



Minister Steve Whan

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

MEDIA RELEASE

14 August, 2010

Best figures in years offer hope to drought stricken farmers

The area of NSW in drought has fallen to its lowest level in almost a decade, with July's drenching rains helping improve conditions across the State, NSW Primary Industries Minister, Steve Whan, said today.

The official August figures show that just 7.1% of the State is in drought, down from 13.4% last month – the best figures since August 2001.

And 36.5% of the State is declared marginal – down from 44.1% last month, while 56.4% of the State is satisfactory, up from 42.5%.

“Sowing of the estimated 5.15 million hectare winter crop is completed, and experts expect that come harvest time we may see the best yields in the last 10 years,” Minister Whan said.

“Today's figures highlight the impact recent widespread rains have had on most areas of the State, and are hopefully a positive indication of things to come.”

In July, large rainfalls were recorded at:

- Orange 154mls
- Coonabarabran 146mls
- Glen Innes 126mls
- Tamworth 111mls
- Parkes 110mls
- Cobar 93mls

“The Central, Hume and Riverina areas moved out of drought, while parts of the Central West, Cumberland, Darling, Hume and Tablelands regions moved from marginal to satisfactory,” Minister Whan said.

“The whole of the Lachlan moved from marginal to satisfactory.

“As a result of the above average rainfall for July received by most areas, soil profiles have recharged, and continuing average rainfall in northern NSW provide excellent summer crop prospects for paddocks under fallow and also provide the opportunity for double cropping by growers.

“Over the last six months, rainfall was generally above to very much above average over most of NSW, including the far west and north west of the State.

“Growers are hoping to reap the benefits of skyrocketing grain prices, with worsening drought conditions in Eastern Europe, better-than-expected US wheat sales and the weaker US dollar pushing prices up for cereals and pulses.”

Water storage has improved in many areas, with plenty of runoff, water storage levels are up 1.8 per cent on last month, 15.3% higher than the same time last year.

“But unfortunately it's not all good news with NSW expecting its worst locust plague in more than 30 years,” he said.



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“The State’s experts are predicting locust hatchings to commence in the central north in the next week or so.

“Farmers and land managers need to check crop and pastures thoroughly, report sightings and hatching immediately and treat locusts when they are banding – this is the most efficient and effective way.”

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

Area in **Drought**: 7.19% (down from 13.4%)
Area in **Marginal**: 36.5% (down from 44.1%)
Area in **Satisfactory**: 56.4% (up from 42.5%)

NEW DECLARATIONS (moved into drought)

NIL

REVOCATIONS (moved out of drought)

Central North LHPA	Part of District moved from drought to marginal
Hume LHPA	Part of District moved from drought to marginal
Riverina LHPA	Part of District moved from drought to marginal (Whole of District now marginal)

ALTERATIONS (moved between marginal and satisfactory)

DECLINED (satisfactory to marginal)

Nil

IMPROVED (marginal to satisfactory)

Central West LHPA	Part of District moved from marginal to satisfactory (Whole of District now satisfactory)
Cumberland LHPA	Part of District moved from marginal to satisfactory (Whole of District now satisfactory)
Darling LHPA	Part of District moved from marginal to satisfactory
Hume LHPA	Part of District moved from marginal to satisfactory
Lachlan LHPA	Whole District moved from marginal to satisfactory
Tablelands LHPA	Part of District moved from marginal to satisfactory (Whole of District now satisfactory)