

SEASONAL UPDATE WEBINAR RECAP

NOVEMBER 2026

Seasonal snapshot by Marek Matuszek (Ag Logic), with regional focus points from Jason Lynch (Pinion Advisory)

1 Current conditions and regional snapshot

A strong spring has helped many farms get ahead, but soil moisture is disappearing quickly. The key message from this month's webinar is simple: know your numbers, understand your options and act early while you still have choices.

Many sites experienced their warmest winter on record through May and June, without being excessively wet. As a result, spring growth started early, quickly drawing down soil moisture reserves. North of Longford, most areas received a good winter recharge, while many areas further south and along the East Coast missed out. Dry years can compound when deeper soil moisture reserves aren't replenished. Many paddocks still look green, but soil moisture is running down and pasture growth is slowing. While conditions may look reasonable on the surface, things can tighten quickly without follow up rain.

North West

Sitting well, with an early cropping season and well spaced spring rain. ETo is around 3 mm a day, so showers under 5 mm do little. The Sassafras, Moriarty and Wesley Vale pocket missed rain, with dryland pasture drawing from 80 cm.

Focus: use ETo, ETc and probes now so you don't fall behind.

Northern Midlands

Tracking like two years ago, but that year was rescued by a large rainfall event at the start of Dec. Pastures are going to seed or shutting down earlier than normal. Light soils are drying ahead of heavy ground, so do not let wetter areas set the irrigation schedule for the rest of the paddock.

Focus: water, feed budgets and irrigation scheduling.

North East

Best winter in five years along the coast, but spring has used moisture fast. Pipers River sites are drawing from 60 cm, where last year they were near full. Localised rain two weekends ago lifted some areas, including Winnaleah, back to last season's levels.

Focus: feed budgets.

East Coast and Fingal Valley

Lowest soil moisture for this time of year in five years. Winter refill reached only about half at most sites, so an inch of rain does little. Run country has a shallow 30 to 40 cm bucket; avoid overgrazing so native pastures can respond to rain.

Focus: containment feeding and destocking.

Flinders Island

Tracking like two seasons ago and well below last year after a warm winter and early spring. Recent rain was heavier than on mainland Tasmania but has not closed the gap. Many farmers have already made early stocking decisions.

Focus: feed budgets and destocking

King Island

Some sites are the driest for this time of year since soil moisture probes went in, with wetter parts of the island hit hardest. Recent rain of up to 26 mm roughly matched a week of ETo; refilling the profile takes 50 to 70 mm.

Focus: feed budgeting and destocking. Compare with 2023-24: what worked and what didn't.

Southern Midlands, Coal Valley and Derwent Valley

A decent spring, but soil moisture levels are below this time last year, and many sites from Campbell Town south to Bothwell, Richmond and Bream Creek are low. On very dry soil, rain soaks in poorly and roots need time to regrow.

Focus: water security for irrigation, containment feeding and destocking.

Rainfall Outlook (BOM, December to February)

Shifted towards roughly even odds for much of the state, with the central and south east still leaning drier. Confidence is low: it means anything can happen, not that average rain is coming.

2 Planning tools for a tight season

In this webinar, Jason Lynch from Pinion Advisory joined Marek to share a regional perspective on planning for a tighter season.

The core message is simple: a cycle of planning, prioritising, allocating and reviewing helps take the guesswork out of decisions and makes all the difference when managing through tougher seasons.

Step	Pasture based	Annual cropping
Plan	Stock numbers, fodder, water, pasture covers	Gross margins, crops in, contracts, water
Prioritise	Pregnancy, then lactation, then weight gain	Higher margin, lower risk crops first
Allocate	Feed and water budgets, irrigation scheduling	Budgets and Scheduling, inputs
Review	Every 30, 60 and 90 days	Every 30, 60 and 90 days

Feed budgets

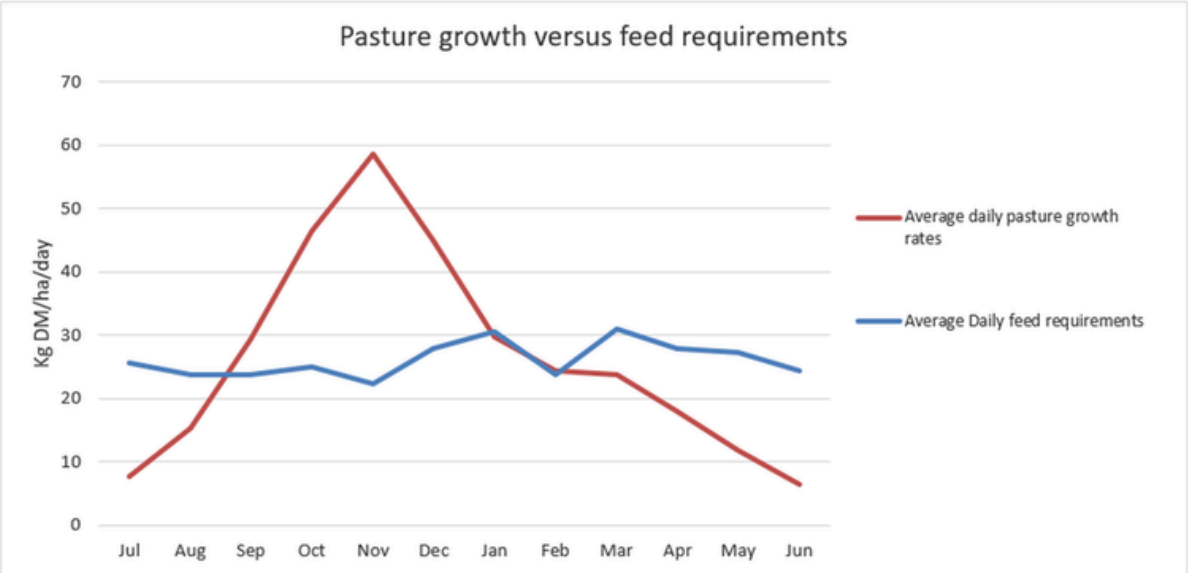
A feed budget compares the feed you have available, and what you expect to grow, with what your stock need. This helps you understand when a feed deficit might start, how significant it could be and how long it may last.

To get started, you'll need:

- Pasture covers, forage crops and supplements on hand.
- Projected growth rates (Farming Forecaster, the TIA Dairy Pasture Growth Report, neighbours and your own measurements).
- Stock classes, numbers and feed requirements.
- Your timeline for weaning, selling and destocking.

You don't need a complicated spreadsheet to get started. Begin with a simple 30, 60 and 90 day feed budget, then refine it as more information becomes available. You can even start with a few notes on the back of an envelope.

With hay and silage in short supply, prices may rise, and many areas need to start lengthening their grazing rotation now.



Where pasture growth (red) sits above feed demand/requirements (blue), you have surplus feed that can be conserved or carried forward. Where growth falls below feed demand, you have a feed gap that needs to be filled or managed through actions such as supplementary feeding or destocking.

Water budgets

Add up every available water source (dams, scheme allocations and bores) and compare supply against demand month by month, taking pump capacity into account.

Prioritise water:

- Stock water first: Livestock water requirements are non-negotiable and should be accounted for before anything else.
- Highest gross margin per ML: Prioritise water for the crops and pastures delivering the highest return per megalitre, while understanding their seasonal water requirements.

If allocations are reduced: check your priorities and identify where irrigation can be reduced with the least impact on production and profitability.

Containment feeding, destocking and early weaning

Option	Why	Watch for
Containment feeding	Rests the remainder of the farm; 10 to 20% better use of feed	Shelter, reliable water and flow, flat site, right ration
Destocking	The earlier you act, the bigger the effect	Do a feed budget first; cull carefully; 2027 and 2028 joining
Early weaning	Feed and water budgets, irrigation scheduling	High protein support for weaners; animal welfare

How Flinders Island producers decide

They monitor three key triggers: pasture covers (to understand the size of the spring surplus), cow condition and market conditions. If cow condition starts to slip, they look at weaning early and destocking, while planning ahead around boat logistics.

One of the key lessons from Flinders Island producers is that timing matters. Making decisions early, before stock condition declines or feed runs short, generally creates more options and better outcomes than waiting for rain to arrive.

Take home messages

Know your numbers: Understand your feed position, stocking pressure, water availability and requirements, pump capacity, water storage levels, production costs, yields and overall business performance.

Have a plan: Feed and water budgets help identify pressure points early and highlight the options available to respond.

Act early, while you still have options: Early decisions around feed, water, weaning and stocking rates generally provide more flexibility and better outcomes than waiting until conditions become critical. The longer you wait, the fewer options you have.

Review regularly: Conditions can change quickly. Revisit your assumptions every 30, 60 and 90 days and adjust your plan as new information becomes available.

Reach out, use your support network: Talk with your farm consultant, agronomist, agribusiness banker, vet, discussion group, Rural Alive and Well, neighbours and family when making important decisions.

Preparedness isn't about having all the answers. It's about understanding your position, knowing your options and having the right people around you to help make informed decisions. The earlier you identify a feed or water shortfall, the more options you have to respond.

3 Questions for you and your advisor

- How does this season compare with this time last year, which decisions worked and which didn't?
- Do I have at least a 30, 60 and 90 day feed budget, and when does my first deficit start?
- Does my water supply meet demand in every month, not just in total, and what gets cut first?
- What are my trigger points for early weaning, destocking or containment feeding?

4 Links and useful resources

Farming Forecaster:
farmingforecaster.com.au

Bureau of Meteorology long range forecast:
Click the map, hover your locality, and read the chart that pops up. bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks

Ag Logic weather station and soil probe network:
Subscribe here

Tasmanian Irrigation dam levels:
tasmanianirrigation.com.au

TIA Weekly pasture growth rate report:
jacob.lightman@utas.edu.au

Previous recaps:
tasfarmhub.com.au/resources/seasonal-update-with-ag-logic

King Island webinar with Marek (recording):
King Island Beef Producers Group webinar - Ag Logic weather station data-20261029_075713UTC-Meeting Recording.mp4

Feed or water budgeting workshop:
Interested? Let the Hub or Ag Logic know

Pasture 365 Mixed Species Trial Walk Pipers River:
https://events.humanitix.com/copy-of-pasture-365-mixed-species-trial-walk-pipers-river

Evapotranspiration data:
https://weatherwise.swansystems.com.au

Australian CliMate:
https://climateapp.net.au

Ag Vic's Drought Feeding guide:
Tools and calculators | Drought support | Farm management | Agriculture Victoria

NSW DPI drought and supplementary feed calculator
https://www.dpird.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nutrition/feeding-practices/drought-and-supplementary-feed-calculator

The DPI Drought & Supp Feed Calculator app is free to assist sheep and cattle producers to develop feed rations during drought and dry seasons.
For iOS | For Android | For Desktop

NEXT MONTH'S WEBINAR:
1pm, Friday 4th December 2026

Register online at:
tasfarmhub.com.au/events

Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Future Drought Fund

TAS FARM INNOVATION HUB

University of Tasmania TIA Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture

AG LOGIC Agricultural Intelligence

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