

SEASONAL UPDATE WEBINAR RECAP

SEPTEMBER 2026



TAS FARM
INNOVATION HUB

Seasonal snapshot by Marek Matuszek (Ag Logic), with a Farming Forecaster session from Phil Graham (Graham Advisory)

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Current conditions and regional snapshot

The warm winter is the story this month. May was the warmest on record, and winter was not far behind, with growing degree days since the start of May well above the historic average. That warmth has grown pasture right through winter.

Actively growing plants are using more soil moisture than usual for this time of year, so winter rainfall totals on their own will mislead you. It also brings spring forward, because pastures are not waiting for waterlogged ground to drain and let air back in. North of Longford profiles are at or near full. South of Longford winter refill will not happen, and that is not as disastrous as it may sound.

North West

Woolnorth is sitting waterlogged as it usually does, on sandy soils where the water table simply rises. Edith Creek has not sat waterlogged at all, because the warmth and the pasture growth has been utilising the moisture throughout winter. Sassafras is much like recent years, although the 10 cm line is showing its first real drawdown now. Circular Head and the coast are in a holding pattern, waiting for the rain to ease before a real increase in moisture uptake.

North East

Around Pipers River this is probably the best winter in four years, and the growers there say the same. Further inland around Ringarooma more rain again has filled the profile, and the warmth means pastures are using it rather than sitting wet. The lighter soils will draw down quickly once rainfall events reduce.

Northern Midlands

Profiles north of Longford are full and growth has been good. Most areas are close to last year without being too wet. Longford is again the divide, and just south of it profiles never reached full point and have started to dip. Walk paddocks while the ground is still wet and note where water pools.

East Coast and Fingal Valley

A very different picture. Around Swansea soil moisture is the lowest it has been at this time of year for five years, and none of it has reached the bottom of the profile. On the shallow run country nearby pasture has kicked off, but on the current gradient that country will be exhausted by early October without follow up rain. Winter refill will not happen, and the run country is the pressure point.

Flinders Island and King Island

Flinders is similar to last year with growth already kicking off. King Island is also similar to last year, with the bonus of an earlier winter refill that has filled dams and stock troughs. It did not get the earlier growth Flinders did, and waterlogging looks to have held the heavier south eastern country back. Both islands are set up well, and spring and early summer now carry more weight.

Southern Midlands, Coal Valley and Derwent Valley

Winter refill will not happen here, which is no surprise and not the end of the world. The windblown sands around Campbell Town are already on the downturn, drawing moisture up sooner than usual, while St Peters Pass is still better than last year. Bothwell is better than last year too, and Ouse picked up winter rain that missed Bothwell. The Coal Valley is dry and Craigbourne Dam is low, because two years without much runoff means little going into storage.



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Reading Farming Forecaster with Phil Graham

Phil Graham builds all the farm models for each Farming Forecaster site around the country, giving him great insight into the seasonal pasture outlook and bases his recommendation based on known facts rather than forecasts.

The moisture on the left of the screen is real and measured, and the only way it leaves the soil is through pasture growth, which is shown on the graph on the right.

The two line test

Draw a line across at the average spring peak, where the yellow meets the green, and a second at the 25 percent point where the pink meets the yellow. Consider the lower blue line a failed spring and then track where the forecast lines cross. Get above the failed spring line and you are likely fine without doing anything radical, because once the feed is grown a dry turn in the season only takes it from green to dead, you don't lose it.

Forecast lines sitting down in the white are the signal for big decisions. One quirk to know: in winter a forecast line falling away can mean waterlogging rather than dryness, because the wettest years stop growth.

A farming forecaster site in the Southern Midlands illustrating actual soil moisture levels on the top and forecasted pasture growth below, with a likelihood of having a failed spring.



Probe

Last update: 3 hours ago (probe)
1 hour ago (weather)

Soil Moisture

10cm	58%
20cm	73%
30cm	66%
40cm	56%
50cm	29%
60cm	6%

Change

7 days	▼ -3%
30 days	▼ -7%
Year	▼ -8%



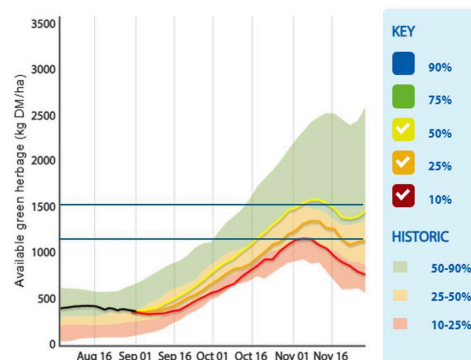
Pasture Forecast

Last Update: 1 days ago

Stonehouse

Powered by CSIRO GrassGro

Projected green herbage available relative to historic variation



What you are looking at

ON THE GRAPH	WHAT IT IS	HOW TO READ IT
The shaded band	Thirty years of modelled pasture with your arm system, soil type, pasture type, fertility and stocking rate held constant.	Your reference point. Where the black line sits against the shading matters more than anything else on the page.
The black line	Current conditions, updated daily or every second day.	Where does that line sit in relation to the shaded bands?
The forecast lines	Growth modelled from 30 years of weather data, redrawn every Tuesday.	Track the 25 percent line this year. Anything greater than that is unrealistic on a year such as this.

How the sites read on that test

- **Flinders Island:** the 25 percent line clears the failed spring by about mid November and comes close to an average spring.
- **King Island:** the 25 percent line does not reach the failed spring, so more rain than that is needed. The lines stay close together until mid November, which points to waterlogging holding growth back rather than dryness.
- **North East:** the 25 percent line peaks about halfway between a failed spring and an average spring, on soil moisture 34 percent better than last year.
- **Western Fingal Valley:** the 25 percent line does not reach the failed spring at all, and moisture is nearly 60 percent below the same time last year. This is where the warning bells ring loudest.
- **Bothwell:** soil moisture 18 percent better than last year, the black line well above the historical range, and the 25 percent line already past the failed spring. One of the better sites in the state.

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Key messages and actions

- **A warm winter has brought spring forward:** growth banked in winter means less growth is needed in spring. North of Longford profiles are full and growth takes off once the rain eases.
- **Do not read rainfall totals on their own:** with warmth and actively growing plants, evapotranspiration used more what fell compared to previous years.
- **Winter refill will not happen south of Longford:** that is not a disaster. Work out what it means for your system rather than assuming the worst.
- **The East Coast and Fingal Valley are the pressure points:** lowest soil moisture in five years, with run country depleted by early October without rain.
- **Summer is the question, not spring:** an early spring can also finish early, so think now about grazing, fodder conservation and late summer rain.
- **Ignore the noise:** in 2023 people bailed out on El Nino talk when the data said they would get a spring, and it cost them money.
- **Water storage is a separate problem:** two years without meaningful runoff in the southern regions means storages have not recovered, whatever the pasture is doing.

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Things to think about or speak with your advisor about

- Where your black line sits against the 30 year shading, and where your 25 percent line crosses the two reference lines.
- What a dry summer means for your system, particularly if you cannot irrigate.
- Your feed wedge now against where it needs to be in late summer.
- How long stored moisture will last on the run country at the current rate, and whether containment feeding needs to start earlier than usual.
- Whether your agronomist uses Farming Forecaster, and introducing them to it if not.

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Links & useful resources

Farming Forecaster:

Soil moisture, weather and pasture growth predictions for your location. The Tasmanian sites are funded by the Hub for another 12 months.

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:

Real time weather, soil moisture and evapotranspiration data, and the source of the figures here.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/fmy7iy9uMe>

Tasmanian Irrigation dam levels:

Updated daily, useful for tracking scheme water into the season.

tasmanianirrigation.com.au

LLS NSW webinar recording:

'Putting the El Nino into perspective' -

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zN5CSpCbqw8

Previous recaps:

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

NEXT MONTH'S WEBINAR:

1pm, Friday 2nd October 2026

Register online at:

tasfarmhub.com.au/events



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