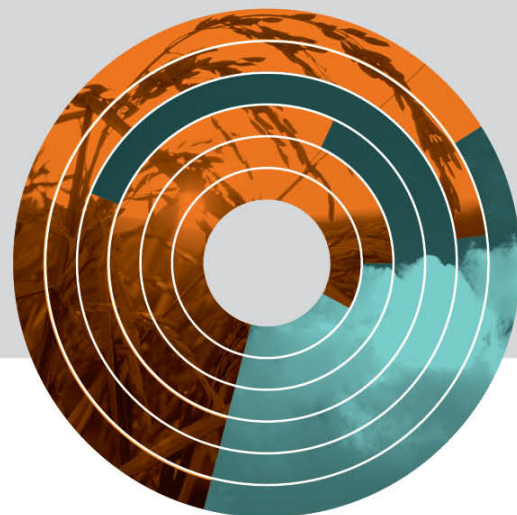




# Weekly Australian Climate, Water and Agricultural Update



15 March 2012

The full report is available from [www.daff.gov.au/abares](http://www.daff.gov.au/abares)

## Summary of key issues

- Floodwaters are continuing to cause damage to some crops and infrastructure in parts of New South Wales and Victoria. Fodder is being donated to flood affected farmers in these regions.
- Recent flooding in parts of New South Wales and Queensland has disrupted sheep shearing and increased the prevalence of disease, which has reportedly caused some stock losses.
- La Niña conditions have declined over the past fortnight with most indicators approaching or at neutral values (Bureau of Meteorology 'ENSO Wrap-up' 13 March 2012).
- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin increased this week by 100 gigalitres to approximately 91 per cent of total capacity.
- Vegetable prices were generally higher in the week ending 10 March 2012, but fruit prices were mixed. Rockmelon and avocado prices were higher, but peach and orange prices were lower. Most fruit and vegetable prices are much lower than at the same time in 2011.
- The world wheat indicator price (US hard red winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$295 a tonne in the week ending 13 March 2012, compared with US\$303 a tonne in the previous week.
- The ban on cotton exports imposed by the Indian Government on 5 March 2012 was partially lifted on 12 March 2012 to allow contracts registered prior to 4 March 2012 to be shipped. No new Registration Certificates will be issued until further notice by the Indian Government. Following the initial announcement of the suspension, there was a temporary increase in world cotton prices that has since eased.
- The world cotton indicator price (the Cotlook 'A' index) averaged US99.2 cents a pound in the week ending 14 March 2012, almost the same as the previous week.
- The Eastern Market Indicator price for wool remained largely unchanged in the week ending 8 March 2012 at 1216 cents a kilogram clean. Bales offered for sale were up 5 per cent and bales sold rose slightly over 3 per cent in the week.
- Young cattle price movements in the week ending 9 March 2012 were mixed. The Queensland young cattle price rose 46 cents to 402 cents a kilogram and the Victorian young cattle price rose 25 cents to 388 cents a kilogram. However, young cattle prices in New South Wales and South Australia fell by 6 cents and 15 cents to 385 cents and 362 cents a kilogram, respectively.

# 1. Climate

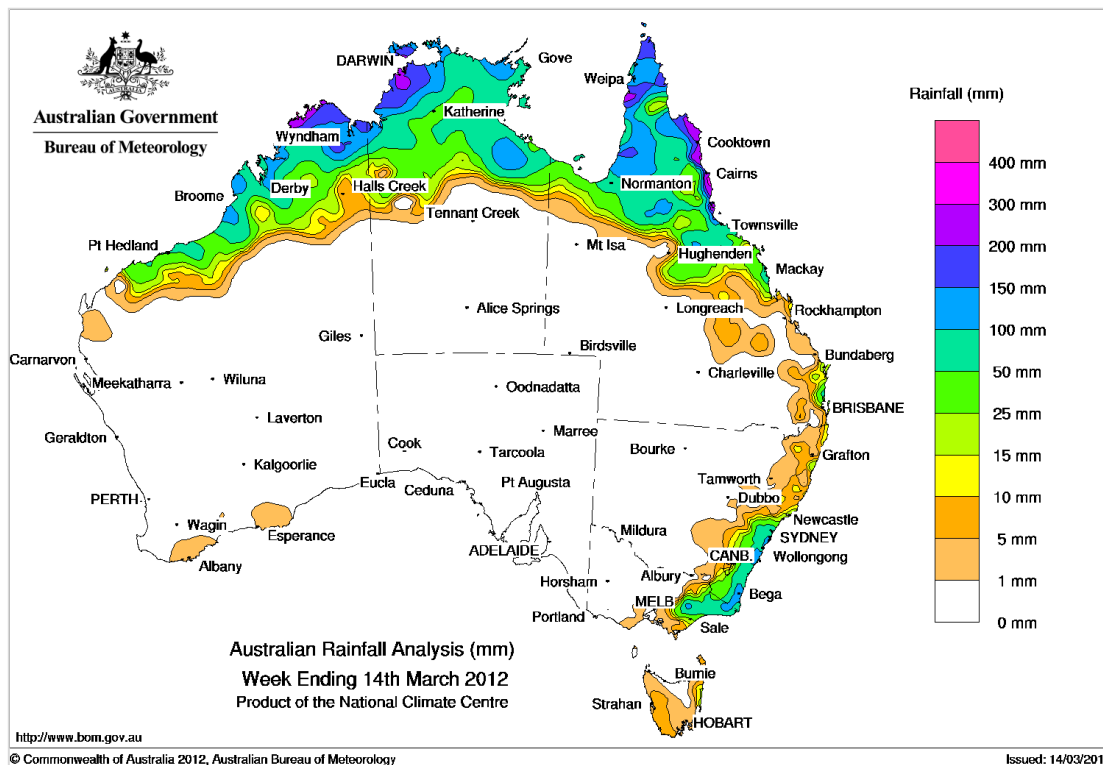
## 1.1. Notable events

- For the week ending 14 March, rainfall was mostly recorded in northern and eastern Australia. The highest measured total for the week was 625 millimetres at Babinda near Cairns in Queensland.
- Floodwaters are continuing to cause damage to some crops and infrastructure in the Murrumbidgee Valley. There are reports of mixed outcomes for farmers in the affected regions with some vineyards being swamped mid-harvest, while others were spared due to sandbagging efforts.
- Moderate to major flood warnings are current for parts of the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, Darling, Warrego, Birrie, Bokhara and Culgoa Rivers in New South Wales, and the Snowy River Catchment in Victoria. Fodder is being donated to flood affected farmers in Victoria and New South Wales.
- Shearing has stopped and transportation of wool has been disrupted in recently flooded areas in central and southern New South Wales. Heavy worm infestations in sheep in southern Queensland is also reportedly reducing production and causing some stock losses.
- La Niña conditions have declined over the past fortnight with most indicators approaching or at neutral values. Climate models suggest that the Pacific Ocean will continue to warm over the coming months, with neutral conditions expected to remain through autumn. While La Niña is nearing its end, waters around Australia remain warmer than normal, maintaining the potential for increased rainfall over the continent (Bureau of Meteorology 'ENSO Wrap-up' 13 March 2012).

## 1.2. Rainfall this week

For the week ending 14 March 2012, rainfall was received mostly in the northern and eastern Australia. For further information, go to [www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml).

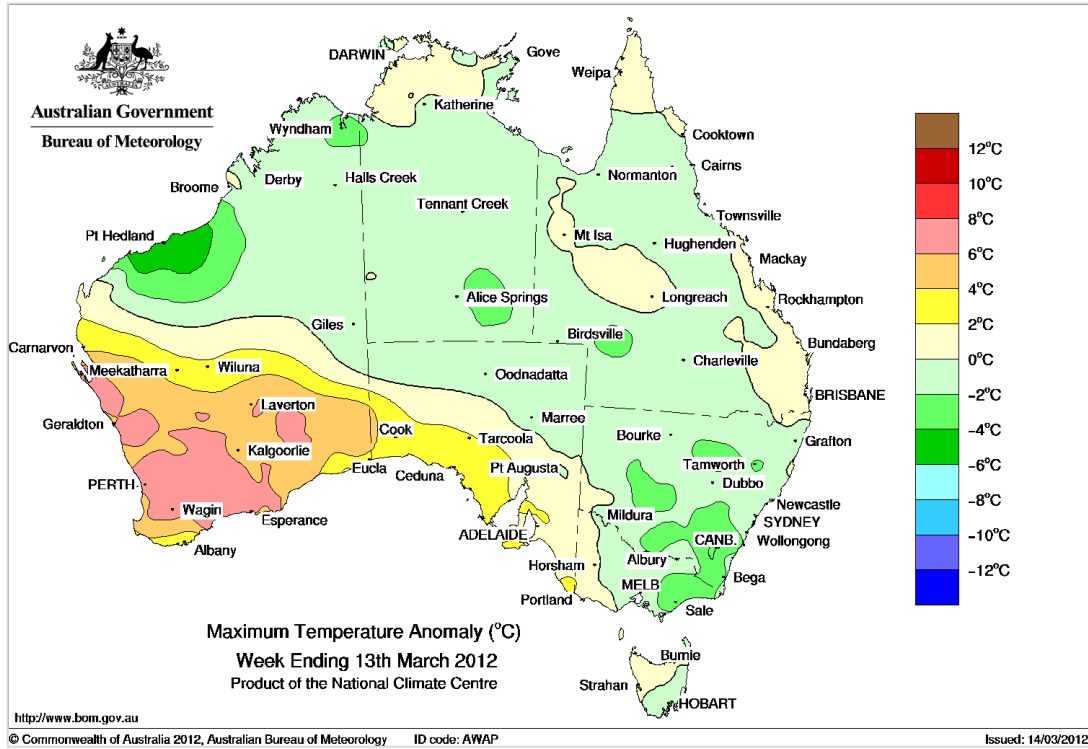
### Rainfall for the week ending 14 March 2012



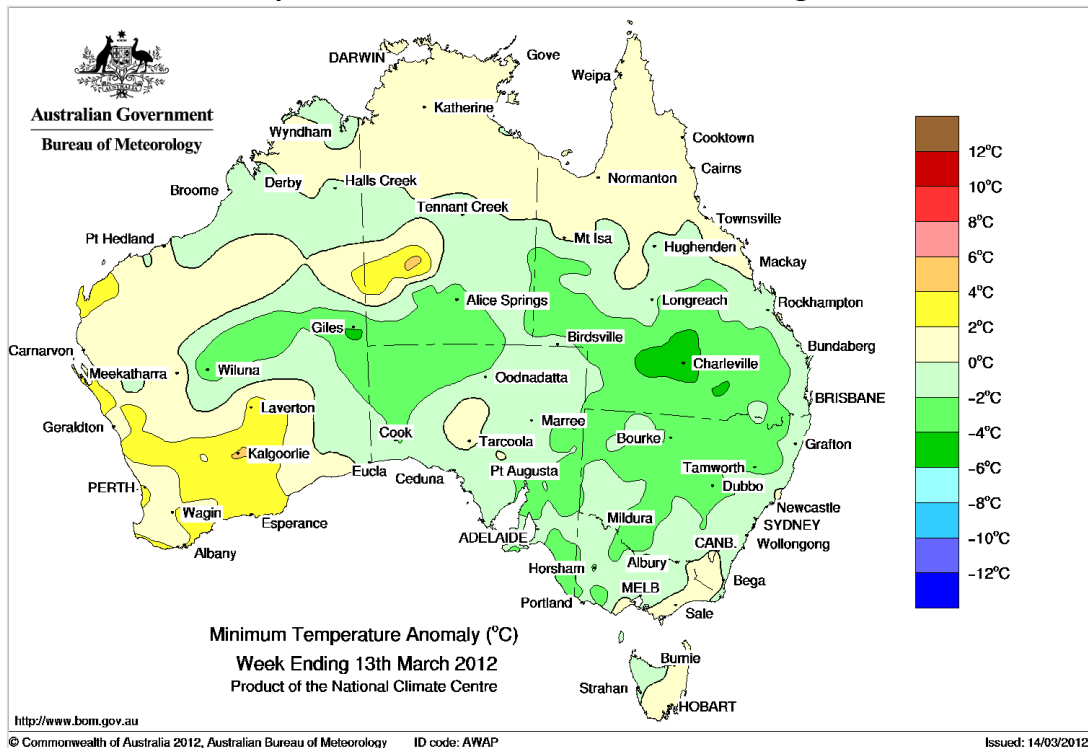
### 1.3. Temperature anomalies this week

Spatial temperature analyses are based on historical weekly temperature data provided by the Bureau of Meteorology. These temperature anomaly maps show the departure of the maximum and minimum from the long-term average. Temperature anomalies are calculated using high resolution gridded datasets from 1911 onwards. For further information on temperature anomalies, go to [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/).

**Maximum temperature anomalies for the week ending 13 March 2012**



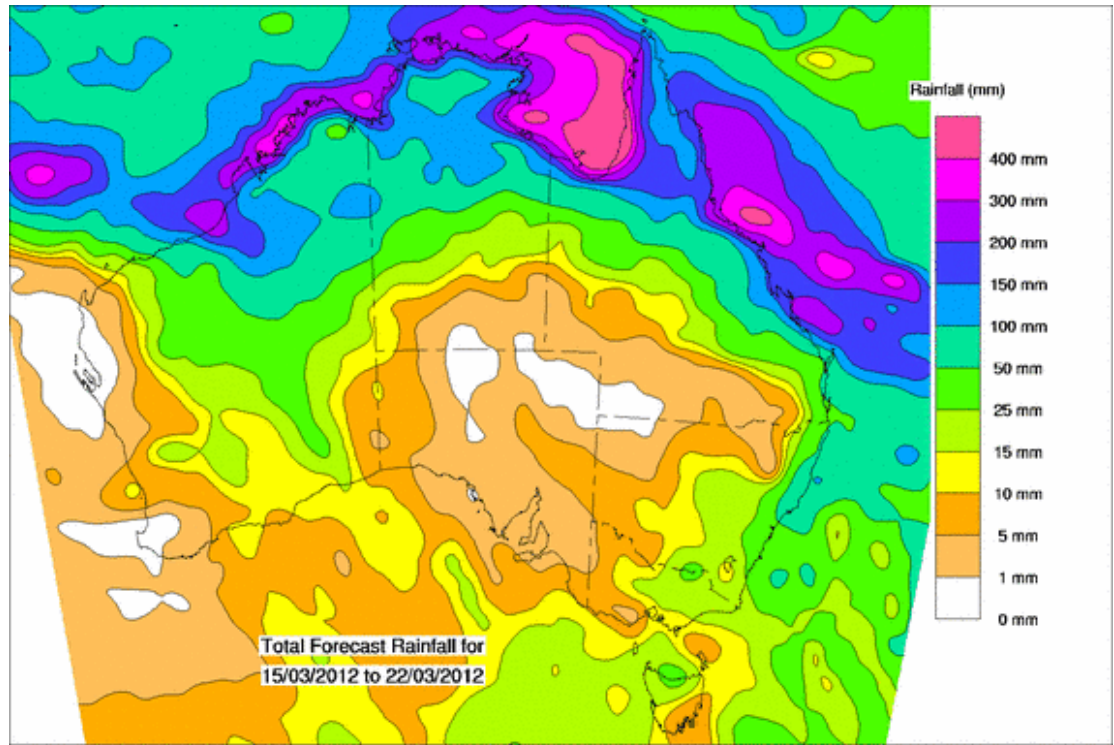
**Minimum temperature anomalies for the week ending 13 March 2012**



## 1.4. Rainfall outlook

The rainfall forecast below is produced from computer models. As it contains no input from weather forecasters, it is important to also check local forecasts and warnings by the Bureau of Meteorology.

### Total forecast rainfall for the period 15 to 22 March 2012



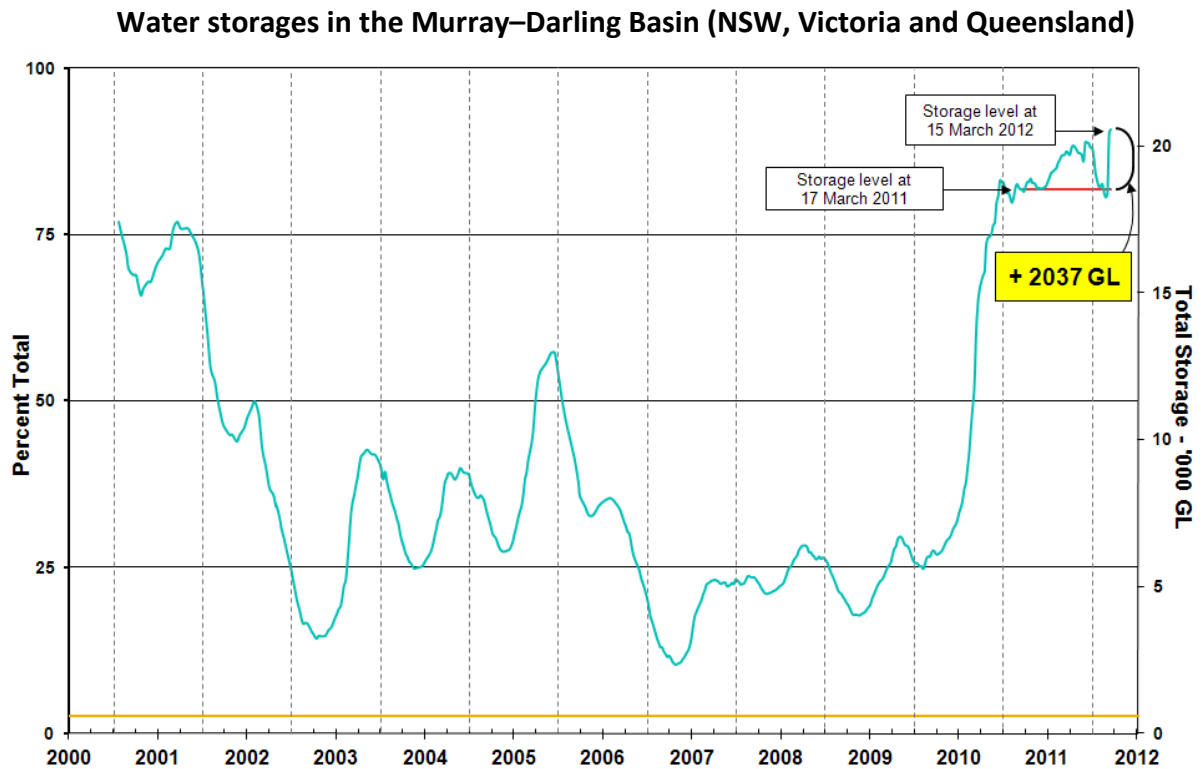
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Issued: 14/03/2012

## 2. Water

### 2.1. Water availability

- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin increased this week by 100 gigalitres (GL) to approximately 91 per cent of total capacity. This is 9 percentage points or 2037 GL more than this time last year.
- General security water allocations in the New South Wales Lachlan Valley increased this week to 136 per cent of entitlement as a result of Wyangala Dam spilling for the first time in more than 10 years.
- All other water allocations remain unchanged.



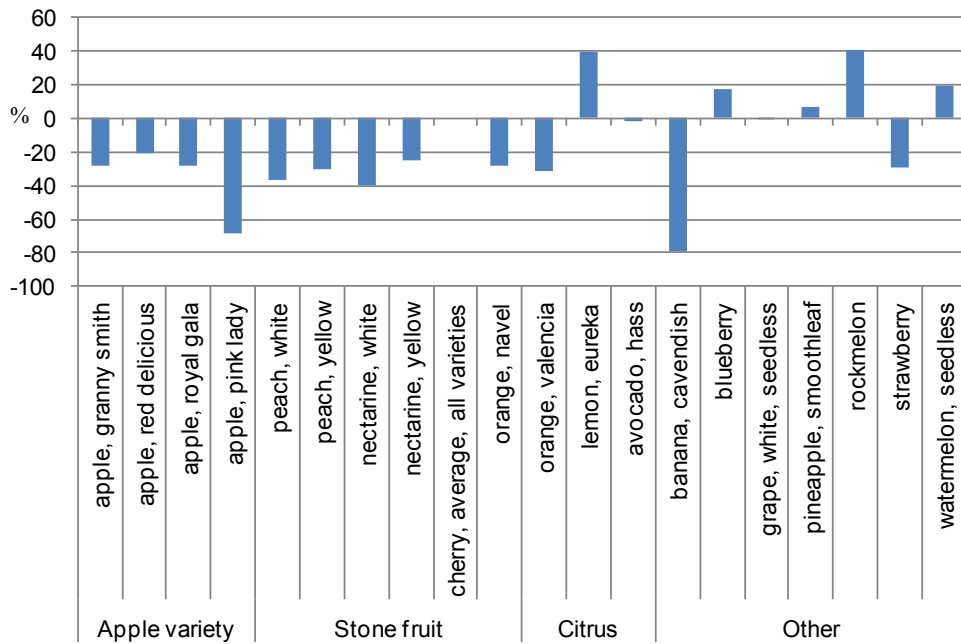
Information on irrigation water available in the Murray–Darling Basin from 1 January 2001 to 15 March 2012 is shown above. The top horizontal (red) line indicates the storage level at the similar time last year. The bottom horizontal (orange) line indicates the amount of 'dead' or unusable storage.

## 3. Commodities

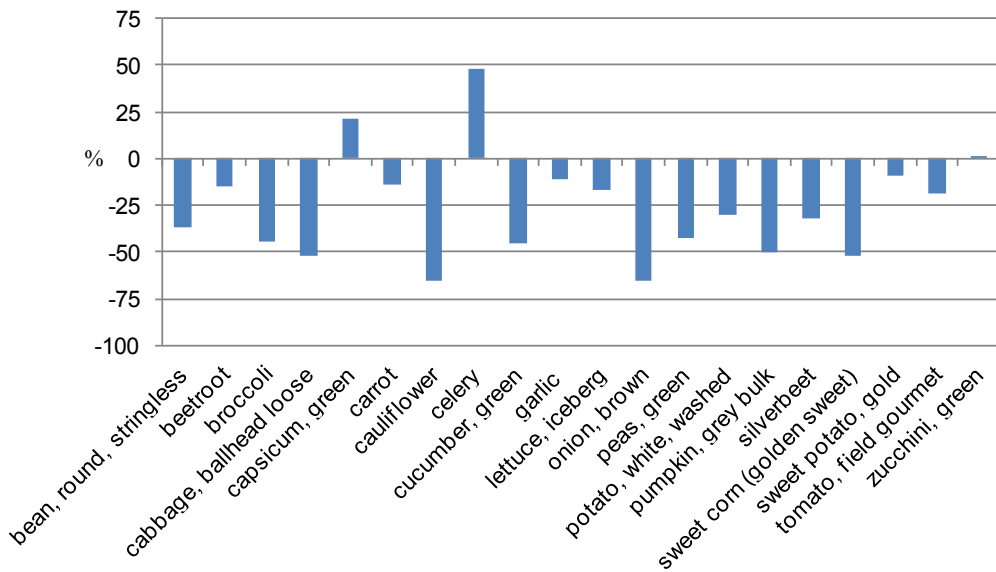
### 3.1. Production and commodities

- Rockmelon and avocado wholesale prices were higher in the week ending 10 March 2012 but peach and orange prices were lower. Prices of only a few fruit types are higher than at the same time in 2011 (figure A).
- Vegetable wholesale prices were generally firmer in the week ending 10 March 2012, though prices of lettuce and tomato retreated from recent highs. Most vegetable prices are still very much lower than at the same time in 2011 (figure B).
- Southern New South Wales and northern Victoria are not significant producers of summer crops, with the exception of rice. The majority of rice crops should withstand recent wet conditions and be harvested in coming weeks.
- The ban on cotton exports imposed by the Indian Government on 5 March 2012 was partially lifted on 12 March 2012 to allow contracts registered prior to 4 March 2012 to be shipped. No new Registration Certificates will be issued until further notice by the Indian Government. Following the initial announcement of the suspension, there was a temporary increase in world cotton prices that has since eased.
- The world cotton indicator price (the Cotlook 'A' index) averaged US99.2 cents a pound in the week ending 14 March 2012, almost the same as the previous week.
- The world sugar indicator price (Intercontinental Exchange, nearby futures, no. 11 contract) was around US24 cents a pound in the week ending 14 March 2012, US0.5 cents a pound lower than the previous week.
- The Eastern Market Indicator price for wool remained largely unchanged in the week ending 8 March 2012 at 1216 cents a kilogram clean. Bales offered for sale were up 5 per cent and bales sold rose slightly over 3 per cent in the week.
- The world canola indicator price (Rapeseed, Europe, cif Hamburg) averaged US\$625 a tonne in the week ending 13 March 2012, compared with US\$623 a tonne in the previous week.
- The Australian canola indicator price (Portland, Victoria) averaged \$497 a tonne in the week ending 12 March 2012, compared with \$499 a tonne in the previous week.
- The world wheat indicator price (US hard red winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$295 a tonne in the week ending 13 March 2012, compared with US\$303 a tonne in the previous week.
- The world coarse grains indicator price (US no. 2 yellow corn, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$284 a tonne in the week ending 14 March 2012, compared with US\$283 a tonne in the previous week.
- Young cattle price movements in the week ending 9 March 2012 were mixed. The Queensland young cattle price rose 46 cents to 402 cents a kilogram and the Victorian young cattle price rose 25 cents to 388 cents a kilogram. However, young cattle prices in New South Wales and South Australia fell by 6 cents and 15 cents to 385 cents and 362 cents a kilogram, respectively.

**Figure A: Year-on-year changes in selected fruit prices, Melbourne wholesale market, 10 March 2012**



**Figure B: Year-on-year changes in selected vegetable prices, Melbourne wholesale market, 10 March 2012**

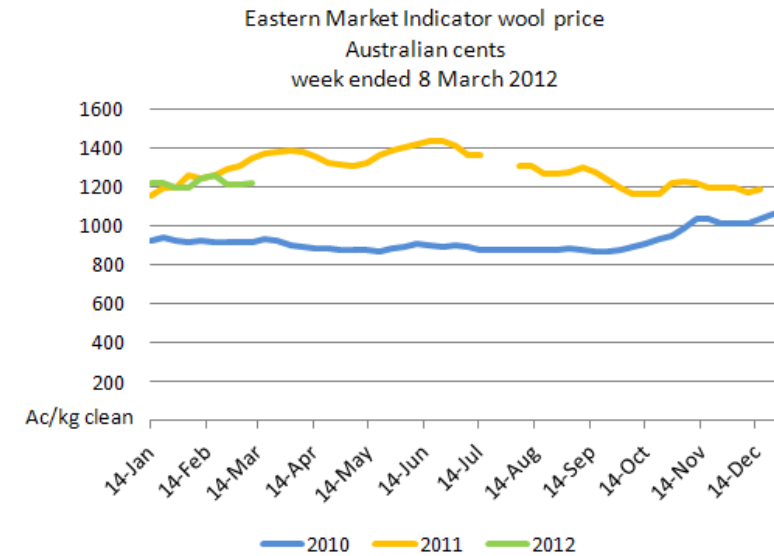
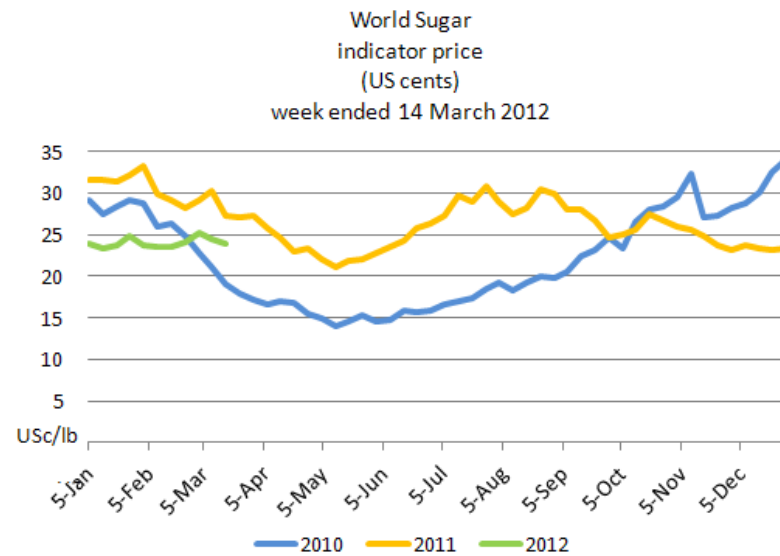
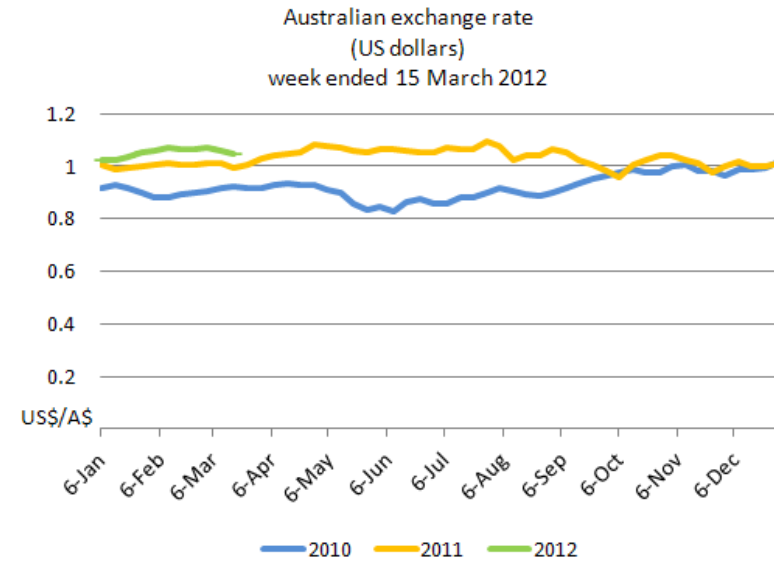
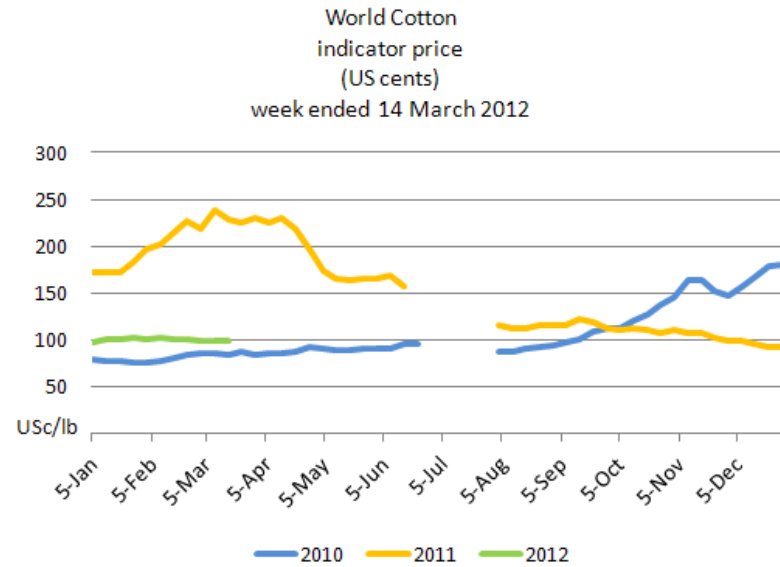




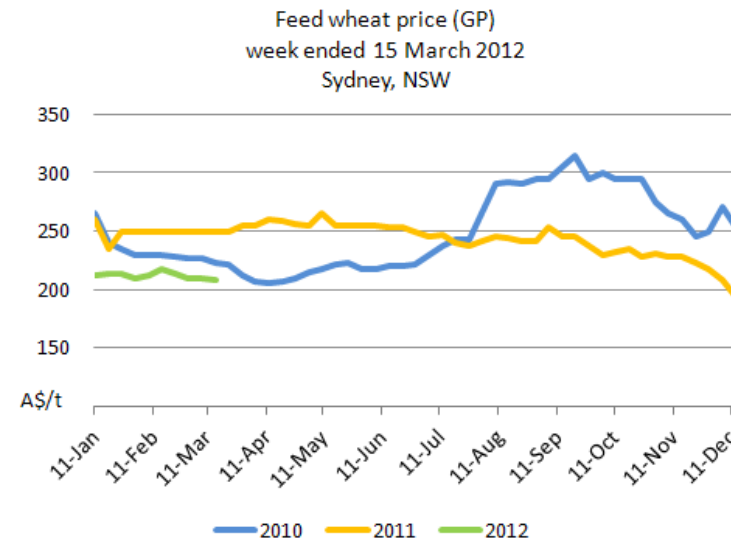
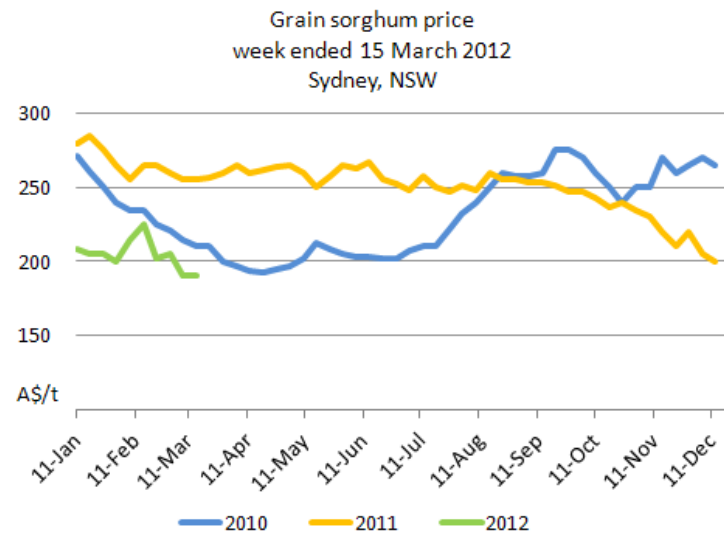
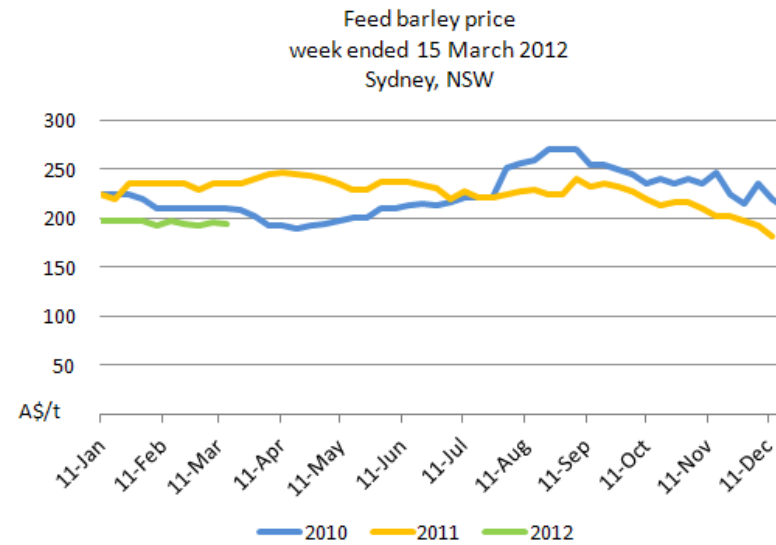
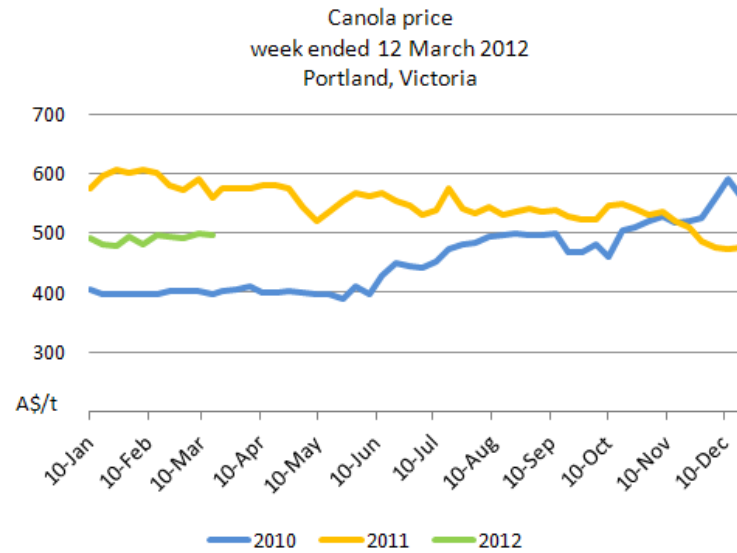




### 3.3. Selected world indicator prices



### 3.4. Crop indicator prices





## 4. Data attribution

### Climate

#### Bureau of Meteorology

- Weekly rainfall totals: [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/rain/index.jsp](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/rain/index.jsp)
- Monthly and last 3-months rainfall percentiles: [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/)
- Temperature anomalies: [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/)
- Rainfall forecast: [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/rainfall/pme.jsp](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/rainfall/pme.jsp)
- Seasonal outlook: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead)
- Drought statement: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/drought.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/drought.shtml)
- ENSO Wrap-Up: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/)
- Soil moisture (BoM, CSIRO and the former Bureau of Rural Sciences): [www.eoc.csiro.au/awap/](http://www.eoc.csiro.au/awap/)

### Water

#### New South Wales

- New South Wales Water Information: <http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au/>
- New South Wales Office of Water, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water: [www.water.nsw.gov.au/Home/default.aspx](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/Home/default.aspx)
- Available water determinations register: [www.wix.nsw.gov.au/wma/DeterminationSearch.jsp?selectedRegister=Determination](http://www.wix.nsw.gov.au/wma/DeterminationSearch.jsp?selectedRegister=Determination)
- Snowy Hydro: [www.snowyhydro.com.au/lakeLevels.asp?pageID=47&parentID=61&grandParentID=4](http://www.snowyhydro.com.au/lakeLevels.asp?pageID=47&parentID=61&grandParentID=4)

#### Queensland

- Sunwater: [www.sunwater.com.au](http://www.sunwater.com.au)
- seqwater: <http://seqwater.com.au>

#### South Australia

- SA Water: [www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/TheRiverMurray/River+Murray+Levels.htm](http://www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/TheRiverMurray/River+Murray+Levels.htm)
- South Australian Department of Water: [www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/](http://www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/)

#### Victoria

- Goulburn–Murray Water: [www.g-mwater.com.au](http://www.g-mwater.com.au)

#### Water trading

- Waterexchange: [www.waterexchange.com.au](http://www.waterexchange.com.au)

### Commodities

#### Fruit and vegetables

- Datafresh: [www.datafresh.com.au](http://www.datafresh.com.au)

#### Mutton, lambs, wheat, barley and grain sorghum

- The Land: hardcopy or online at <http://theland.farmonline.com.au/markets.aspx>

#### Cattle, mutton, lambs and pigs

- Meat and Livestock Australia: [www.mla.com.au/Prices-and-markets](http://www.mla.com.au/Prices-and-markets)

#### Canola

- Weekly Times: hardcopy