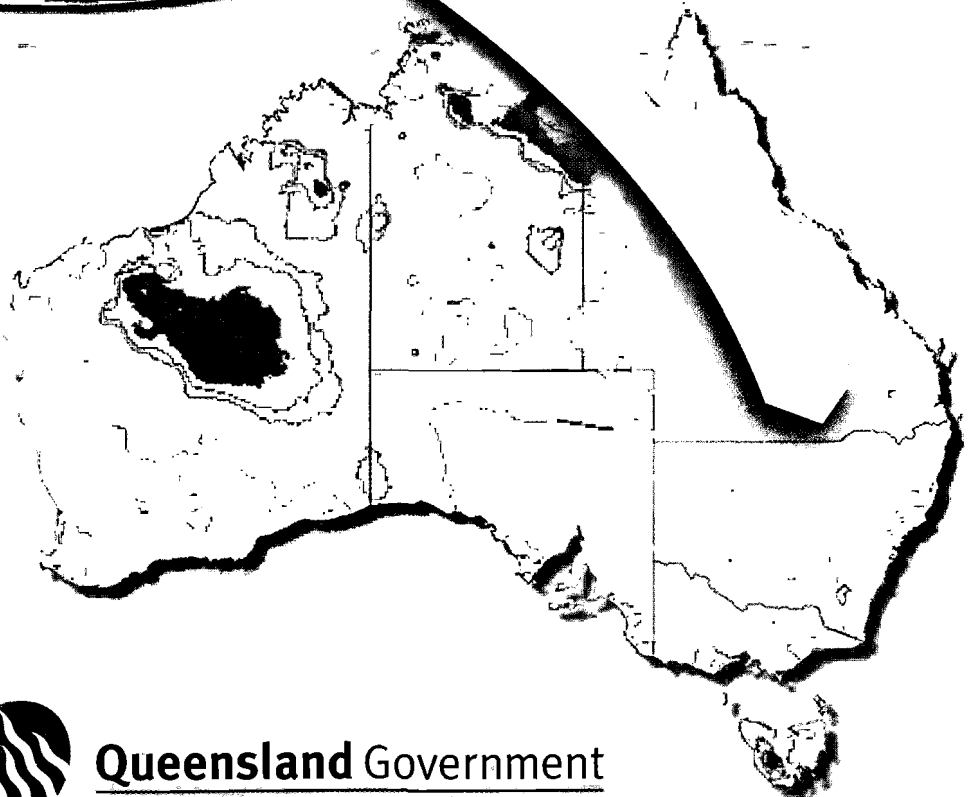
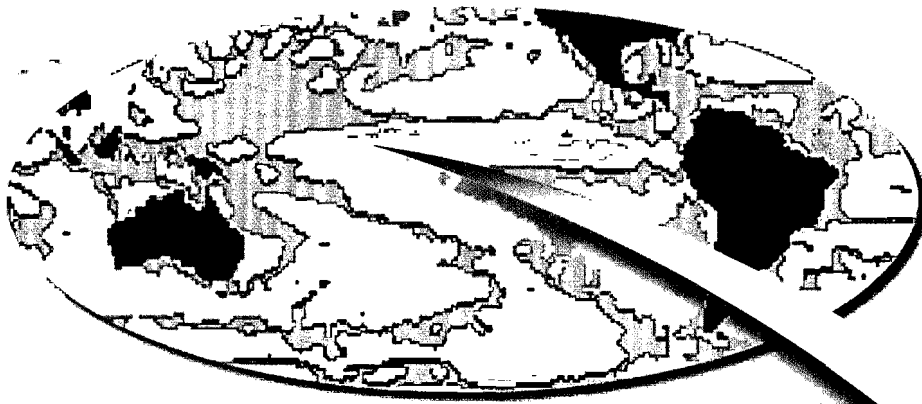




Science for drought

Proceedings of the National Drought Forum
Brisbane, April 2003



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Queensland Government
Department of Primary Industries

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Proceedings of the National Drought Forum

Brisbane, April 2003

Edited by Roger Stone and Ian Partridge

Department of Primary Industries Queensland

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University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba.

The Department of Primary Industries seeks a better quality of life for all Queenslanders—a quality of life supported by innovative world-class food and fibre industries, by responsible and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources and by capable and self-reliant rural communities.

Our business is about:

- innovative science and commercial uptake of new technology by food and fibre industries
- sustainable use of natural resources
- food safety and protection against imported pests and diseases
- market-driven and ethical food and fibre production
- capable rural communities achieving prosperity and self-reliance through successful rural businesses.

This publication provides information to scientists to improve sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable primary production in a highly variable climate.

While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained in these proceedings.

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Foreword

This has been an historic forum. For the first time in almost thirteen years scientists have come from all over Australia to present scientific research that is focussed directly on drought issues.

The current drought has once again shown the devastating impacts our variable climate can have. The lesson we must all take from it is that preparation, forward planning and risk management are critical.

A recent survey has found that nearly 40% of Australian farmers have adopted seasonal forecasts. This rate of take-up may seem low, but it has been achieved in a little over a decade since regular seasonal forecasts became available.

Many farmers will come out of the current drought with greater interest and questioning of the climate forecast information available to them, and this will be a challenge and opportunity for our researchers.

There is a general appreciation among farmers of the value of climate and rainfall data to their business, but there remains a reluctance amongst many to input that data and information into their decision-making.

One issue for research organisations is to present information in which producers can have confidence and which they can access and use with relative ease.

The DPI and the wider Queensland Government places much emphasis on the incorporation of climate forecasting into production and natural resource management systems. This integration and the development of modelling and decision support software are the future of sustainable farming in Australia.

The State Government through the Queensland Centre for Climate Applications has had a strong relationship with the Climate Variability in Agriculture Program which has funded many research and development projects.

The Climate Variability in Agriculture Program has been a major sponsor in this science forum bringing together leading scientists from the Queensland Government, the Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Australian universities, the Bureau of Rural Sciences and State agricultural departments.

The outcomes from this forum will be presented to key decision makers within Federal and State governments, industry associations and all those involved in drought policy. Its implementation will form the basis for a major review of better preparing this country for drought.

The Honourable Henry Palaszczuk MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities