

Summer is coming:

Have you planned ahead for your livestock?

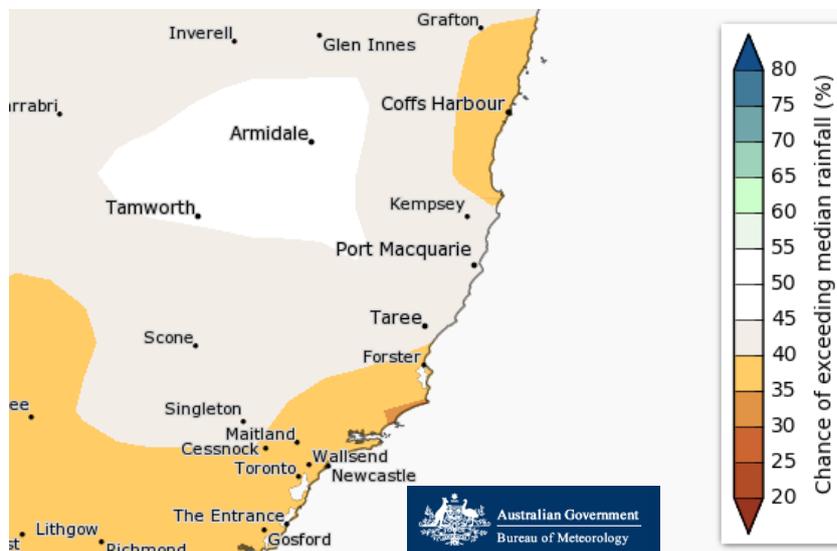
Rain and soil moisture

Rain events have been patchy across the Hunter Local Land Services region over the past few weeks, with parts of the Manning Great Lakes and Lower Hunter receiving good falls. Inconsistent rain falls in the Upper Hunter have resulted in a mixed response. Lighter soil country has responded slightly to minimal rainfall, whereas there have been limited changes to heavier black soil country.

Producers had hoped for a Spring break, which hasn't eventuated for many, and with current BOM outlooks for November through to January showing dryer than average predictions, ongoing drought conditions across parts of the state are likely to continue.

Current observations also indicate that the likelihood of an El Nino have increased, with the ENSO Outlook being raised from El Nino Watch to El Nino Alert.

In summary summer pasture growth in some areas has been good, but without follow up rain to build soil moisture stores, we may be looking at a false recovery situation.



Have you made plans for summer?

In your planning processes for the next three-six months, please consider:

- Do you have enough fodder on hand to get through summer?
- If not, what fodder is available considering that feed prices will continue to remain high as feed is in high demand and hard to source.

- The costs associated with feeding stock for the summer period and where the fodder will come from as it is getting increasingly difficult to obtain.
- The lack of water supplies is now at a critical level in some areas.
- In dams that still retain water, quality has also been severely impacted by the ongoing hot and dry conditions.
- There are significant animal health issues that arise from poor quality water, including problems caused by blue green algae.
- It is important to remember that animals being handfed or lactating and hot weather also increases water needs (up to 100 litres a day per animal).
- Please also consider temperature stress and ensure adequate shade or shelter is available, especially for vulnerable animals like young stock.

Fodder availability outlook

Cereal crops

As producers continue to source hay and grains from interstate and through preferred feed suppliers, winter cereal crops are now being considered for hay across NSW. Producers in the Upper Hunter are opening crops up to stock rather than baling.

Whole barley will be available soon ex Griffith area, and wheat and oats are coming through Newcastle port into the area but are also being freighted interstate from the port.

Corn is also a good option and is available.

White cotton seed and most protein meals are in high demand and limited supply. Prices have increased and are reflective of that.

Hay

Many parts of the Lower Hunter had started to produce hay, but recent rain has pushed timeframes for baling back.

We may see some silage now coming out of those areas instead.

We are starting to see oats being cut, with very limited availability of anything cut last year, unless it comes with a hefty price tag.

Canola hay is currently available, but producers need to be aware of possible health issues associated with nitrate levels.

Most of the decent cereal hays are upwards of \$500/tonne* delivered.

Pellets

The demand for high energy feeds continues, and many producers who were feeding Dry Distillers Grain (DDG) pellets are pleased to see it now back on the market with increased production. We are also seeing other pellets coming from across the state and Western Australia. Pellets are ranging in cost from \$500 - \$780 delivered. * Indicative prices as at 7th November 2018 only & will vary for quality and freight. Delivery prices are into the Hunter.

Some points to consider when feeding:

- Always remember when introducing a new feed to slowly and gradually introduce it to the stock.
- Don't offer large amounts to hungry stock, and where possible, it's best to replace part of the current ration with the new feed, then increase the new feed portion of the ration to slowly to the desired amount.
- If you are in an area that has received rain, continue to feed stock whilst pasture responds, and gradually introduce onto green feed to let the rumen adjust.
- Vaccinating for Clostridial diseases (5 in 1 or 7 in 1) is also a good idea
- Be careful with Biosecurity risks from incoming fodder. With the rain, will come the weeds. Keep an eye on areas where outside feeds have been fed.
- Monitor incoming fodder for any unwanted hitch hikers. There have been reports of snakes and ticks in hay from outside areas.
- Make use of the DPI Drought Feeding Calculator to help budget feed amounts and expense. The more information you can input, the better quality you will receive. Be mindful that the app does not account for wastage, so add an extra 10-30% depending on how you are feeding.
- We continue to see cows with calves losing condition and going down with a lack of energy. Producers must ensure stock are getting adequate quality and quantity in their ration.
- Feed tests are very useful tool in assisting producers to know what quality of feed they are dealing with and how to use it in a ration. Results for basic tests can take 3 – 10 working days depending on the type of test. Hunter Local Land Services can assist with feed testing.

Reduce stock numbers

If you find you don't have enough feed, fodder or water on hand and you are struggling with the cost, or sourcing feed, your options include: selling stock, or downsizing numbers to reduce feed requirements and financial pressure.

Remember it is critical to plan ahead and to make decisions when you still have options. Our staff are available to provide advice and help you make decisions for your livestock. Please call 1300 795 299 to speak to our team.

Drought Hub link to services: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub

Hunter Local Land Services is here to help.

District Vets:

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Customer Service:

Call your nearest office on 1300 795 299.

Drought Administration Officer Anne Lantry 0428 394 668
or by email on anne.lantry@lls.nsw.gov.au.
Anne is available by appointment to assist you with you Rural Assistance Authority forms, including applying for Drought Transport Subsidies.

Drought Support Maria Cameron 0409 636 765 or by email on maria.cameron@lls.nsw.gov.au