

Australia farmers welcome rain relief amid severe drought

5 October 2018



A prolonged dry period in Eastern Australia has left farmers struggling to feed their cattle and sheep

Farmers in drought-stricken parts of Australia are celebrating after the heavens opened up this week, inundating parched lands with more than a month's rain in one day following the country's driest September on record.

Eastern Australia has been suffering from an extended dry period—in some regions stretching across several years—leaving farmers struggling to keep their sheep and cattle alive with dwindling supplies of feed.

A trough system moving across New South Wales state in the southeast of the vast continent since Wednesday has brought wild weather, including heavy rain, to bone-dry towns including Broken Hill and Dubbo.

"A lot of New South Wales is in drought so getting rain anywhere is quite good," Bureau of Meteorology forecaster Chua Zhi-Weng told AFP.

The outback town of Broken Hill received 34.2 millimetres (1.35 inches) of rain on Wednesday,

above the October monthly average of 24.2 millimetres and more than what they had received in the previous nine months.

"Forty-one millimetres! It's bloody great to see. I've lost my words," one [farmer](#) near the outback town of Menindee, which received some 50 millimetres in one day, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

"It doesn't matter how old you are, rain brings people joy," another farmer told the ABC.

In the state's central-west, towns battling the dry such as Dubbo received 45 millimetres of rain on Thursday.

Further north in the inland regions of Queensland state, graziers welcomed the arrival of storms that gave their fields a much-needed drenching.

Despite the wet conditions, meteorologists said more rain was needed in the coming weeks and months to break the drought.

"We do need some more follow-up rain to overcome the deficit that's been built up over the time we haven't had enough [rain](#)," Chua added.

The weather bureau said on Monday that rainfall in September was "very much below average nationally, and particularly low across the southern mainland".

"The year-to-date has also been exceptionally dry over the mainland southeast, with significant rainfall deficiencies continuing to affect large areas of eastern Australia at timescales out to around two years duration," the bureau added.

Farmers will also get little comfort from the weather bureau's forecast of a drier and warmer-than-average end to the year.

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