



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

MEDIA RELEASE

Good times for vegetable and beef producers but drought unchanged

Embargoed 21 July, 2010

Widespread rainfall across NSW has benefited some of the State's vegetable farmers and beef producers, who have begun rebuilding their herds, however the rain has had little impact on the State's drought situation, which is virtually unchanged since last month.

Minister for Primary Industries Steve Whan announced the area in drought has stabilised at **13.4%**, which is down just 0.5% from last month.

"Little has changed in the last month with more than one-eighth of the State in drought and almost half the remainder on the brink," Mr Whan said.

"It's a tale of mixed fortunes with most of the State experiencing a bumper season, including the central and southern region, which is experiencing the best conditions for decades."

Mr Whan said some of the State's vegetable producers have benefitted from the great seasonal conditions, particularly in the Central West.

"Vegetable growers in Cowra, Bathurst and Forbes are taking advantage of the great rain this winter, after experiencing restricted access to irrigation water in recent years," Mr Whan said.

"Unfortunately there is not a lot NSW growers can do about the shortage of tomatoes expected to occur next month, after 7 million seedlings were poisoned in Queensland last month.

"As a result of the shortage, tomato prices are likely to rise for a few weeks in August and September.

"Tomato seedlings available now are more likely to be planted in Queensland, where the growing season is much shorter than in NSW and they are in a better position to fill the gap more quickly."

Minister Whan said graziers in Southern NSW are beginning to rebuild their herds, following the improved conditions.

"Beef producers around in the Hume, Lachlan and Tablelands districts have begun to restock their herds to take advantage of the best seasonal conditions in years," he said.

"Farmers are working to capitalise on the good times while there is more feed in the paddocks.

"While farmers' incomes may suffer from the investment with fewer cattle going to market, there will be minimal change for consumers because our beef prices are generally driven by the export market, with Australia exporting almost 60% of our beef.

"Livestock are generally in fair to good condition, with supplementary feeding occurring in some areas to maintain condition during the cooler months."

Rainfall, Crops and Pastures

- The only area to miss out on rainfall during June was the far north-west corner of NSW, which received around 5 millimetres.
- Generally the eastern third of the State received up to 50mm, while the central and northern coastal strip received between 100-200mm.



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- The central western areas of the State generally received between 10-25mm of rain.
- The State's large water storages have increased 3.4% in June to 36.1% of total storage capacity, which is 12.1% higher than the same time last year.
- The estimated winter crop of more than 5 million hectares is now very achievable with 98% of potential plantings sown by the end of June.
- The estimated winter cereal area is 4.31 million hectares, with 0.84 million hectares of pulses and oilseeds.
- Early autumn sown grazing cereals are providing excellent grazing in most districts.
- Pasture conditions remain patchy, improving in the north and central areas but still relatively poor in parts the northern Tablelands, southern and south western areas.

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

Area in **Drought**: 13.4% (down from 13.9%)

Area in **Marginal**: 44.1% (down from 45.0%)

Area in **Satisfactory**: 42.5% (up from 41.1%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

Nil

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

Hume LHPA Part of District moved from drought to marginal

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Nil

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Central North LHPA Part of District moved from marginal to satisfactory

Hume LHPA Part of District moved from marginal to satisfactory

RETROSPECTIVE (alterations to previous declarations)

Nil