



Minister Steve Whan

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Rural Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

Finally – relief for farmers as drought declines

February 11, 2010

This year's rainfall has brought welcome relief for drought affected areas and farmers across NSW.

Minister for Primary Industries, Steve Whan, today released the latest Government drought figures which indicate 65.7% of the State remains in drought, a drop of 16% since last month.

The official figures show the area of NSW considered satisfactory has also increased to 6.2% (up from 4.4%), while 28.1% of NSW is considered marginal (up from 13.8%).

"As we approach the end of summer, some parts of NSW are in a good position, they have experienced, steady, soaking rain which has filled dams and creeks," Mr Whan said.

"Importantly, this rain has also injected some life back into the pastures, providing a real morale boost for those living on the land."

Mr Whan said recent rainfall patterns have shown NSW to be a state of two extremes.

"The north-eastern half of NSW received good rain over the last month, with falls up to 200mm around Coonabarabran, Tamworth, Scone and Gloucester," Mr Whan said.

"However farmers in the western and southern parts of NSW were not so lucky. Some areas near Broken Hill and Tibooburra received no rain at all.

"Livestock conditions are generally good in the north-east of the State, however in other areas handfeeding is needed to maintain condition."

Mr Whan said whilst there was some good news for parts of the State, the new drought figures highlight the drought is far from over.

"If we look back at this time last year, we were in a slightly better position, 56.6% of NSW was in drought in February 2009 and the figures slowly worsened over the course of the year.

"We also had a larger summer crop harvest of 277,212 hectares last year, compared to the estimated 243,885 hectares expected this season.

"The NSW cotton crop is around 99,000 hectares, grain sorghum sowings are estimated to be down 31% on early season predictions at 86,620 hectares, while sunflowers plantings are up 25% on earlier forecasts at 16,780 hectares."

Minister Whan said the heavy rain over Christmas provided a great boost to all crops, especially the dryland areas, and provided enough water to finish irrigated crops.

"While the rains over the Christmas break provided the Lower Namoi, Bourke and Walgett regions with enough water for next season's crop, it also resulted in the prolific growth of weeds on winter crops across the State."



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The NSW Government has committed more than \$500 million in drought assistance measures since the drought began in 2002 which includes, drought transport subsidies, contributing to exceptional circumstances assistance funding, providing a network of drought support workers and establishing a drought hotline.

"As this drought continues, I would like to thank the dedicated staff who have spent many years helping farmers on the ground, particularly our extension officers from Industry & Investment NSW which includes agronomists, livestock officers, horticulturists, and education teams," Mr Whan said.

FEBRUARY 2010 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS (see I&I NSW drought conditions map)

Area in **Drought**: 65.7 (down from 81.8%)
Area in **Marginal**: 28.1% (up from 13.8%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 6.2% (up from 4.4%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Hume LHPA	Part of District moved from marginal to drought (Whole District now Drought)
Tablelands LHPA	Part of District moved from marginal to drought

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

Central North LHPA	Part of District moved from drought to marginal
Central West LHPA	Part of District moved from drought to marginal
Mid Coast LHPA	Part of District moved from drought to marginal
New England LHPA	Part of District moved from drought to marginal
North West LHPA	Part of District moved from drought to marginal

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Nil

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Darling LHPA	Part of District moved from marginal to satisfactory
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RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil

[More information](#)

[NSW drought maps](#)