



Australian Government

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and  
Resource Economics and Sciences

## Weekly Australian Climate, Water and Agricultural Update

18 August 2011

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

### Summary of key issues

- Rainfall received over the past 24 hours in parts of New South Wales will assist crop and pasture growth leading up to spring.
- Favourable seasonal conditions continue in Western Australia, with rainfall received this week set to further assist crop growth as temperatures increase.
- Rainfall received this week in Victoria will improve soil moisture and assist plant growth.
- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin increased this week by 99 gigalitres and remained at approximately 86 per cent of total capacity.
- Most wholesale prices for fruit and vegetables were steady or lower in the week ending 13 August 2011. While banana prices fell sharply in the week, price increases were recorded for lettuces and watermelons.
- The world wheat indicator price (US Hard Red Winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$331 a tonne for the week ending 16 August 2011 compared with US\$315 a tonne in the previous week.
- Saleyard cattle prices for the week ending 12 August 2011 were generally mixed. The Queensland trade steer price rose by 3 per cent to 372 cents per kilogram, but trade steer prices in all other states were lower. Heavy steer and medium cow prices rose in most states.
- The lamb indicator price (weighted average saleyard price in Victoria) fell by around 3 per cent to 490 cents per kilogram in the week ending 12 August 2011. The lamb indicator price has been trending down since late March and this is the first time in 2011 that it has fallen below 500 cents per kilogram.
- The mutton indicator price (weighted average saleyard price in Victoria) fell by around 13 per cent to 397 cents per kilogram in the week ending 12 August 2011.

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Science and economics for decision-makers

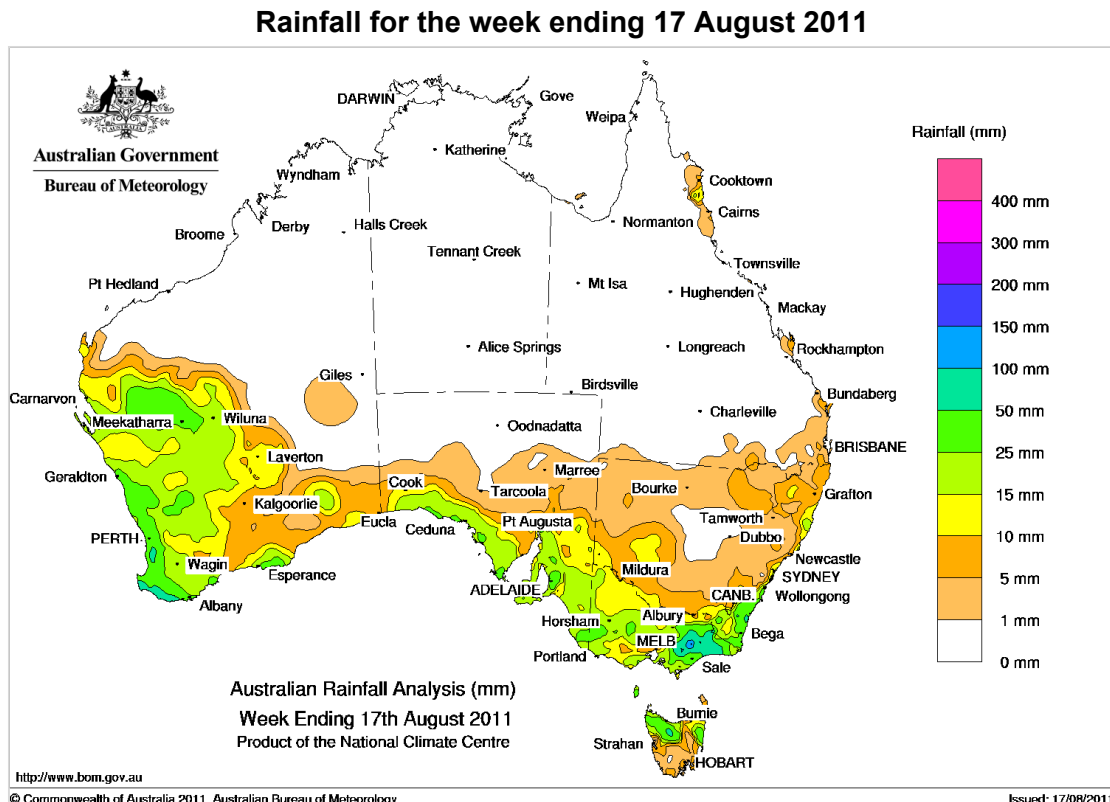
# 1. Climate

## 1.1. Notable events

- For the week ending 17 August 2011, rainfall was mostly recorded across south-west and south-east Australia. The highest measured total for the week was 148 millimetres at Reeves Knob in Victoria.
- Rainfall received over the past 24 hours in parts of central and northern New South Wales will assist crop and pasture growth. Short-term rainfall deficiencies in these areas have recently caused moisture stress in some crops.
- Favourable seasonal conditions continue in Western Australia, with rainfall received this week set to further assist crop growth as temperatures increase. The rain may also help recharge surface and groundwater resources and help alleviate long-term rainfall deficiencies in the south-west of the state.
- Moderate to heavy rainfall received this week in eastern Victoria will improve soil moisture and assist pasture growth as temperatures increase leading up to spring.
- Canola crops in the Western district of Victoria have reportedly been damaged by slugs. The extent of the damage is unknown at this stage.
- Mouse activity is likely to increase in southern cropping regions during spring.
- The tropical Pacific Ocean remains ENSO neutral, although ocean temperatures have continued to cool in the past fortnight. Forecasts of ENSO show that neutral conditions are likely to continue into spring. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral, although the climate model, POAMA, suggests a strong chance of a positive IOD event forming over the coming months. In the past, positive IOD events have been associated with drier conditions over parts of Australia, particularly in the south-east, during winter and spring (Bureau of Meteorology ENSO 'Wrap-Up', 17 August 2011).

## 1.2. Rainfall this week

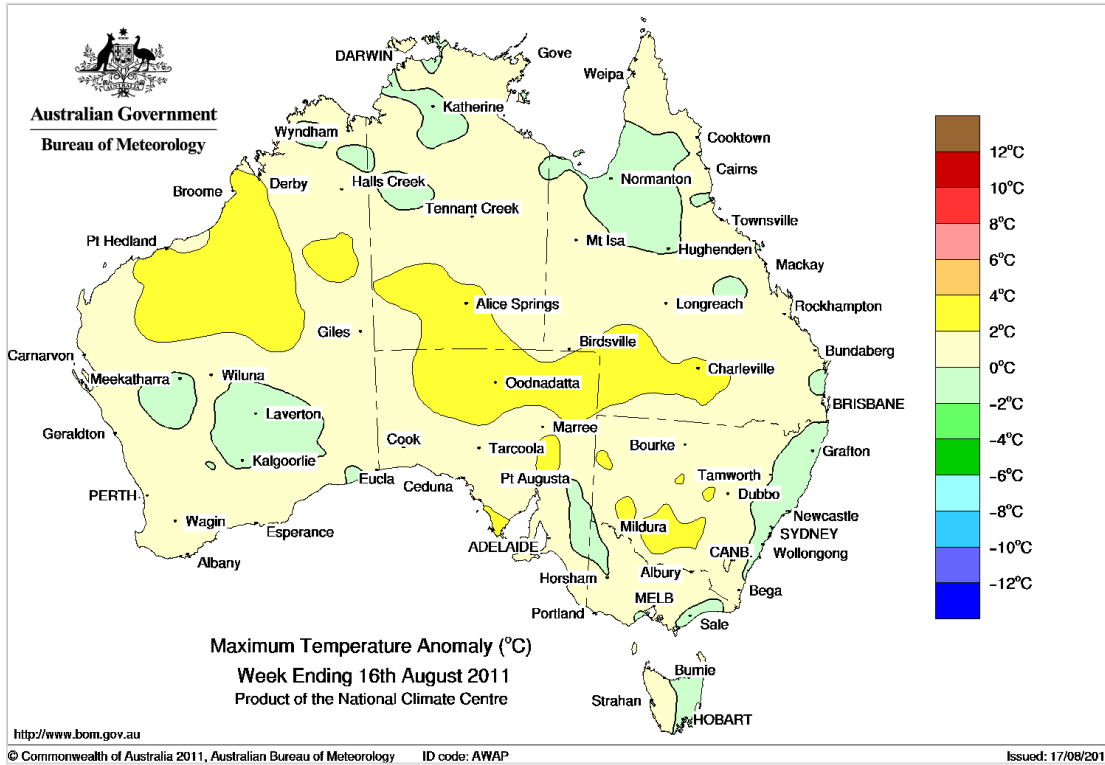
For the week ending 17 August 2011, rainfall was mostly received across south-west and south-east Australia. For further information, go to [www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml).



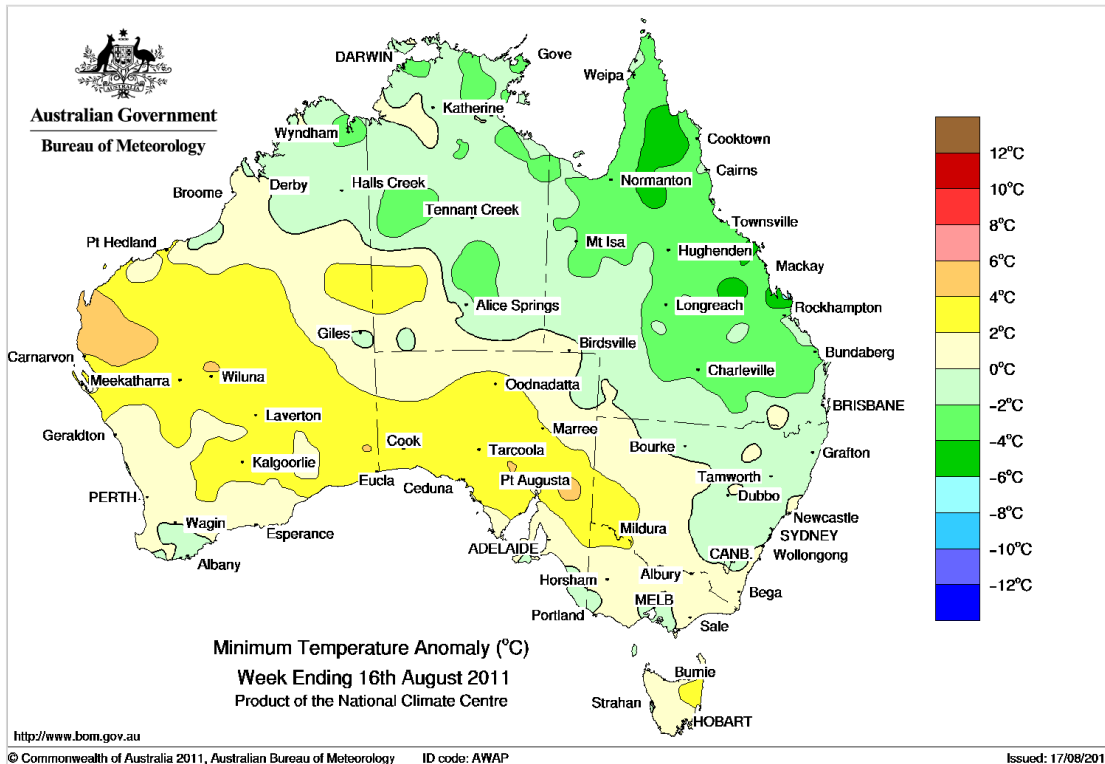
### 1.3. Temperature anomalies this week

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 16 August 2011**



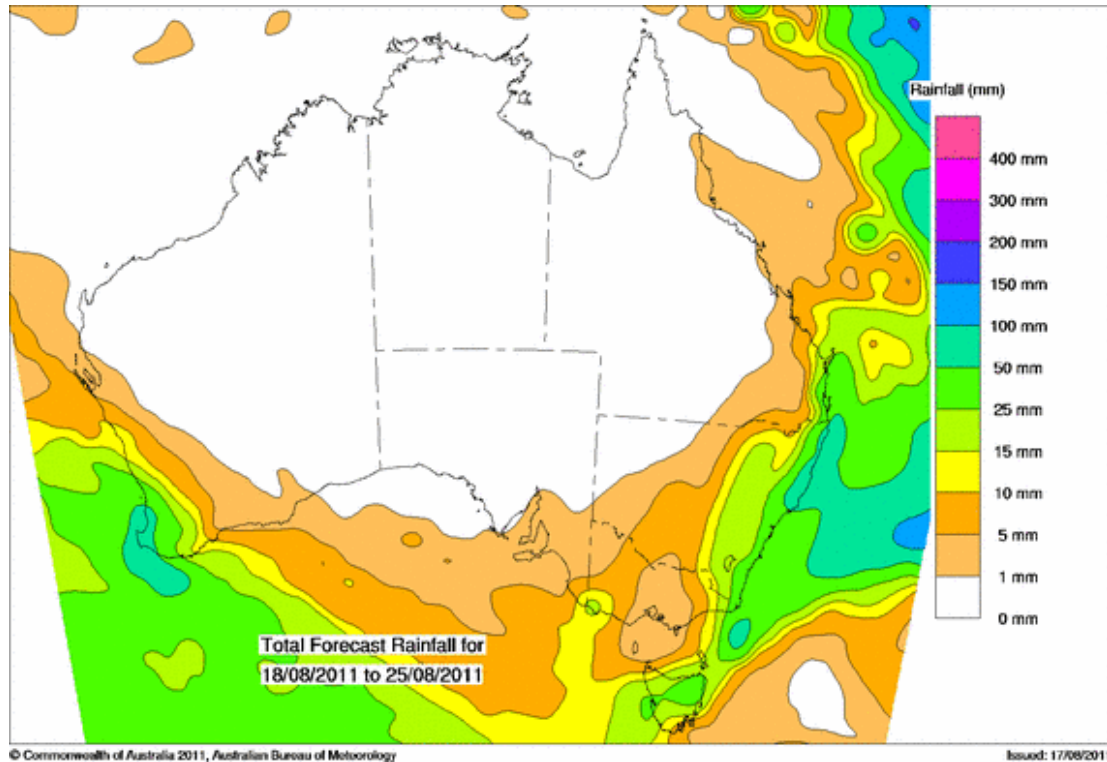
**Minimum temperature anomalies for the week ending 16 August 2011**



## 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 18–25 August 2011

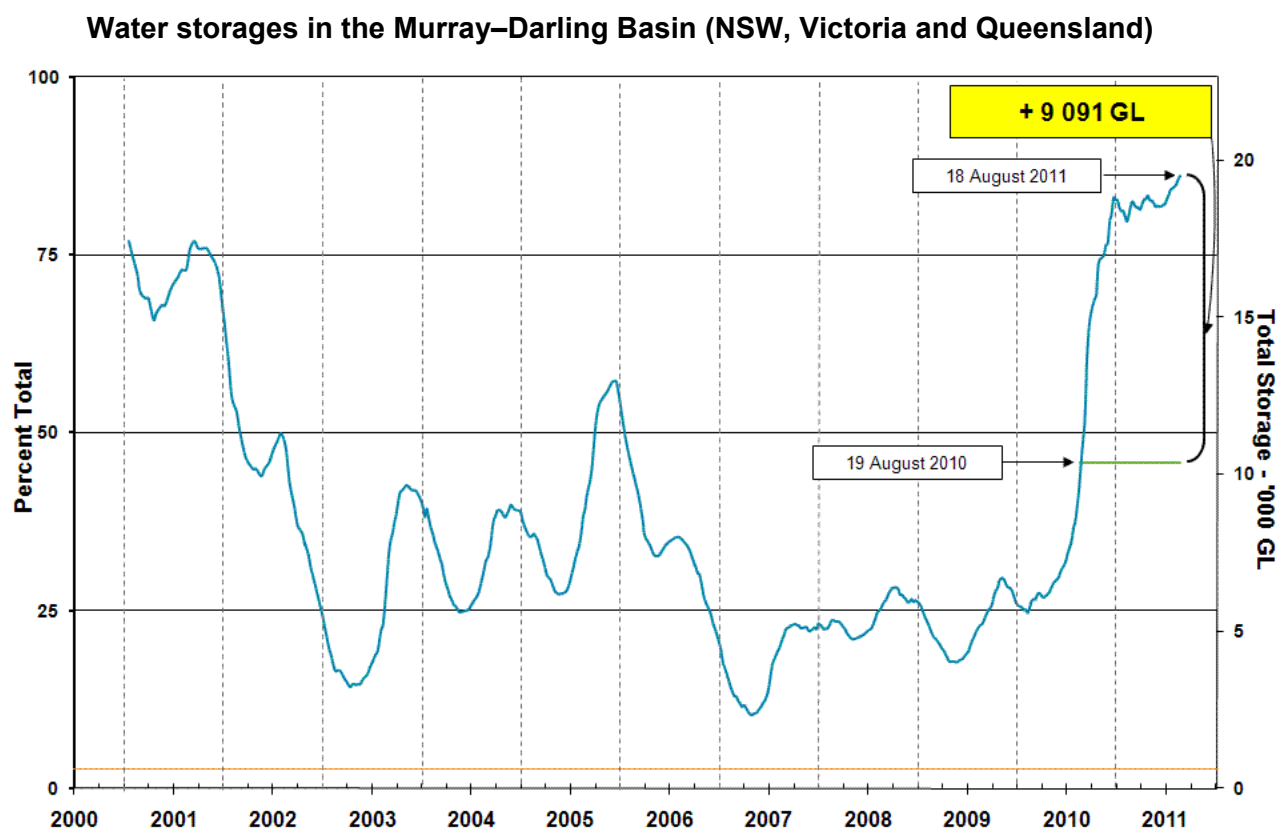


## 2. Water

### 2.1. Water availability and trading

- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB) increased this week by 99 gigalitres (GL) and remained at approximately 86 per cent of total capacity. This is 40 percentage points or 9091 GL more than this time last year.

### 2.2. Water storages



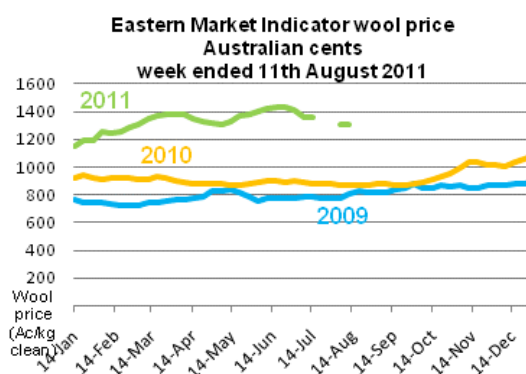
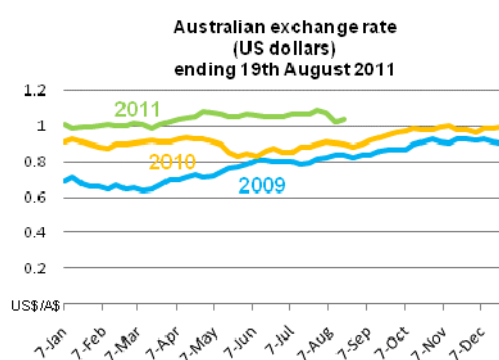
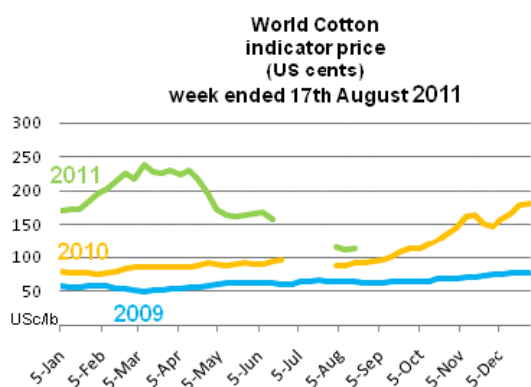
Information on irrigation water available in the Murray–Darling Basin from 1 January 2001 to 18 August 2011 is shown above. The green line indicates the storage level at the same time last year. The orange line indicates the amount of 'dead' or unusable storage.

## 3. Commodities

### 3.1. Production and commodities

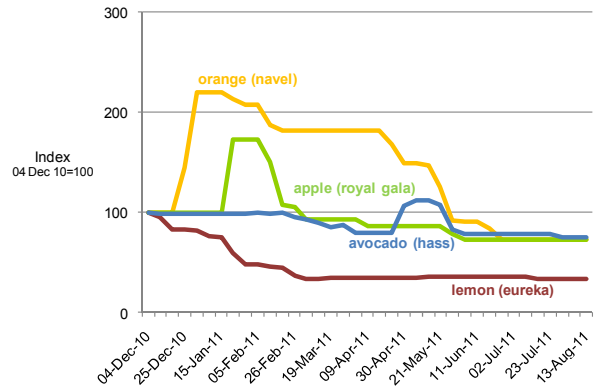
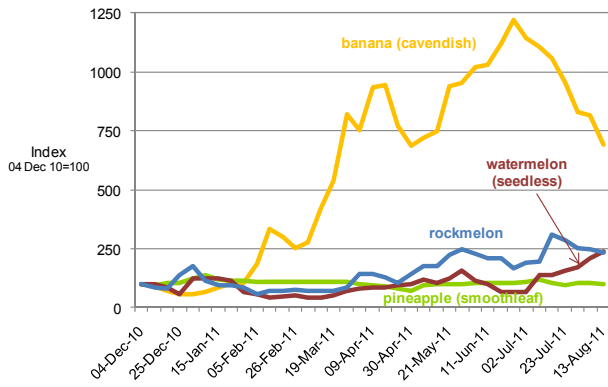
- Banana wholesale prices declined sharply again in the week ending 13 August 2011 and are now at their lowest level since late April 2011. Apart from watermelons, prices of most other fruits were steady or lower.
- Prices of most vegetables were steady or lower in the week ending 13 August 2011, with the exception of lettuce. Tomato prices continued to decline from their recent peak in early June, as a result of increased supplies from northern producing areas, such as Bowen in Queensland.
- The world wheat indicator price (US Hard Red Winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$331 a tonne for the week ending 16 August 2011 compared with US\$315 a tonne in the previous week.
- The world corn indicator price (US no. 2 yellow corn, free on board, Gulf ports) averaged US\$309 a tonne for the week ending 17 August 2011, compared with US\$301 a tonne in the previous week.
- Saleyard cattle prices for the week ending 12 August 2011 were generally mixed. The Queensland trade steer price rose by 3 per cent to 372 cents per kilogram but trade steer prices in all other states were lower. Heavy steer and medium cow prices rose in most states.
- The lamb indicator price (weighted average saleyard price in Victoria) fell by around 3 per cent to 490 cents per kilogram in the week ending 12 August 2011. The lamb indicator price has been trending down since late March and this is the first time in 2011 that it has fallen below 500 cents per kilogram.
- The mutton indicator price (weighted average saleyard price in Victoria) fell by around 13 per cent to 397 cents per kilogram in the week ending 12 August 2011.

### 3.2. Selected world indicator prices

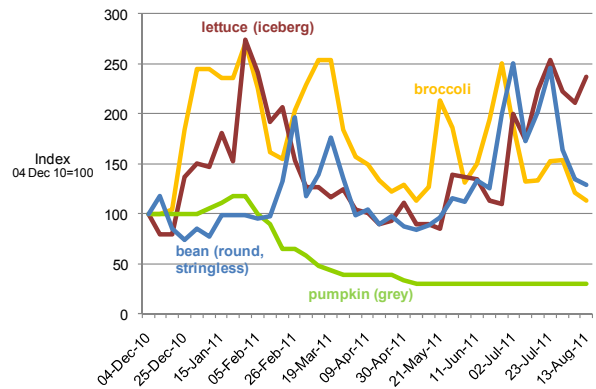
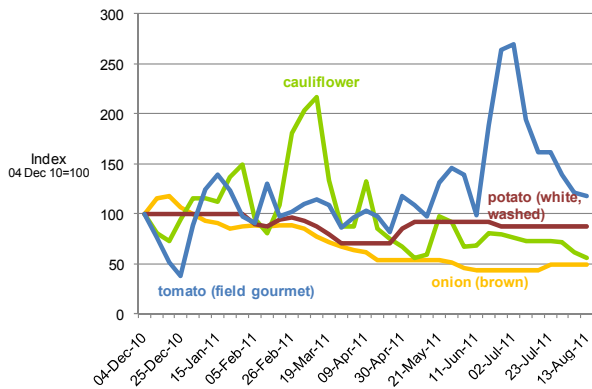


### 3.3. Recent movements in fruit and vegetable prices

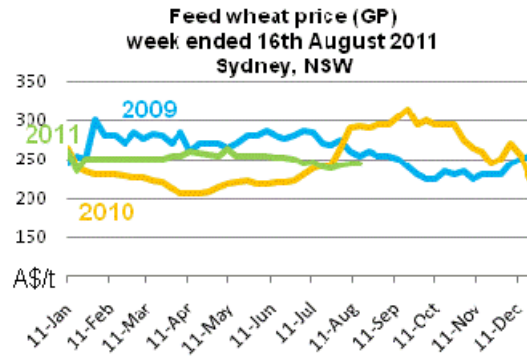
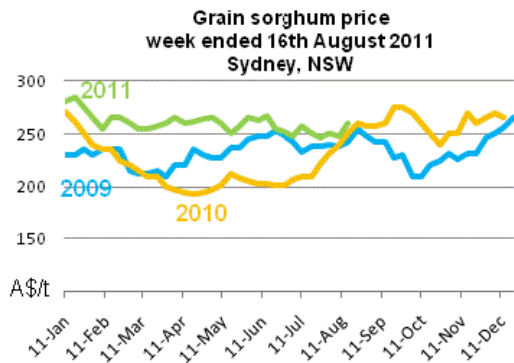
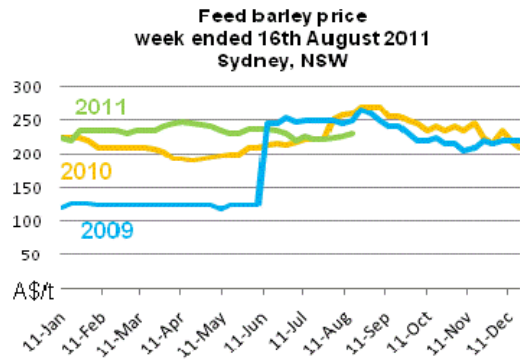
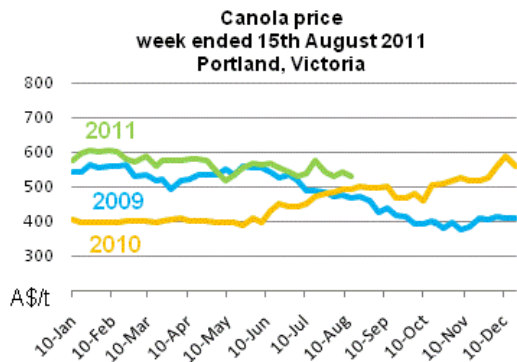
Weekly wholesale prices for selected fruit, Melbourne market



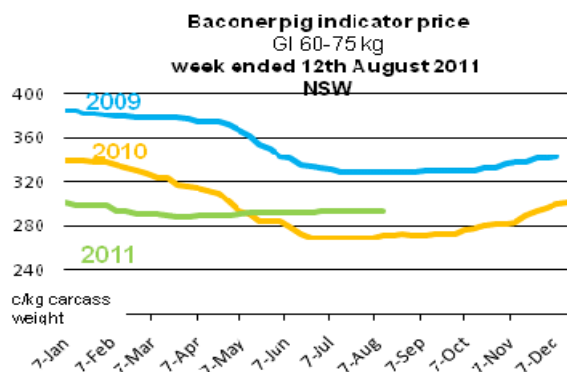
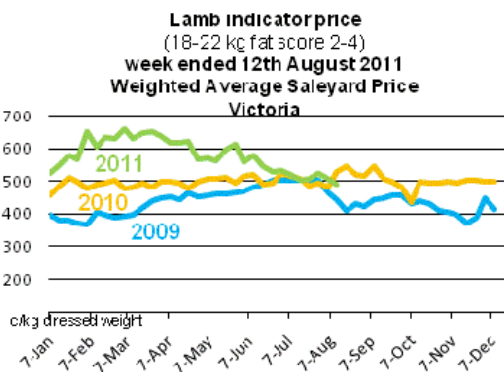
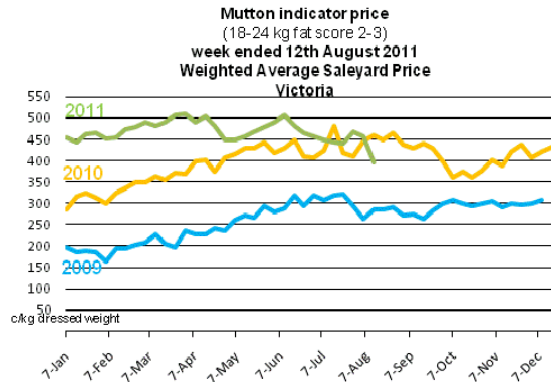
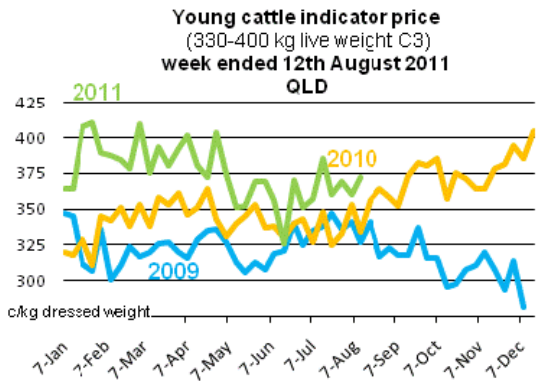
Weekly wholesale prices for selected vegetables, Melbourne market



### 3.4. Crop indicator prices



### 3.5. Livestock 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: <http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/>
- Temperature anomalies: <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

#### Murray–Darling Basin

- Murray–Darling Basin Authority: [www.mdba.gov.au/water/waterinstorage](http://www.mdba.gov.au/water/waterinstorage)

#### 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