful falls of rain were recorded in many parts of the region during the month with highest falls in coastal areas around Mackay and Rockhampton. Stock and pasture condition is reasonable for this time of year with the main concern being the low and diminishing surface water supplies which are forcing producers in some areas to drill for water and consider carting water for stock. Some producers north of Dingo have begun carting water. Cold conditions and frosts in some cropping areas led to some damage in late summer crops. Most winter crops are progressing well. All sugar mills in the Mackay area have begun crushing with some delaying their start due to wet weather.

South-East Region: Cold conditions with frost, cold winds and below average temperatures for all centres has slowed growth of many crops in the region and affected stock condition. This, combined with lower than average rainfall for the majority of centres in the South East, will affect the production of most industries. Rain is now needed across the region to ensure that the few winter cereal crops that have been planted will reach their yield potential.

South Region: There was some useful planting rain to the east of the region but falls were mostly average for June with areas around Goondiwindi and western parts below average. The summer native pasture growth has drawn to an end and some areas are experiencing water and pasture concerns. Some district reports indicate that there will be a shortage of feed and water if stocking numbers are not adjusted. Stock numbers have been lightened up with supplementary feeding increasing throughout the region.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:

North Region: Stock are in good to excellent condition throughout the region. Pastures are plentiful in most areas but the cold conditions have hampered pasture growth. Many areas have experienced frost which has hayed off some pastures, with some of the most severe frosts for many years being experienced in the Eacham and Herberton Shires.

West Region: Stock are in excellent condition and large numbers are being moved south to take advantage of the improved conditions in the Channel Country. Pastures are typical for the winter period, having hayed off but are of high quality and quantity. The conditions across the region are excellent and the best for many years.

Central Region: Stock are generally in good to excellent condition with some poorer classes around the Bauhinia Downs area. The frosts at the end of May had a deleterious effect on the quality of the pastures, but this has been offset to a major degree in most areas by the rain and some milder weather. The feed is described as excellent in the areas that did not suffer the frosts, but there are some dry pockets west of Springsure and around Bauhinia Downs.

South-East Region: Stock are generally in good condition and stock movement trends are typical of a normal winter. Drought feeding is occurring on a small percentage of properties that are drought declared in the North Burnett. Some near coastal districts still have good green feed for stock. Worthwhile rainfall along the coast has given pastures a lift but there has not been enough autumn rainfall for most producers to plant winter oats for stock feed.

South Region: Stock condition in general has declined through the winter, however, the fat score is not unusually low for this time of year. Cattle prices remain buoyant and commodity prices for other animal industries are satisfactory. There is likely to be an increase in supplementary feeding as the quality of pastures is reduced. There has been insufficient rain to produce a good bulk of winter herbage and medics throughout the region and frosts have also reduced the quality of pastures.

CROPPING AND HORTICULTURE

North Region: Frost early in the month had a severe impact on cropping on the Atherton Tableland with losses of a peanut and a potato crop reported and various degrees of damage to others. The peanut harvest delivered lower yields and grades than those of average years. Maize is being harvested with quality reported to be quite good. Incidents of frost in inland areas affected tree crops and cucurbits. The cooler weather has contributed to banana production being more in line with demand, resulting in a welcome improvement in price for growers, despite fruit quality being dulled.

Central Region: Widespread frosts were recorded in the Dawson/Callide area in the first few days of the month resulting in minor areas of crop losses. Rainfall in the middle of the month in this area has helped crops already planted and allowed for remaining areas to be planted. Most crops are progressing well, although those which have been double cropped like mungbeans last summer, will be needing more rain in the next month to ensure reasonable yields.

South-East Region: There has been little activity for most cropping enterprises as most are waiting for further falls of rain for winter crops. The ideal winter crop planting window closed at the end of June and if no significant rain falls, growers will have to take the chance with a late crop or wait for an early summer crop. In the Bundaberg district, frosts and cool conditions have slowed the growth of crops such as tomatoes and also some late opportunity tomato crops were badly affected by frost in the Gatton district. However, high rainfall and cold conditions in other horticultural areas have helped prices considerably for growers. Harvesting of citrus in the Gayndah district is continuing but lack of irrigation water in the coming cropping season is a major concern.

South Region: Growers have until mid July to plant wheat on the Eastern Downs with rainfall in mid June initiating some plantings. Yield potential will drop with the delayed planting but protein levels could rise. Chickpea yields will also be reduced. Areas which have been double cropped have found it difficult to successfully sow winter crops.

RAINFALL

- (figure in brackets indicates average)

North Region: Babinda received 211mm (208), Cairns 32mm (n/a), Herberton 60mm (n/a), Malanda 119mm (62), Ingham 50mm (43), Innisfail 238mm (n/a), Townsville 32mm (20), Tully 207mm (n/a), Bowen 85mm (n/a), Charters Towers 47mm (n/a) and Georgetown 76mm (6).

West Region: Birdsville recorded 0mm (8), Boulia 3mm (7), Windorah 0mm (12), Cloncurry 8mm (4), Mt Isa 5mm (3), Longreach 23mm (13), Muttaborra 22mm (13), Winton 20mm (11), Eromanga n/a (14), Augathella 18mm (24) and Charleville 25mm (19).

Central Region: Clermont recorded 53mm (24), Alpha 34mm (23), Springsure 40mm (24), Mackay 72mm (64), Yaamba 56mm (38), Proserpine 67mm (n/a), Biloela 34mm (31), Mt Larcom 9mm (36), Gladstone 64mm (35), and Theodore 30mm (28).

South-East Region: Eidsvold recorded 34mm (38), Gayndah 39mm (30), Mundubbera 30mm (31), Esk 36mm (51), Kilkivan 46mm (40), Kingaroy 40mm (36), Murgon 39mm (34), Nanango 57mm (34), Proston 47mm (31), and Beaudesert 20mm (49). On the coastal fringe Bundaberg received 70mm (54), Maryborough 89mm (64), Nambour 100mm (95) and Tewantin 127mm (n/a).

South Region: Clifton recorded 31mm (32), Dalby 34mm (n/a), Goondiwindi 15mm (n/a), Inglewood 6mm (28), Oakey 42mm (33), Pittsworth 37mm (37), Stanthorpe 11mm (39), Toowoomba 40mm (n/a), Warwick 29mm (n/a), Roma 5mm (n/a), St George 4mm (n/a) and Taroom 42mm (29)

WATER STORAGE/SUPPLIES

The latest Water Storage Report issued by the Department of Natural Resources is attached.

North Region: A wetter than average month was experienced on the dry tropical coast, lower gulf and most inland parts. Some parts of Cape York were drier than normal and average conditions prevailed on the wet tropical coast. Burdekin Falls Dam was 101.7% and Tinaroo Dam 101% as at 5/7/00.

West Region: During mid June a general rain influence passed across the western portion of the region producing falls of up to 50mm in the Channel Country, resulting in the Diamantina River and associated channels having significant flows. There are no reports of water deficiencies in the region.

Central Region: Rainfall was normal for this time of year with the best falls being near the coast and in the Mackay hinterland. The Connors River recorded another small flow event but flows elsewhere were almost non-existent. During June, the Mackenzie and Dawson River weirs declined slightly. There was a small release from Kroombit Dam while Callide Dam remains low at 11% of useable storage. Fairbairn Dam is holding over 905 000 Ml or 69% of useable storage.

South-East Region: Rainfall along the coastal fringe has been greater than inland areas, but in spite of this, some centres across the southern and northern part of the region received average rainfall. Many creeks and watercourses have continued to run in near coastal areas. Producers in many areas of the North and Central Burnett and to a lesser extent, the South Burnett, have reported dry dams and bores rapidly losing supply. Underground supplies have been replenished in some areas but generally it will take considerable rainfall to fully return these reserves to former levels.

South Region: A reasonable base flow continued in the Macintyre River at Goondiwindi. Very low base flows continued in the Balonne River upstream of Beardmore Dam while there was no flow downstream of St George. The Weir and Moonie Rivers receded to no flow during the month. The Maranoa River remained dry throughout the month. The drier conditions have led to an increased demand for irrigation supplies. The main alluvial aquifer associated with the Condamine River on the Eastern Downs remains in a depleted state. Surface water storage is generally in a reasonable position for this time of year.

Ros Moloney
POLICY OFFICER
RISK MANAGEMENT AND DROUGHT

**NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL DROUGHTED PROPERTIES (IDPs) IN QUEENSLAND
OUTSIDE OF OFFICIAL SHIRE & PART SHIRE DECLARATIONS
30-Jun-2000**

Region	NO. OF PROPERTIES DECLARED IN SHIRE/PART SHIRE	TOTAL NO. OF PROPERTIES IN SHIRE/PART SHIRE	% OF PROPERTIES DECLARED IN SHIRE/PART SHIRE
NORTH	0		
TOTAL:	0		
WEST			
BULLOO	1	45	2
TOTAL:	1		
CENTRAL			
FITZROY	6	888	1
LIVINGSTONE	5	732	1
DUARINGA	6	353	2
BANANA	15	1343	1
CALLIOPE	1	612	0
TOTAL:	33		
SOUTH			
BOORINGA	1	316	0
TAROOM	4	630	0
TOTAL:	5		
SOUTH EAST			
EIDSVOLD	26	145	18
GAYNDAH	3	306	>1
MONTO	25	453	6
MUNDUBBERA	3	300	1
TOTAL:	57		

GRAND TOTAL 96 Properties in 12 shires

Water Storage Report

Fortnight Ending: 21-Jun-00

Area or Project	Storage Name	Capacity ML	Current Storage ML	Dead Storage ML	Useable Storage %	Variation %	Below FSL in m	Ann'd Allocation %	Comments
Central Region									
Barker-Barambah	Bjelke-Petersen Dam	134,900	118,113	230	88%	0%	0.78	100%	38 mm rain.
Bowen Broken	Eungella Dam	112,400	112,400	1,240	100%	0%	0.00		15 mm rain. Overflowing.
Bundaberg	Walla Weir	29,500	11,323	2,250	33%	-2%	3.73	30%	Rel 72 ML/D.
	Fred Haigh Dam	562,000	101,803	4,390	17%	0%	14.63	60%	
	Ben Anderson Barrage	30,300	24,084	10,500	69%	4%	0.84	30%	Rel 10 ML/D.
	Bucca Weir	11,600	6,353	900	51%	-1%	2.43	60%	Rel 5 ML/D.
	Kolan Barrage	3,810	3,209	1,430	75%	0%	0.29	60%	Rel 12 ML/D.
Callide	Kroombit Dam	14,600	586	30	4%	-7%	10.32		
	Callide Dam	136,300	17,880	3,350	11%	0%	16.14		
Dawson Valley	Glebe Weir	17,300	14,729	15	85%	0%	0.51	81%	
	Gyranda Weir	16,400	12,680	1,760	75%	-1%	1.08	81%	
	Orange Creek Weir	6,140	5,751	3,990	82%	0%	0.26	81%	
	Theodore Weir	4,760	4,251	750	87%	-6%	0.54		81%R 100%C
	Moura Weir	7,260	5,749	1,640	73%	-3%	0.80	81%	
	Neville Hewitt Weir	11,300	9,508	650	83%	-3%	0.61	100%	
Emerald	Bedford Weir	22,900	22,900	3,290	100%	0%	0.00	100%	Rel 1ML/D.
	Bingegang Weir	8,060	6,548	240	81%	-14%	0.67	100%	Rel 4 ML/D.
	Fairbairn Dam	1,301,000	905,494	65,600	68%	0%	2.93	100%	5 mm rain.
	Tartus Weir	12,000	12,000	2,580	100%	0%	0.00	100%	Overflowing.
Eton	Kinchant Dam	62,800	62,800	130	100%	0%	0.00	100%	
Lower Mary	Mary Barrage	12,000	12,000	5,050	100%	0%	0.00	100%	23 mm rain. O'flow 1620 ML/D.
	Tinana Barrage	4,750	4,750	1,900	100%	0%	0.00	100%	23 mm rain. O'flow 460 ML/D.
Mary Valley	Borumba Dam	46,000	46,000	510	100%	0%	0.00	100%	7 mm rain. O'flow 70 ML/D.
	Cedar Pocket Dam	730	730	25	100%	0%	0.00	100%	18 mm rain. O'flow 11 ML/D.
Pioneer Valley	Teemburra Dam	147,500	147,500	8,290	100%	0%	0.00		22 mm rain.
	Mirani Weir	4,660	4,660	530	100%	0%	0.00	100%	O'flow 2270 ML/D. Bag down.
	Dumbleton Weir	8,780	8,780	56	100%	0%	0.00	100%	O'flow 2270 ML/D. Bag down.
Proserpine	Peter Faust Dam	491,400	391,989	970	80%	0%	2.45	100%	10 mm rain.
Rockhampton	Eden Bann Weir	35,900	35,900	9,700	100%	0%	0.00	100%	O'flow 732 ML/D.
Tarong/Boyne River	Boondooma Dam	204,200	151,146	8,360	73%	0%	3.40	100%	2 mm rain. Rel 34 ML/D.
Three Moon Creek	Cania Dam	88,500	14,482	650	18%	0%	16.43	90%	4 mm rain.
Upper Burnett	John Goleby Weir	1,690	1,000	160	55%	1%	1.40	100%	3 mm rain.
	Jones Weir	3,720	3,368	52	90%	15%	0.19	100%	2 mm rain. Rel 3 ML/D.
	C. Wharton Weir	12,800	7,324	85	57%	-1%	1.78	100%	5 mm rain. Rel 12 ML/D.
	Wuruma Dam	165,400	5,787	2,040	2%	0%	23.77	95%	6 mm rain. Rel 4 ML/D.
North Region									
Burdekin	Clare Weir	15,900	12,745	3,700	74%	-26%	0.66	100%	
	Burdekin Falls Dam	1,860,000	1,860,000	7,860	100%	0%	0.00	100%	
Mareeba Dimbulah	Tinaroo Falls Dam	438,900	438,900	1,300	100%	0%	0.00	100%	24 mm rain. O'flow 64 ML/D.
Mt Isa	Julius Dam	107,500	107,500	8,190	100%	0%	0.00		Estimated
South Region									
Border Rivers	Boggabilla Weir	5,850	464	420	1%	0%	5.38		7 mm rain. Rel 138 ML/D.
	Glenlyon Dam	253,600	205,152	1,740	81%	0%	2.91	95%	Rel 5 ML/D.
Central Lockyer	Bill Gunn Dam	6,940	726	450	4%	-1%	8.57	100%	29 mm rain. Rel 8 ML/D.
	Lake Clarendon	24,300	2,185	50	9%	0%	9.32	100%	37 mm rain.
Condamine	Chinchilla Weir	9,780	8,043	120	82%	-1%	0.53	100%	
Logan River	Maroon Dam	37,500	36,823	2,190	98%	1%	0.25	100%	32 mm rain. Rel 12 ML/D.
Lower Lockyer	Atkinson Dam	30,400	18,296	2,100	57%	-1%	2.49	100%	42 mm rain. Rel 37 ML/D.
Macintyre Brook	Coolmunda Dam	69,000	46,895	220	68%	-1%	1.54	100%	Rel 8 ML/D.
Maranoa	Neil Turner Weir	1,470	1,470	360	100%	0%	0.00	100%	
St George	Beardmore Dam	81,700	48,839	1,540	59%	-17%	1.56	90%	3 mm rain.
	Jack Taylor Weir	10,100	9,603	270	95%	0%	0.22	90%	4 mm rain.
Upper Condamine	Leslie Dam	106,200	72,441	220	68%	-4%	2.97	100%	Rel 393 ML/D.
Warrego River	Cunnamulla Weir	4,770	4,770	1,600	100%	0%	0.00	80%	
Warrill Valley	Moogerah Dam	83,700	38,491	550	46%	-1%	6.62	100%	27 mm rain. Rel 57 ML/D.
Total :		6,880,970	5,206,920	176,223	75%	0%			

Change this Fortnight in ML: Decrease -23,797

Notes: (1) Useable storage does not include dead storage.

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Date: 22/06/2000