



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
ABARES

Weekly Australian Climate, Water and Agricultural Update



23 February 2012

The full report is available from www.daff.gov.au/abares

Summary of key issues

- Floods in southern Queensland are easing with floodwaters continuing to move downstream in New South Wales. State governments are continuing to support affected farmers with fodder drops and relocating stock to higher ground.
- Wet conditions over summer have encouraged extensive weed growth and an increase in insect pest and rabbit populations in eastern Australia.
- The latest seasonal outlook for autumn 2012 indicates that large parts of northern and eastern Australia are likely to experience wetter than normal conditions, while southwest Western Australia, southern Victoria and Tasmania are more likely to experience drier than normal conditions
- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin decreased this week by 152 gigalitres (GL) and remained at approximately 81 per cent of total capacity.
- Most fruit and vegetable wholesale prices were lower in the week ending 18 February 2012.
- The Australian canola indicator price (Portland, Victoria) averaged \$494 a tonne in the week ending 20 February 2012, compared with \$497 a tonne in the previous week.
- The Queensland trade steer indicator price closed at 405 cents a kilogram in the week ending 17 February 2012, 16 cents higher than a week earlier. Trade steer prices were also higher in Western Australia, but were lower in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.
- Saleyard lamb prices declined in all states in the week ending 17 February 2012 except in Victoria.



Outlook 2012 conference – registrations open

Registrations are now open for Australia's premier agriculture economics and commodity forecasting event. Details at www.daff.gov.au/abares/outlook

1. Climate

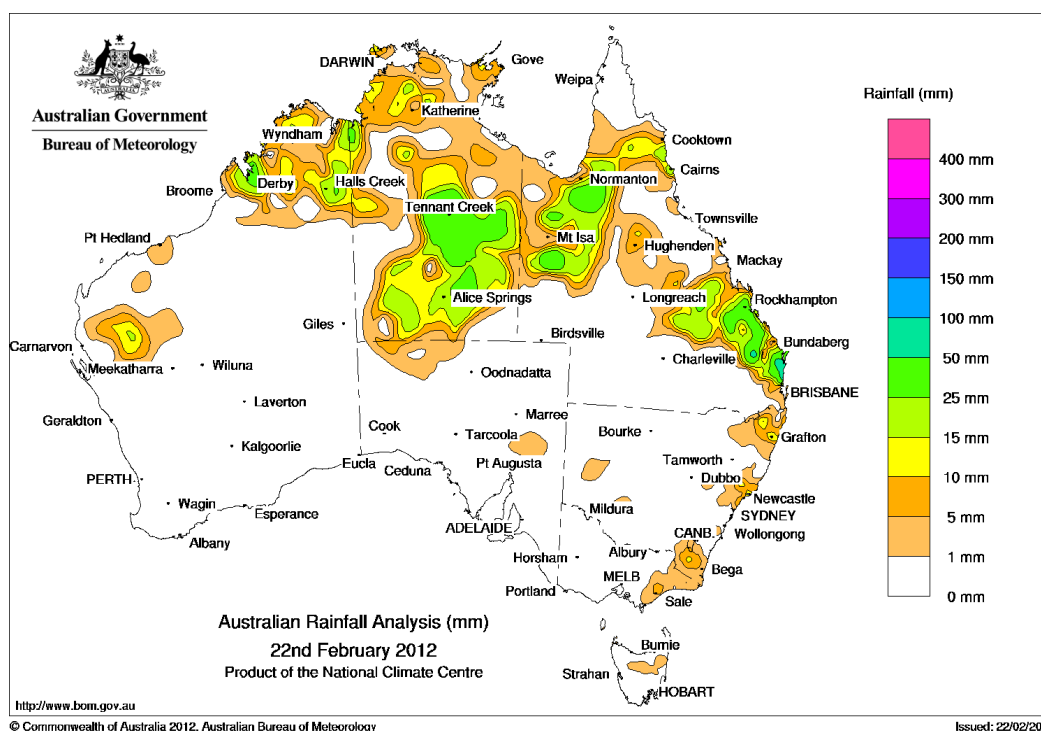
1.1. Notable events

- For the week ending 23 February, rainfall was recorded in all states and territories, with the highest falls occurring mostly in northern and eastern Australia. The highest measured total for the week was 197 millimetres at Port Douglas.
- Floodwaters have been slowly draining from saturated catchments in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland. Floods are expected to ease along the Lower Paroo River and in the Coopers Creek catchment in southern Queensland. For New South Wales, flooding will continue along the Narran, Ballandool, Bokhara and Culgoa Rivers, Briarie Creek and the Balonne River. State governments are continuing to provide support and assistance to affected farmers with fodder drops and relocating livestock to higher ground.
- Wet conditions over summer have encouraged extensive weed growth and an increase in insect pest and rabbit populations in eastern Australia. Blackberry infestations and rabbit populations in New South Wales are reported to be hard to control
- Despite widespread rainfall over eastern Australia for February to date parts of southern Queensland are experiencing dry conditions. Cotton crops around Toowoomba, Norwin and Bongeen area would benefit from additional rainfall.
- The latest seasonal outlook for autumn 2012 indicates that large parts of northern and eastern Australia are likely to experience wetter than normal conditions, while southwest Western Australia, southern Victoria and Tasmania are more likely to experience drier than normal conditions. At this time of year the outlook is more reliable for the tropics and south west Western Australia. (Bureau of Meteorology seasonal rainfall outlook, 22 February 2012).

1.2. Rainfall this week

For the week ending 22 February 2012, rainfall was primarily received in northern and eastern Australia. For further information, go to www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml.

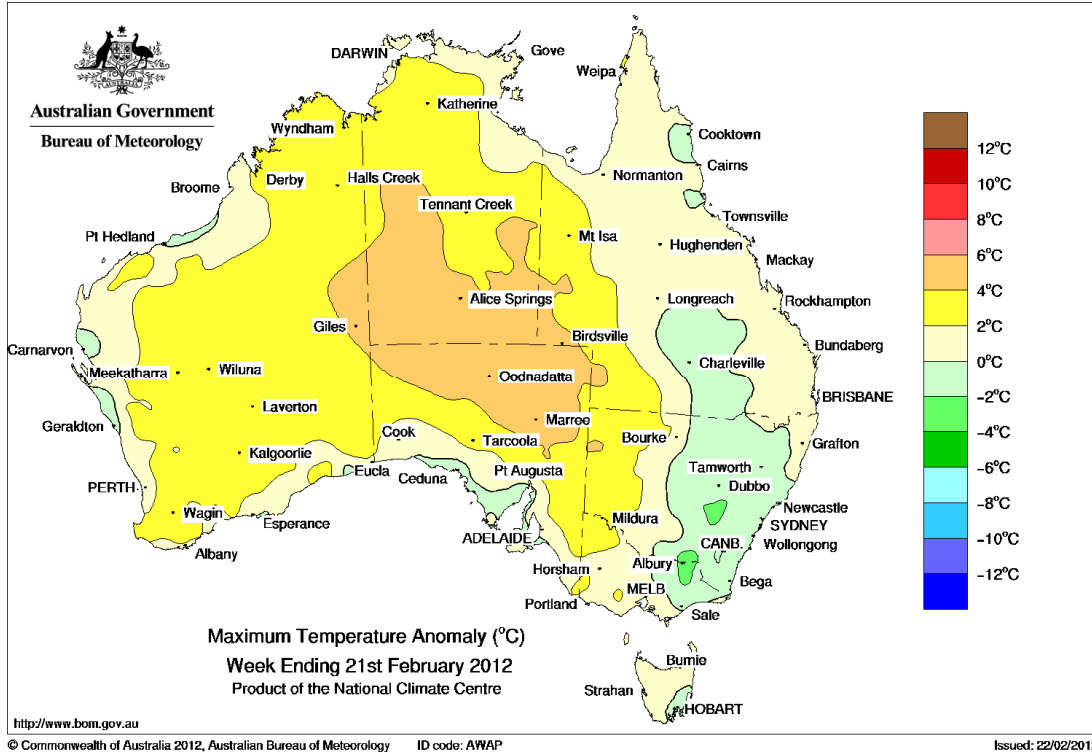
Rainfall for the week ending 22 February 2012



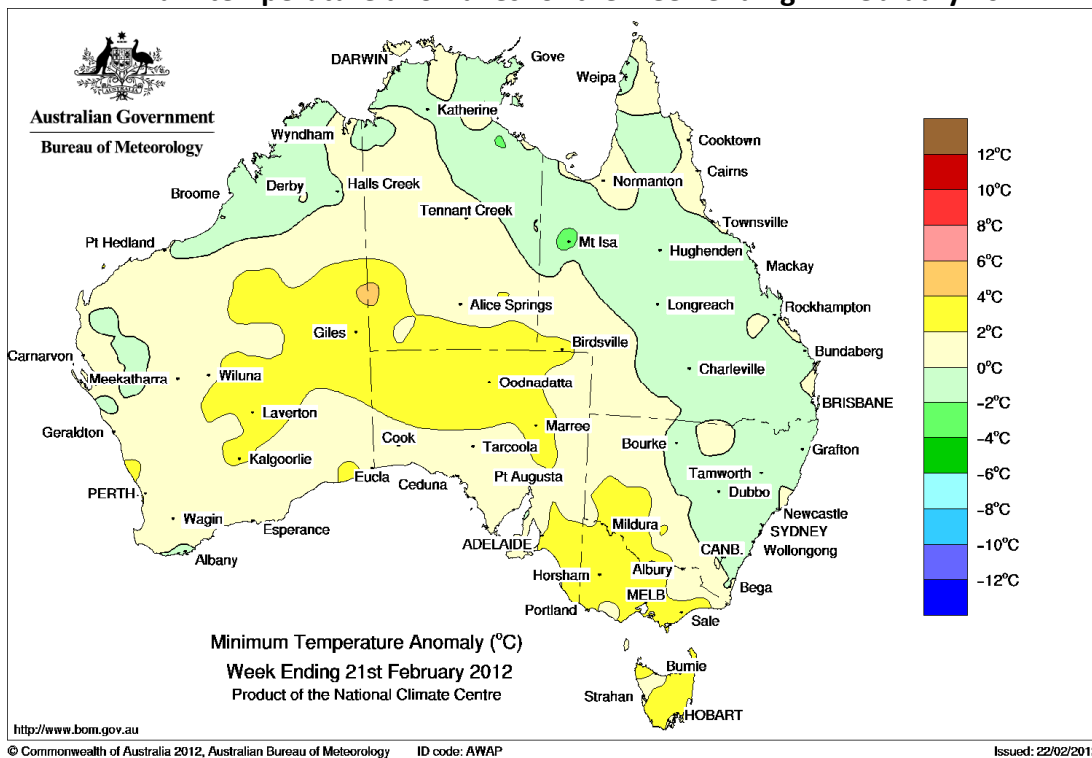
1.3. Temperature anomalies this week

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/.

Maximum temperature anomalies for the week ending 21 February 2012



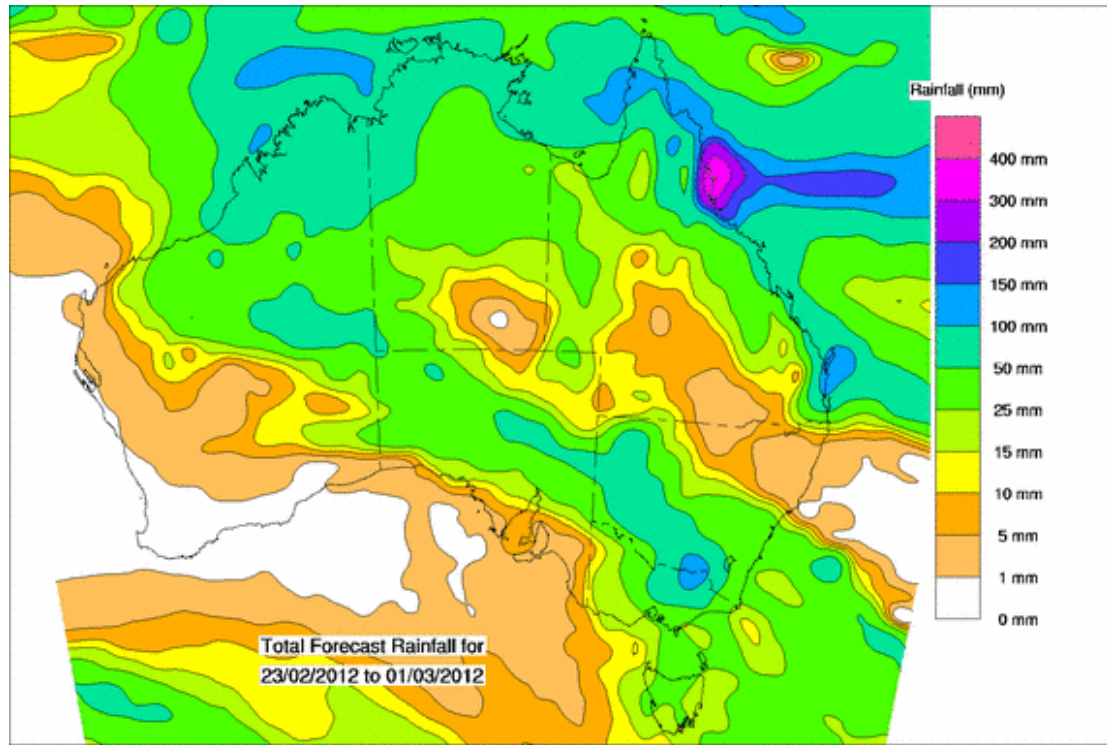
Minimum temperature anomalies for the week ending 21 February 2012



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 23 February to 1 March 2012



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Issued: 22/02/2012

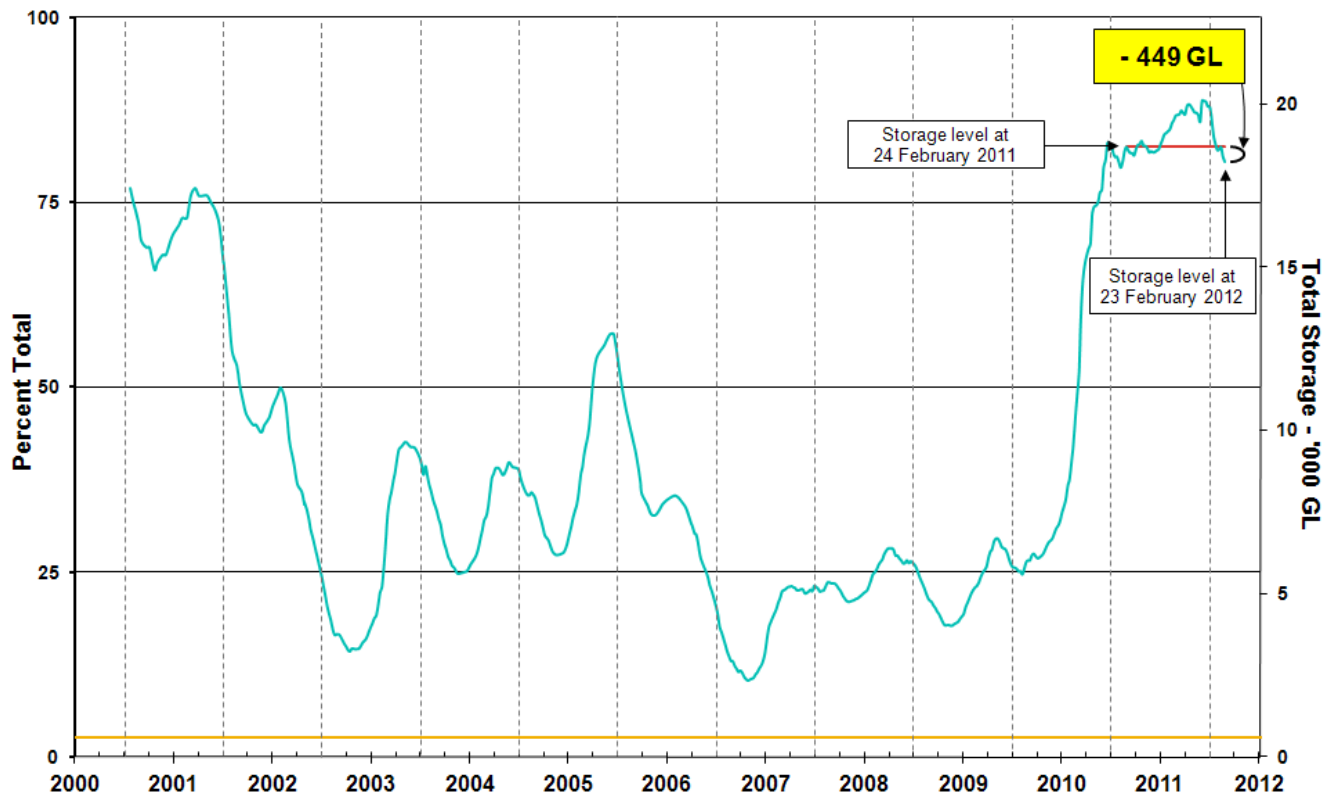
2. Water

2.1. Water availability

- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB) decreased this week by 152 gigalitres (GL) and remained at approximately 81 per cent of total capacity. This is 2 percentage points or 449 GL less than this time last year.

2.2. Water storages

Water storages in the Murray–Darling Basin (NSW, Victoria and Queensland)



Information on irrigation water available in the Murray–Darling Basin from 1 January 2001 to 23 February 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.

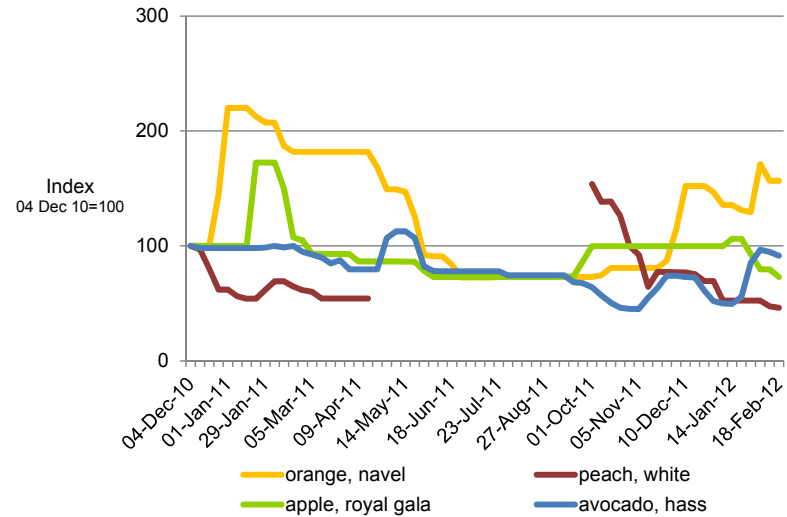
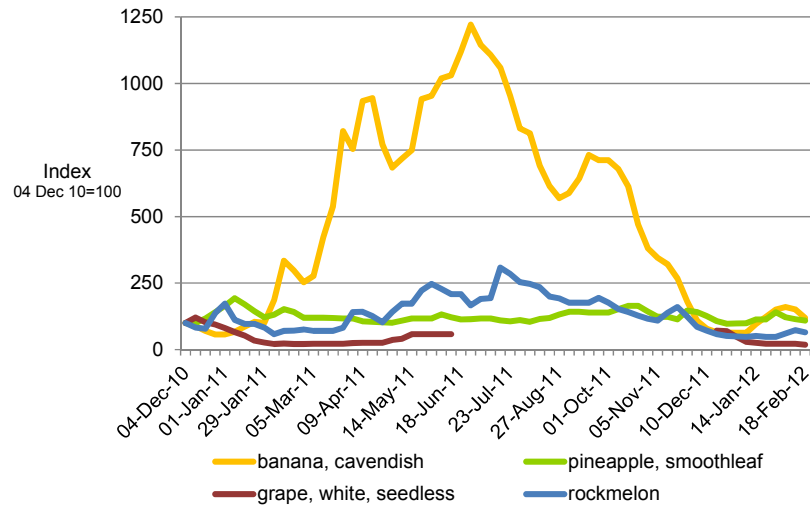
3. Commodities

3.1. Production and commodities

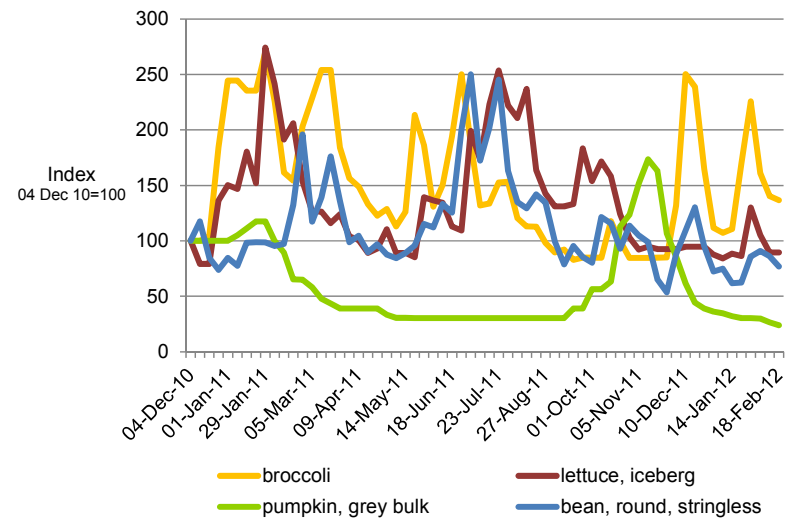
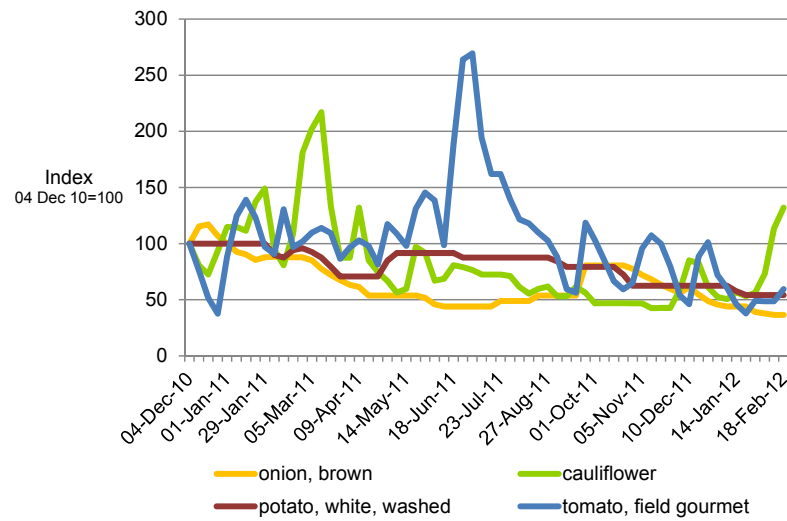
- Cauliflower and tomato wholesale prices were higher in the week ending 18 February 2012, but most other vegetable prices were lower.
- Virtually all fruit wholesale prices were lower in the week ending 18 February 2012.
- The world cotton indicator price (the Cotlook 'A' index) averaged US100.5 cents a pound in the week ending 22 February 2012, virtually unchanged from the previous week.
- The world sugar indicator price averaged US24 cents a pound in the week ending 22 February 2012, almost unchanged from the previous week.
- The Eastern Market Indicator price for wool remained at 1244 cents a kilogram clean in the week ending 16 February 2012. Bales offered for sale rose about 10 per cent and bales sold were also up 8 per cent from the previous week.
- The world wheat indicator price (US hard red winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$292 a tonne in the week ending 21 February 2012, compared with US\$293 a tonne in the previous week.
- The world coarse grains indicator price (US no. 2 yellow corn, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$279 a tonne in the week ending 22 February 2012, compared with US\$280 a tonne in the previous week.
- The world canola indicator price (Rapeseed, Europe, cif Hamburg) averaged US\$619 a tonne in the week ending 21 February 2012, compared with US\$617 a tonne in the previous week.
- The Australian canola indicator price (Portland, Victoria) averaged \$494 a tonne in the week ending 20 February 2012, compared with \$497 a tonne in the previous week.
- The Queensland trade steer indicator price closed at 405 cents a kilogram in the week ending 17 February 2012, 16 cents higher than a week earlier. Trade steer prices were also higher in Western Australia, but were lower in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.
- Saleyards lamb prices declined in all states in the week ending 17 February 2012 except in Victoria, where the price remained relatively unchanged. In Western Australia saleyards lamb prices fell by 8 per cent to 475 cents per kilogram as a result of weaker demand. In both New South Wales and South Australia prices fell by 2 per cent to 467 and 438 cents a kilogram respectively.

3.2. Recent movements in fruit and vegetable prices

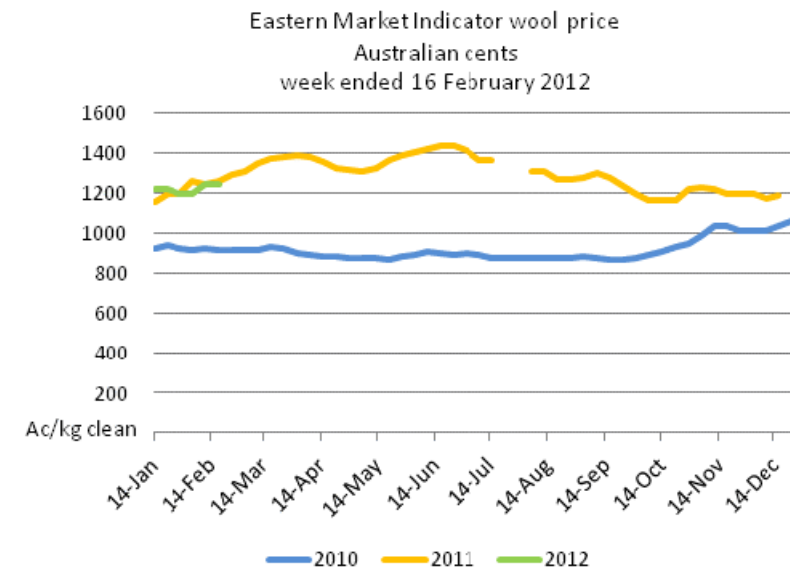
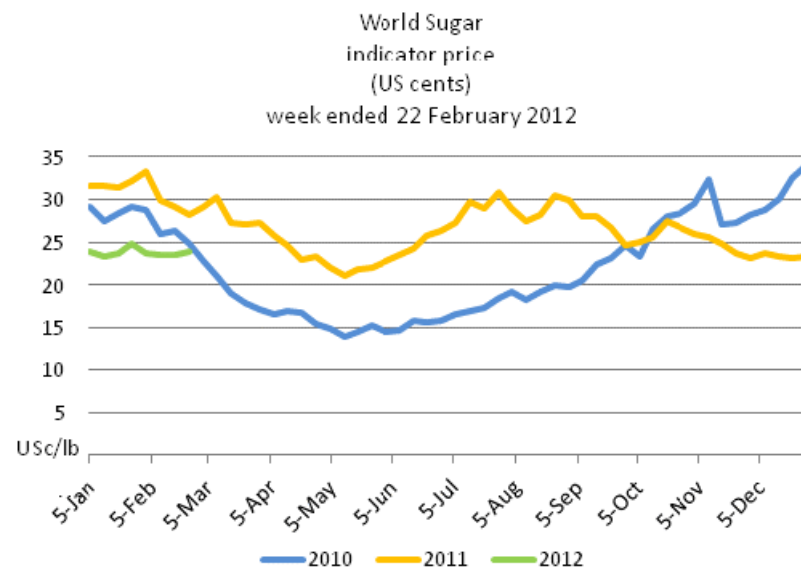
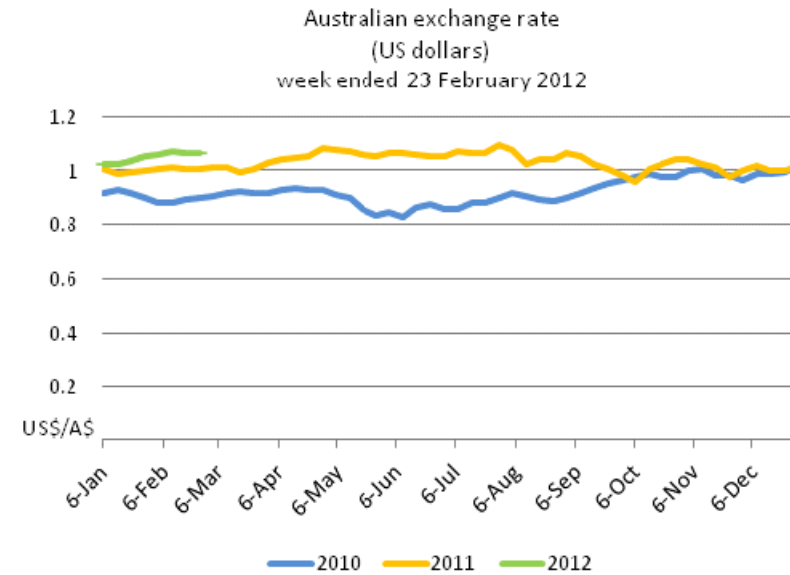
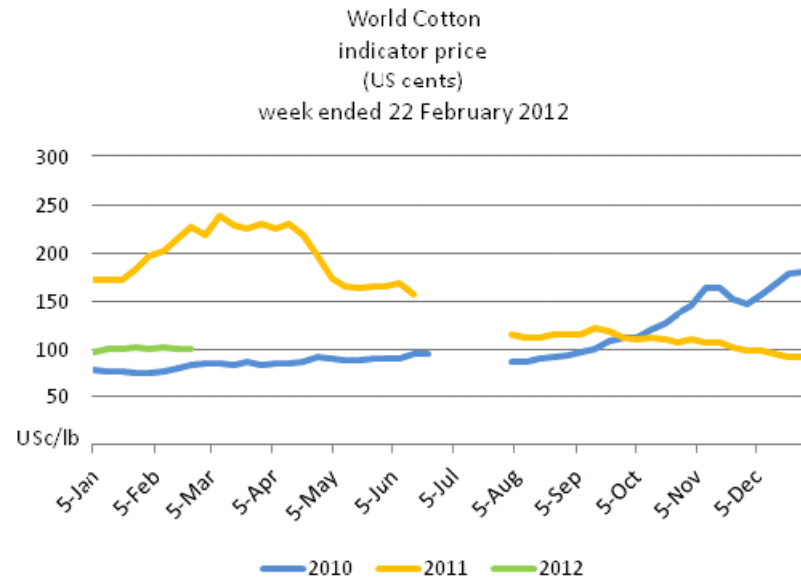
Weekly wholesale prices for selected fruit, Melbourne market



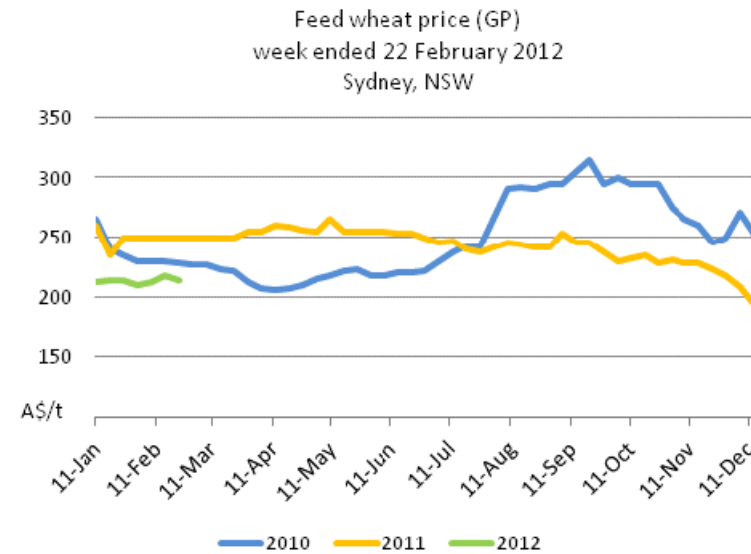
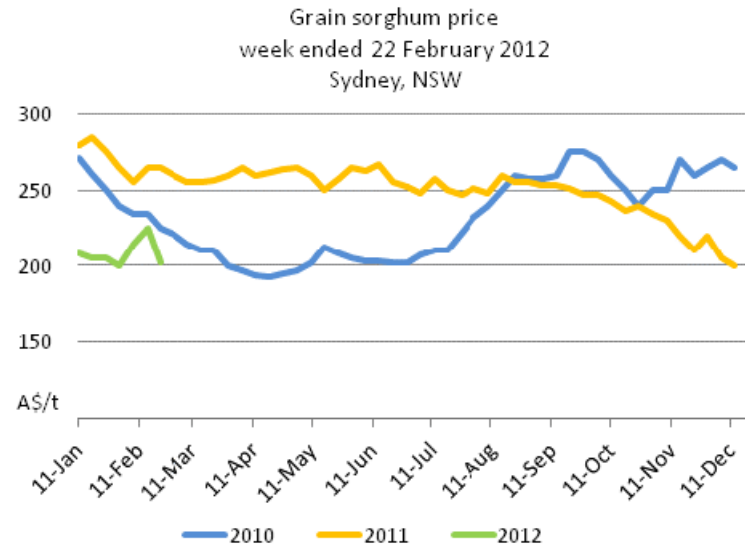
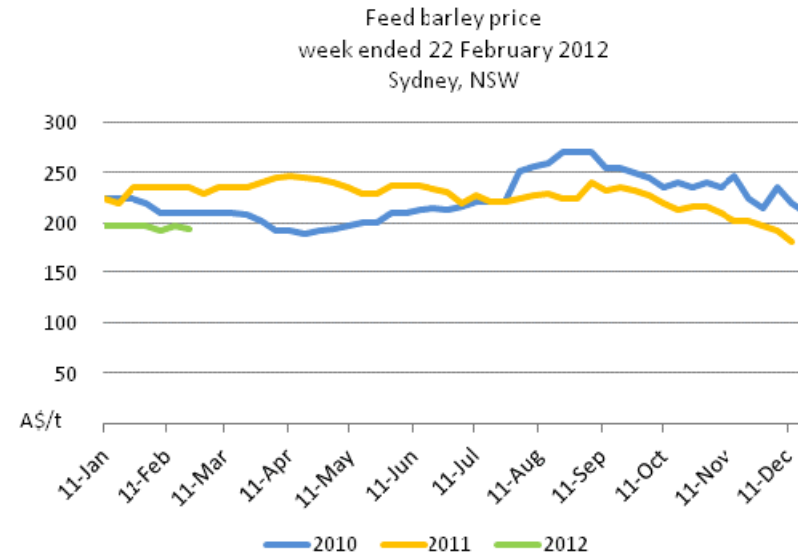
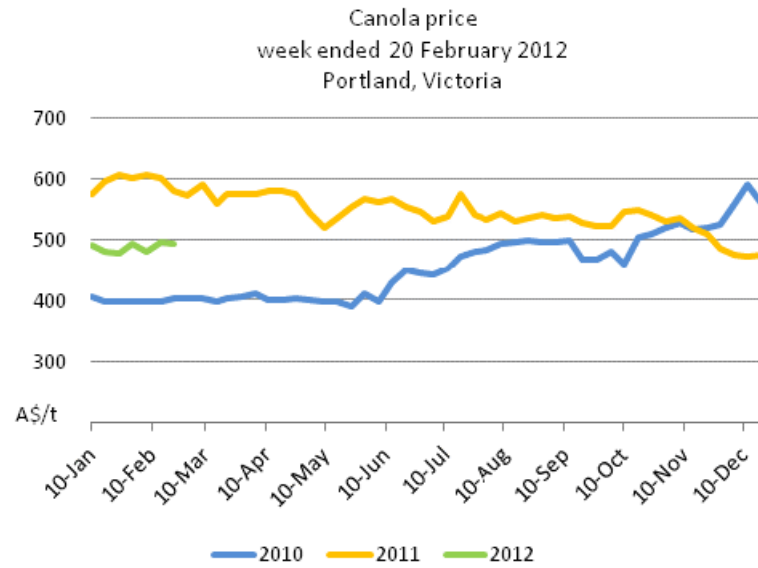
Weekly wholesale prices for selected vegetables, Melbourne market



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
- Monthly and last 3-months rainfall percentiles: www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/
- Temperature anomalies: www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/
- Rainfall forecast: www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/rainfall/pme.jsp
- Seasonal outlook: www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead
- Drought statement: www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/drought.shtml
- ENSO Wrap-Up: www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/
- Soil moisture (BoM, CSIRO and the former Bureau of Rural Sciences): 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
- Available water determinations register: www.wix.nsw.gov.au/wma/DeterminationSearch.jsp?selectedRegister=Determination
- Snowy Hydro: www.snowyhydro.com.au/lakeLevels.asp?pageID=47&parentID=61&grandParentID=4

Queensland

- Sunwater: www.sunwater.com.au
- seqwater: <http://seqwater.com.au>

South Australia

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

Victoria

- Goulburn–Murray Water: www.g-mwater.com.au

Water trading

- Waterexchange: www.waterexchange.com.au

Commodities

Fruit and vegetables

- Datafresh: 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

Canola

- Weekly Times: hardcopy