

Northern Territory Pastoral Feed Outlook - September 2019

The purpose of this quarterly outlook is to summarise information relevant to the pastoral industry such as current feed supplies, seasonal conditions, the development of drought conditions and relative fire risk. You can subscribe to receive the Outlook [here](#).

You can see the entire document and all districts by continuing to scroll through this file. If you are interested in selected sections, you can click on the links below.

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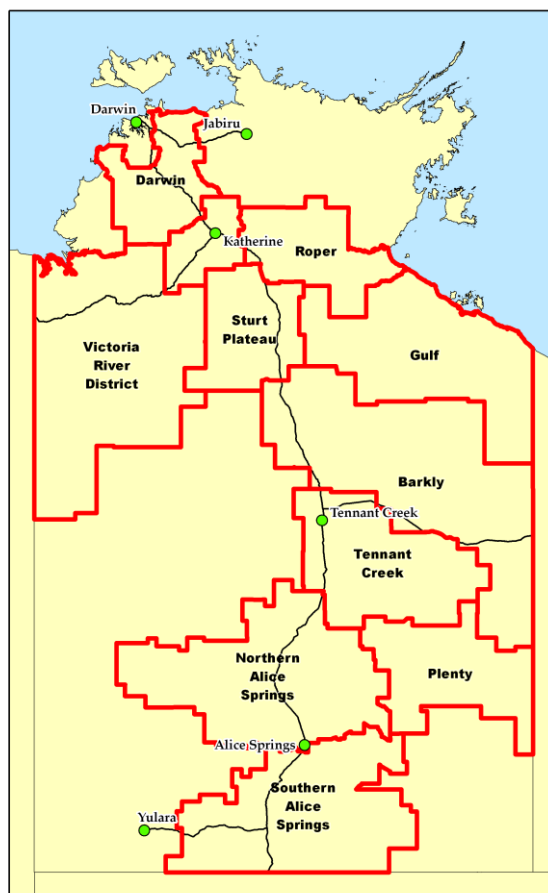
[Barkly District](#)

[Tennant Creek District](#)

[Northern Alice Springs District](#)

[Plenty District](#)

[Southern Alice Springs District](#)



Summary of current situation and trends – all districts – September 2019

Although parts of the Tennant Creek and Plenty districts received rain from ex-cyclone Trevor, as at 1 September 2019, a large part of the NT from about Larrimah down to the SA border has experienced below-average pasture growth over the past 12 months. The majority of these areas have experienced extremely low growth (lowest 10% of years on record). The low 2018/19 growth (together with minimal winter rain in the southern districts) means that significant parts of the NT now have low to extremely low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha). A large proportion of the Barkly district has extremely low levels of pasture biomass (less than 100kg/ha).

BOM forecasts suggest there is a below-average chance of exceeding median rainfall for the remainder of 2019 in most districts. The chances of an early northern wet season onset for the 2019-20 season is low over large parts. Much of the Top End and central parts of the NT have a less than 30% chance of an early rainfall. In other words, these areas have a greater than 70% chance of a *late* wet season rainfall onset.



Indicator	Northern Territory Pastoral Districts											Comments
	Darwin	Katherine	VRD	Sturt Plateau	Roper	Gulf	Barkly	Tennant Creek	Northern Alice Springs	Plenty	Southern Alice Springs	
2018/2019 total pasture growth	↓	↔	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↔	↓	Arrows indicate trend compared to the long-term median (for this time of year).
Current estimated standing biomass	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↔	↔	↑	↔	Arrows indicate trend since previous quarter.
Current fire risk	↓	↔	↔	↔	↔	↓	↓	↔	↔	↔	↓	Arrows indicate the trend since previous quarter.
Current seasonal outlook	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↔	↓	↓	Arrows indicate the trend since previous quarter and taking into account the forecasted model predictions.

For further information about this Outlook, please contact Chris Materne on 08 8951 8135 or Dionne Walsh on 08 8999 2178

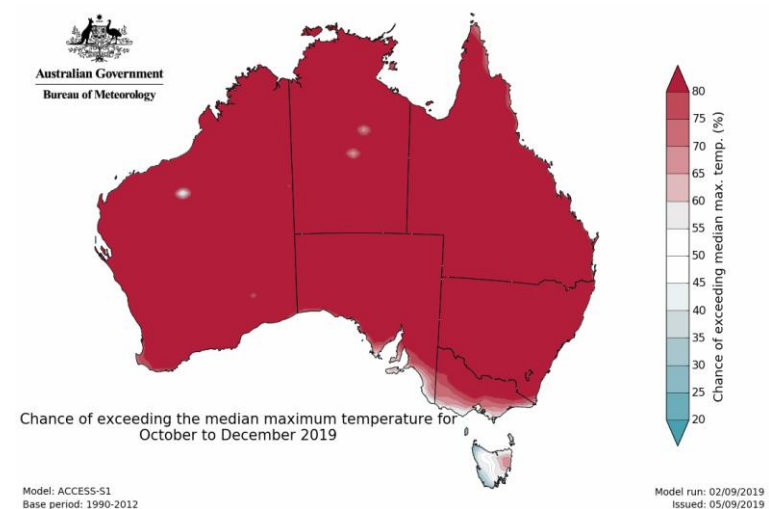
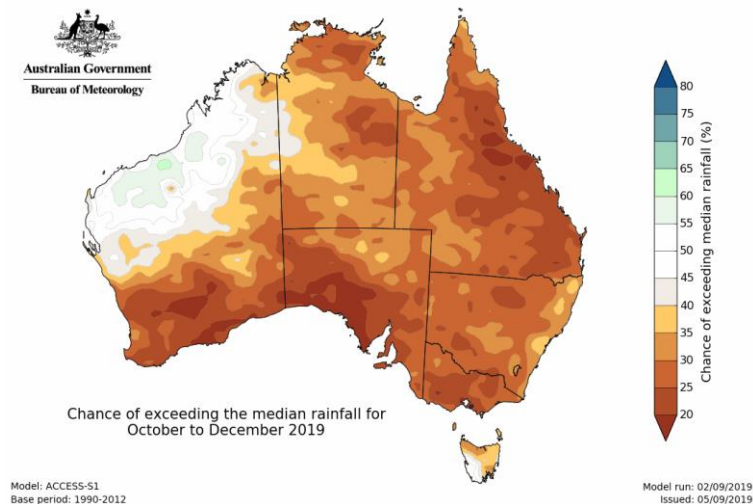
Northern Territory Seasonal Outlook as at September 2019*

Sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)

*This seasonal outlook was correct at the time of publication. For the most up-to-date seasonal outlook, please go to the “[climate outlook](#)” section of the BOM website.

The outlook for October to December 2019 indicates that:

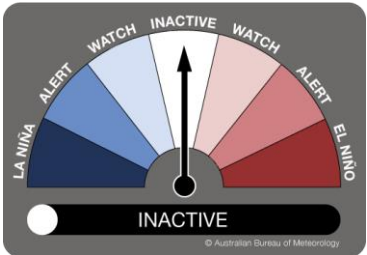
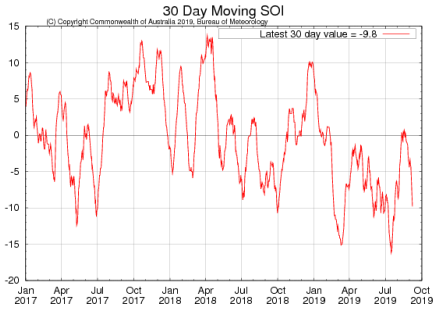
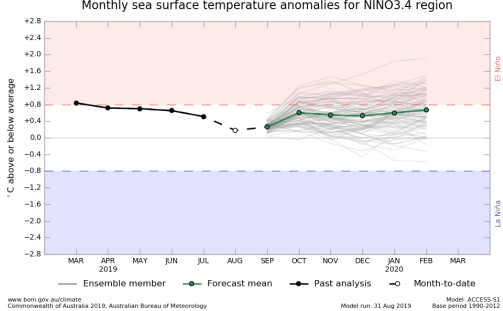
- **Drier** than average conditions are expected across most of the NT for the remainder of 2019
- **Warmer** than average days and nights are likely for almost the entire NT

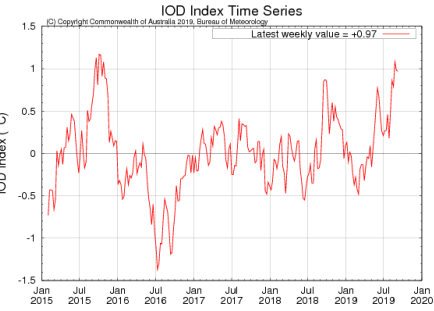
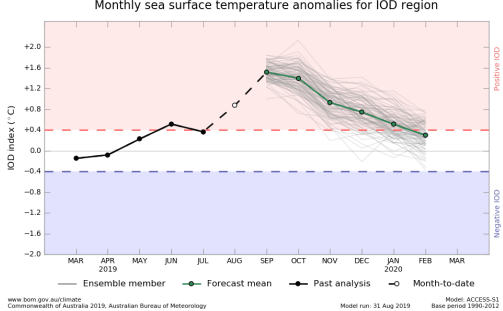


In addition to the natural drivers such as ENSO and the IOD, Australian climate patterns are being influenced by the long-term increasing trend in global air and ocean temperatures.

2019-20 Wet Season Onset

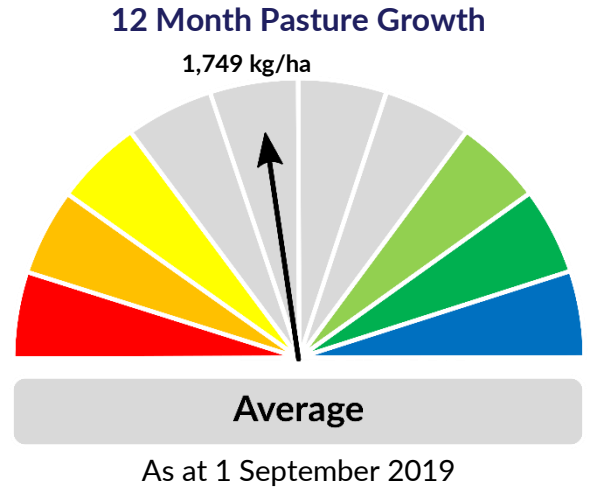
The chance of an early northern rainfall onset for the 2019-20 season is low over large parts of northern Australia. Areas which have a less than 30% chance of an early rainfall onset include much of the Top End and central parts of the NT. In other words, these areas have a greater than 70% chance of a late rainfall onset. The northern rainfall onset outlook gives an indication of whether the first significant rains after 1 September are likely to be earlier or later than normal and can be found here <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/rainfall-onset/>

<p>Seasonal Indicator</p>	<p>Comments (sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology)</p>
<p>El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Bureau of Meteorology ENSO Wrap-Up</p> <p>Current outlook: Neutral ENSO status: INACTIVE</p> 	<p>The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is currently neutral</p> <p>Most climate models indicate the tropical Pacific is likely to remain ENSO-neutral for the rest of 2019 and into early 2020, meaning other climate drivers, like the IOD, are likely to remain as the primary influences on Australian and global weather.</p>   <p><i>El Niño typically results in below-average rainfall for southern Australia during autumn and for eastern Australia during winter and spring.</i></p> <p>To see larger versions of these images, go to the SOI and Outlooks tabs at Bureau of Meteorology ENSO Wrap-Up</p>

<p>Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) Bureau of Meteorology ENSO Wrap-Up</p> <p>Current outlook: Positive</p>	<p>Positive IOD for the rest of 2019</p> <p>A positive IOD is underway and forecast to continue until the end of spring. Typically, this means below average rainfall for much of central and southern Australia during winter-spring, and warmer than average temperatures; consistent with the current outlook.</p> <p>IOD events typically have little influence on Australian climate from December to April, meaning the strong dry signal should start to weaken.</p> <p><i>Typically, a positive IOD brings below-average winter-spring rainfall for southern and central Australia.</i></p> <p>This is currently being reflected in the rainfall outlook for the coming months.</p> <p>To see larger versions of these images, go to IOD Time Series and the Indian Ocean tab at Bureau of Meteorology ENSO Wrap-Up</p>  
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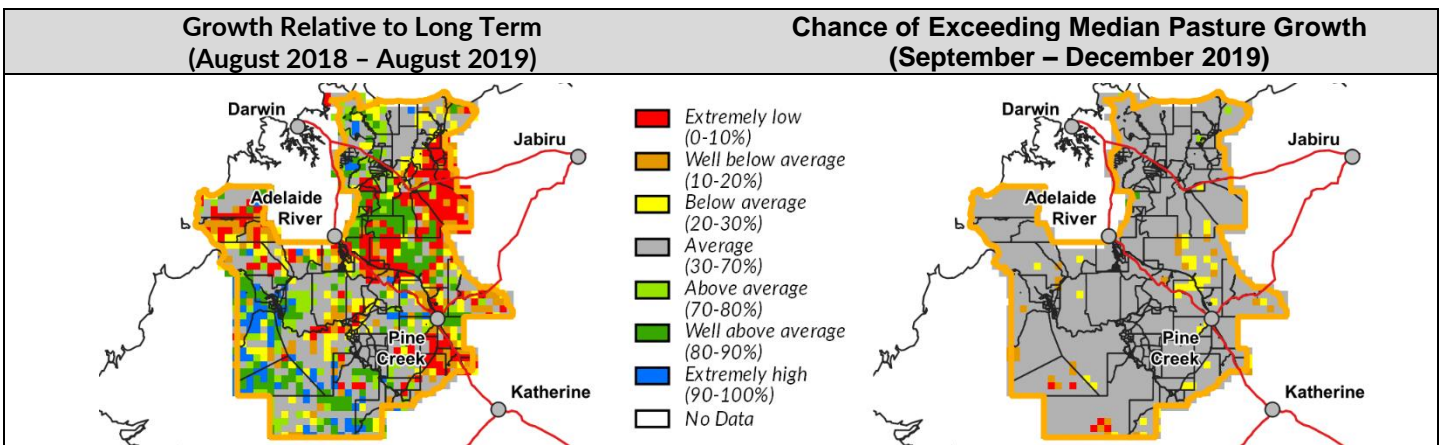
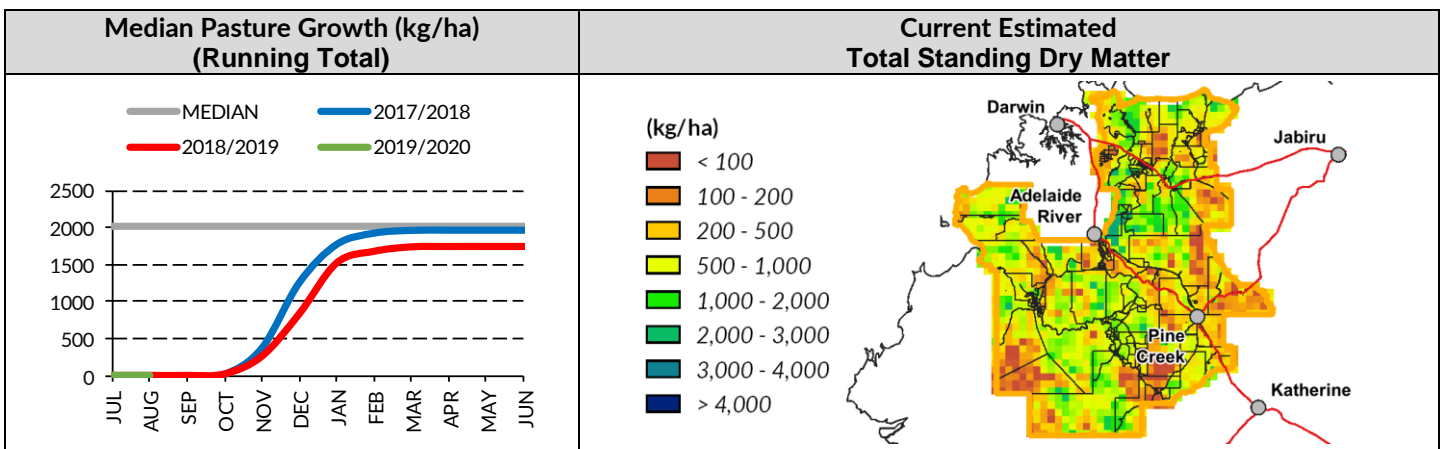
Darwin District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was average. However, the inconsistent rainfall across the district resulted in wide variation in growth.
- Some pockets of the district experienced well below-average growth and others well above-average growth.
- The previous two seasons (2017/18 and 2016/17) were considered about average for pasture growth.
- 44% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019. 31% of this has occurred since 1 July 2019.



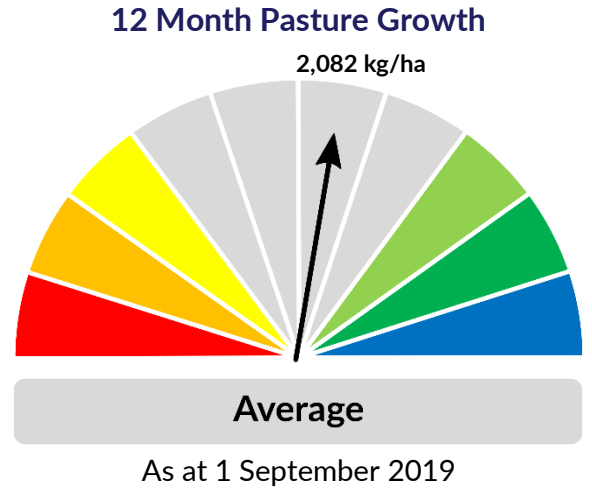
In a typical wet season, pasture growth in the Darwin region tends to be limited by available soil nitrogen rather than soil moisture. Therefore, a poor wet season may not generally affect the total quantity of pasture grown on upland country.

As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	59%	34%	6%	1%



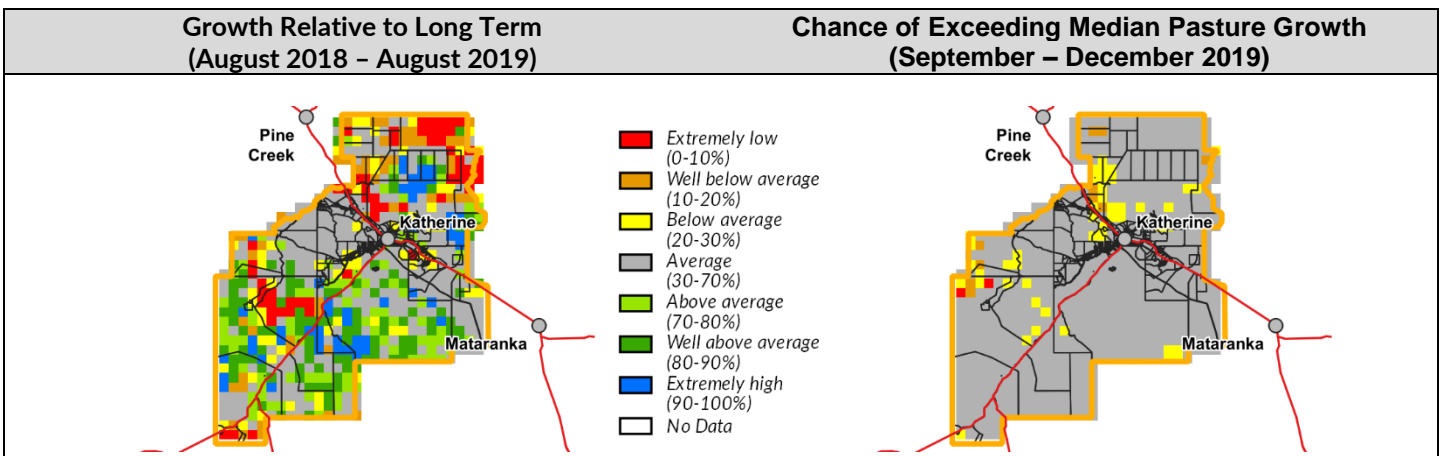
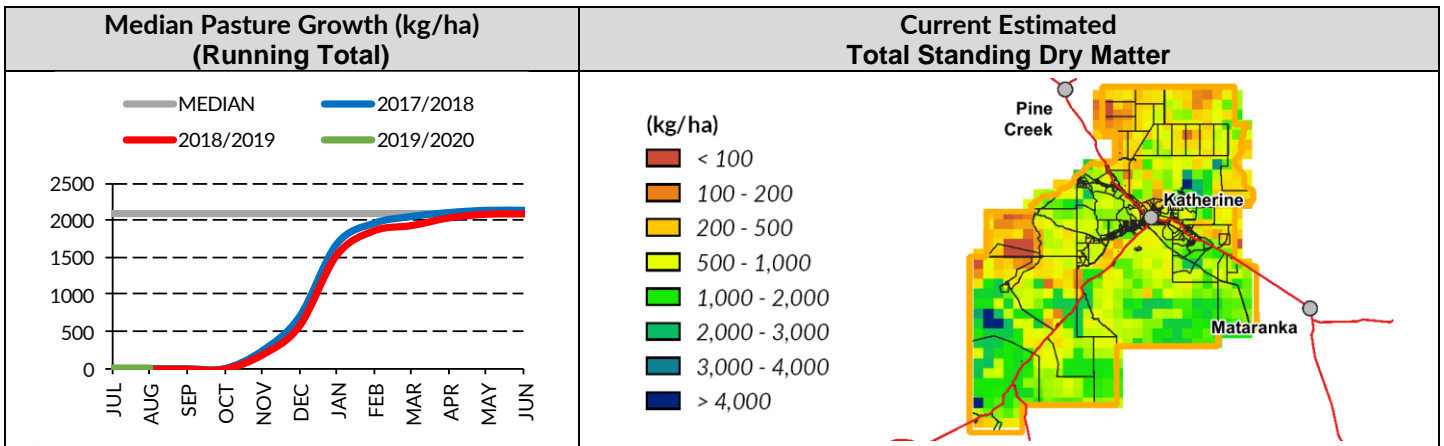
Katherine District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was average. However, the inconsistent rainfall across the district resulted in wide variation in growth.
- Small scattered areas experienced well below-average growth whilst others had well above-average growth.
- The previous two seasons (2017/18 and 2016/17) were considered average for pasture growth.
- 23% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019. 18% of this has occurred since 1 July 2019.



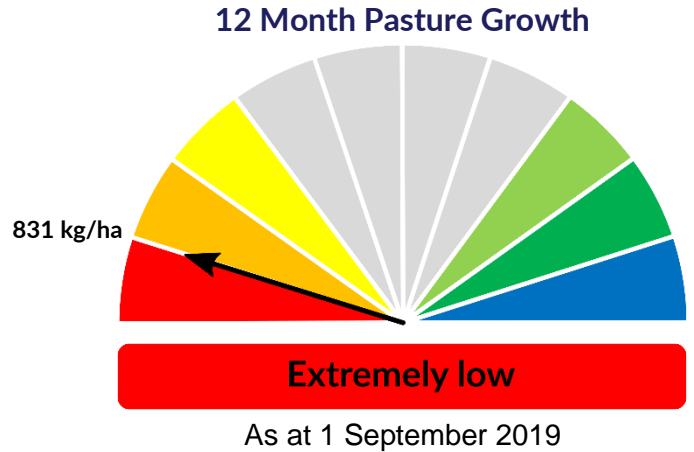
In a typical wet season, pasture growth in the Katherine region tends to be limited by available soil nitrogen rather than soil moisture. Therefore, a poor wet season may not generally affect the total quantity of pasture grown.

As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	34%	47%	17%	2%

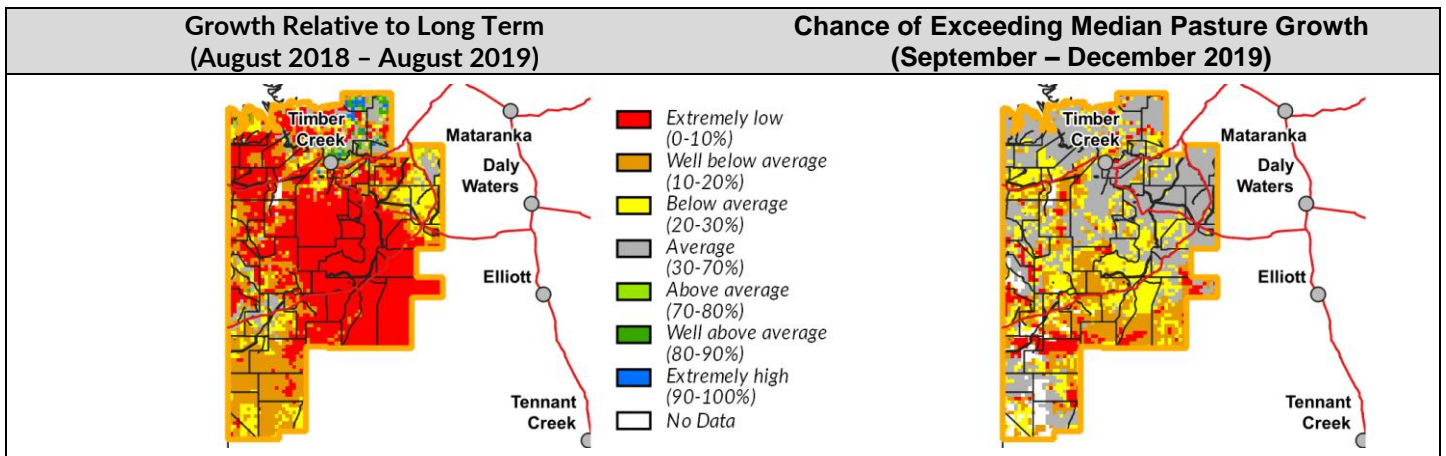
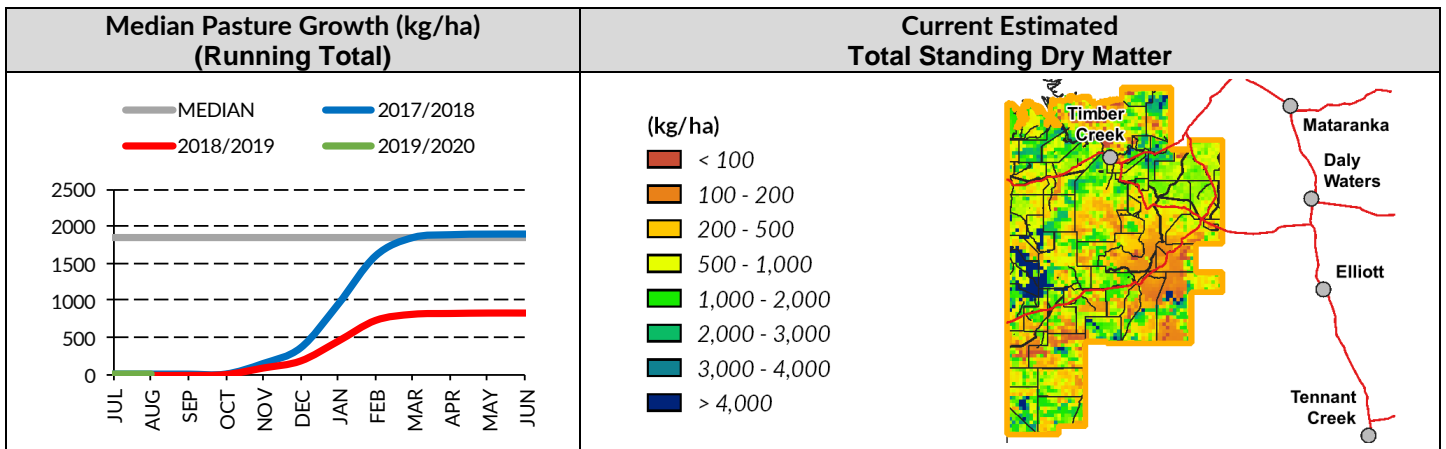


Victoria River District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was considered extremely low (lowest 6% of years on record or about a 1 in 20 year event).
- The far north-east corner was the exception, showing average to above-average growth.
- The two years prior were good seasons - 2017/18 was similar to the long-term median whilst 2016/17 was above-average.
- Areas throughout the district are currently showing very low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- 8% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019. 3% of this has occurred since 1 July 2019.

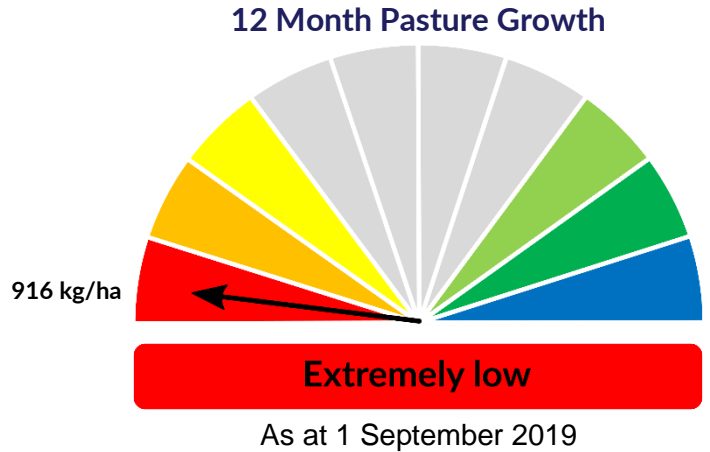


As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	48%	36%	10%	7%

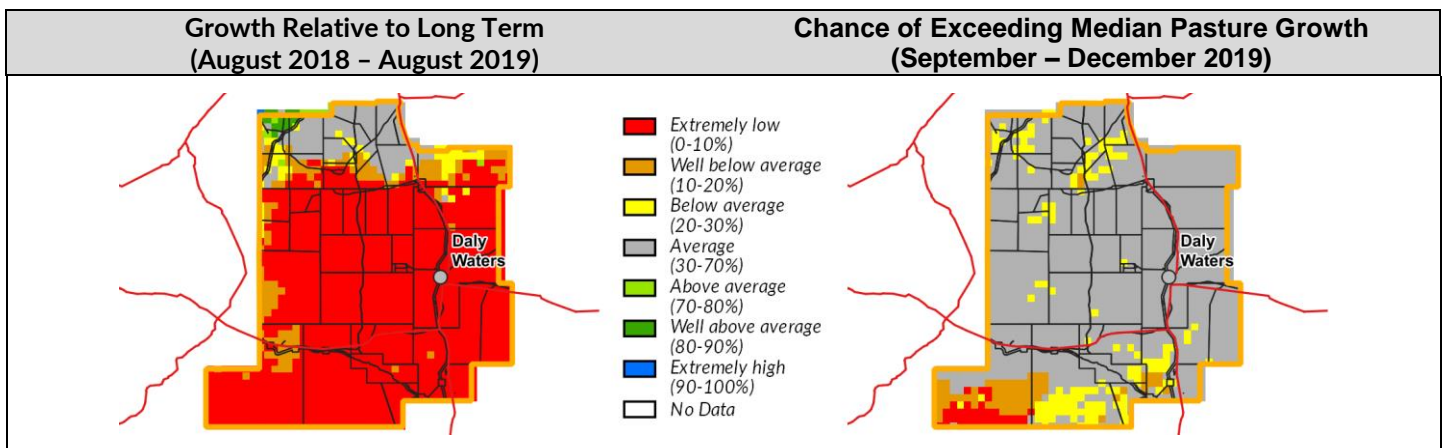
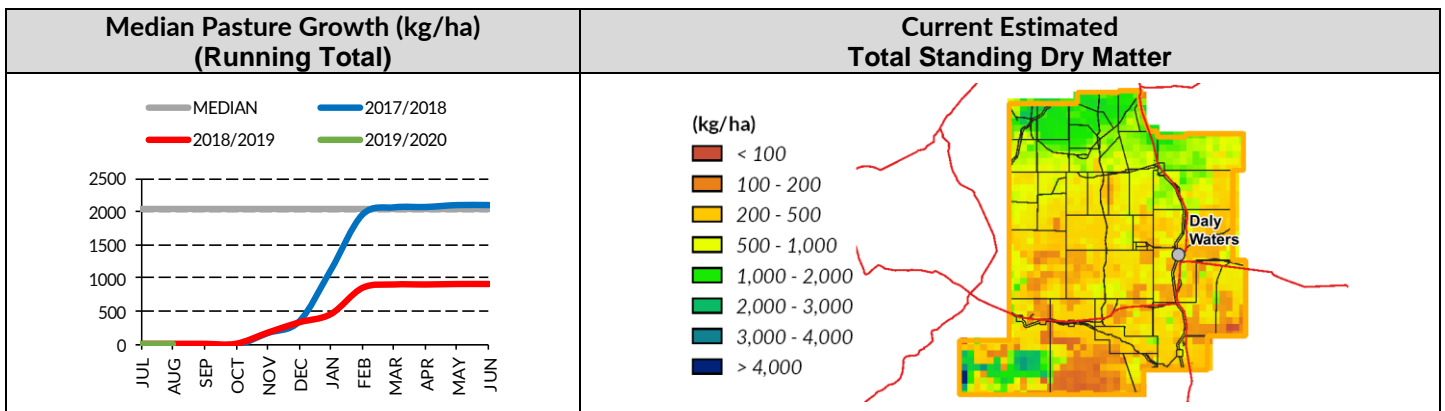


Sturt Plateau District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was extremely low (lowest 3% of years on record or about a 1 in 30 year event).
- A small area in the north of the district was the exception, experiencing average growth.
- Much of the district, with the exception of the far north and south western corner, is showing low levels of pasture biomass (<1,000kg/ha). Some areas are showing extremely low levels (<500kg/ha).
- The previous two seasons (2017/18 and 2016/17) were considered average for pasture growth.
- 1% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019. This has occurred since 1 July 2019.

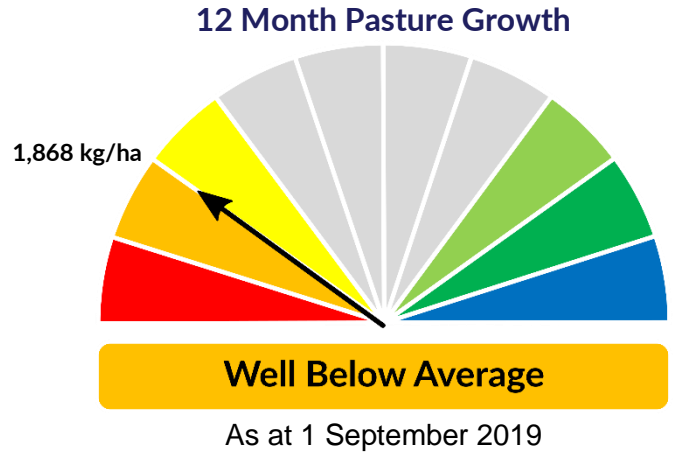


As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	70%	22%	7%	1%

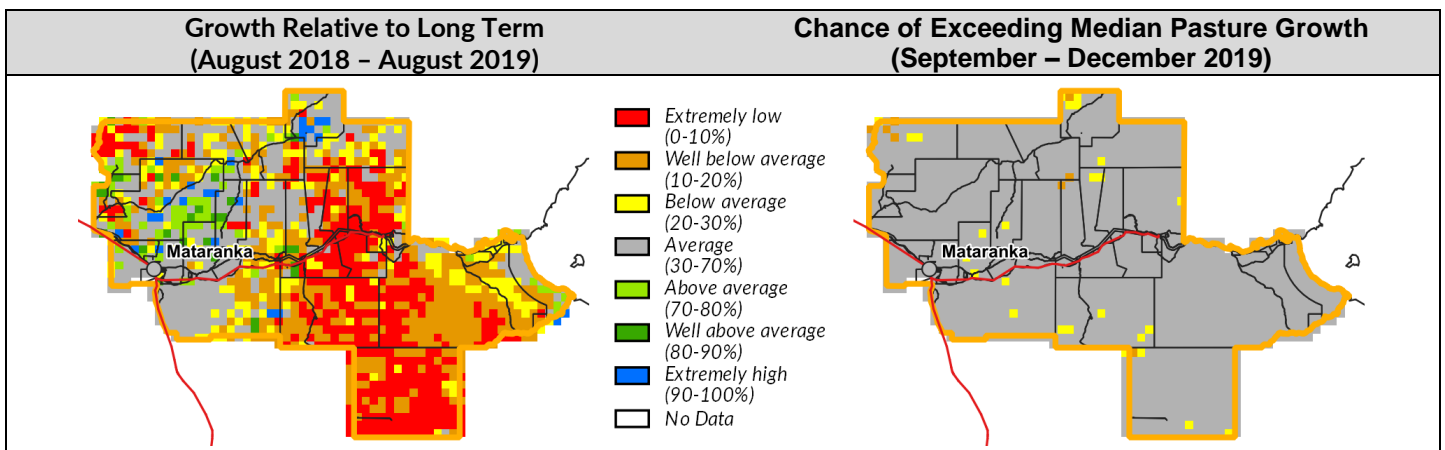
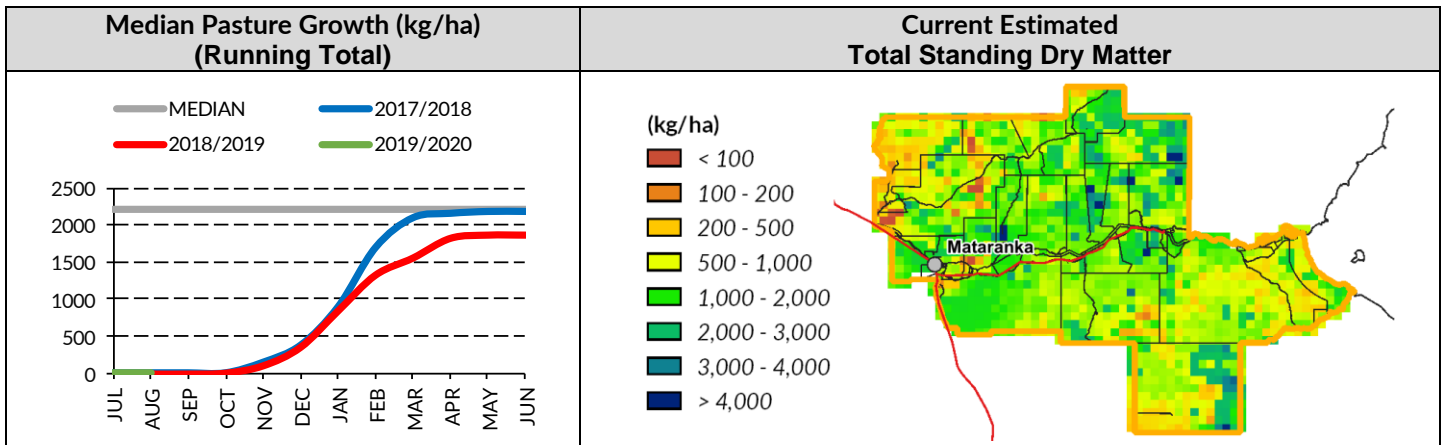


Roper District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was below-average (lowest 21% of years on record). However, growth was very variable across the district.
- The western half of the district generally experienced average to above-average growth, while the eastern half experienced below-average to extremely low pasture growth (lowest 10% of years on record).
- Pasture growth in 2017/18 was similar to the long-term median, but slightly lower than the above-average season in 2016/17.
- 14% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019. 11% of this has occurred since 1 July 2019.

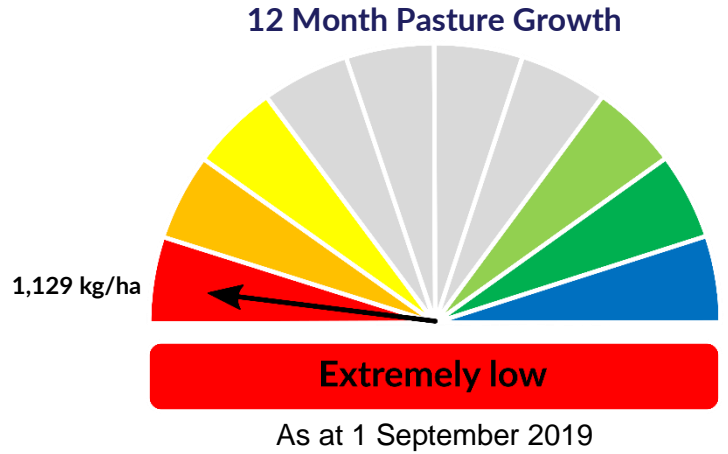


As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	20%	54%	19%	7%

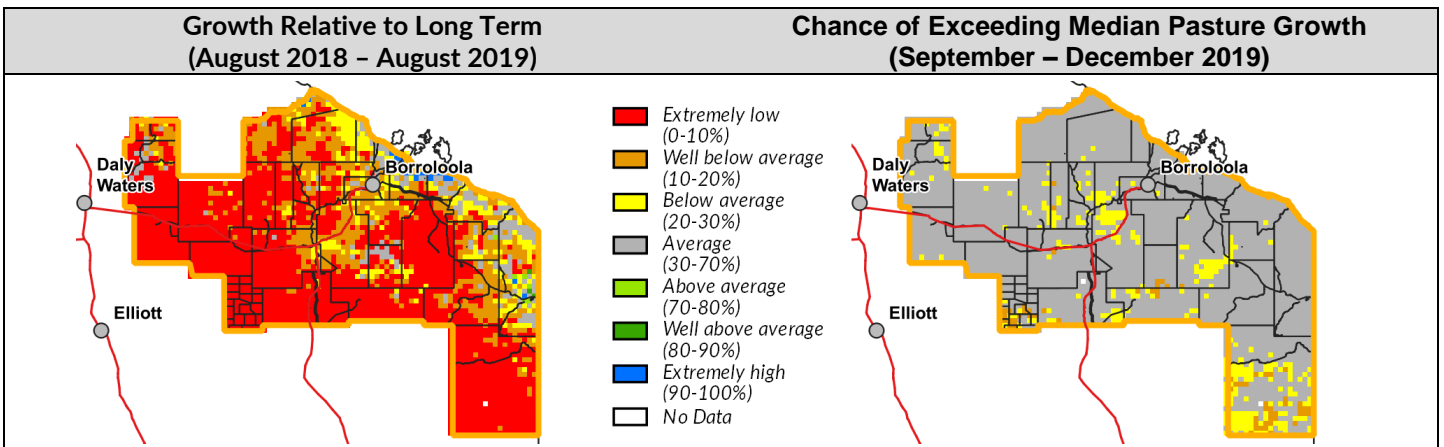
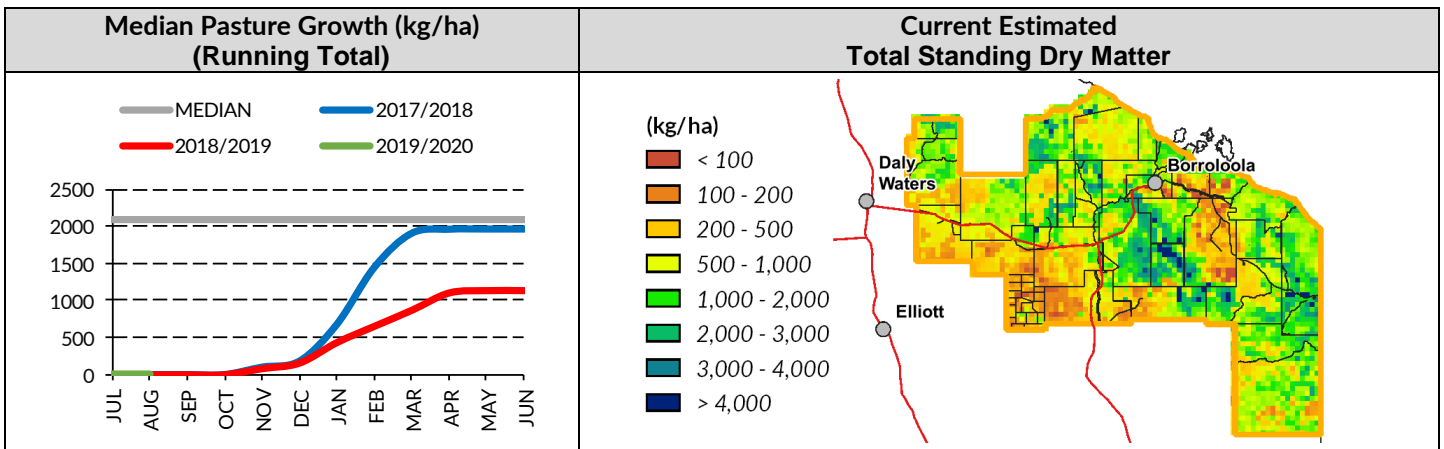


Gulf District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was extremely low (lowest 6% of years on record or about a 1 in 20 year event).
- A narrow strip along the coast from Borroloola to the Queensland border was the exception, with average growth.
- Pasture growth in 2017/18 was similar to the long-term median, but lower than the good season in 2016/17.
- Large areas throughout the district are now showing extremely low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- 7% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019. 4% of this has occurred since 1 July 2019.

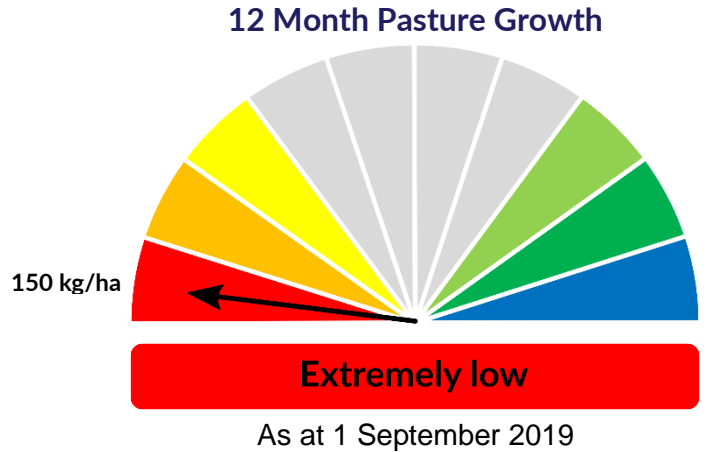


As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	43%	36%	14%	7%

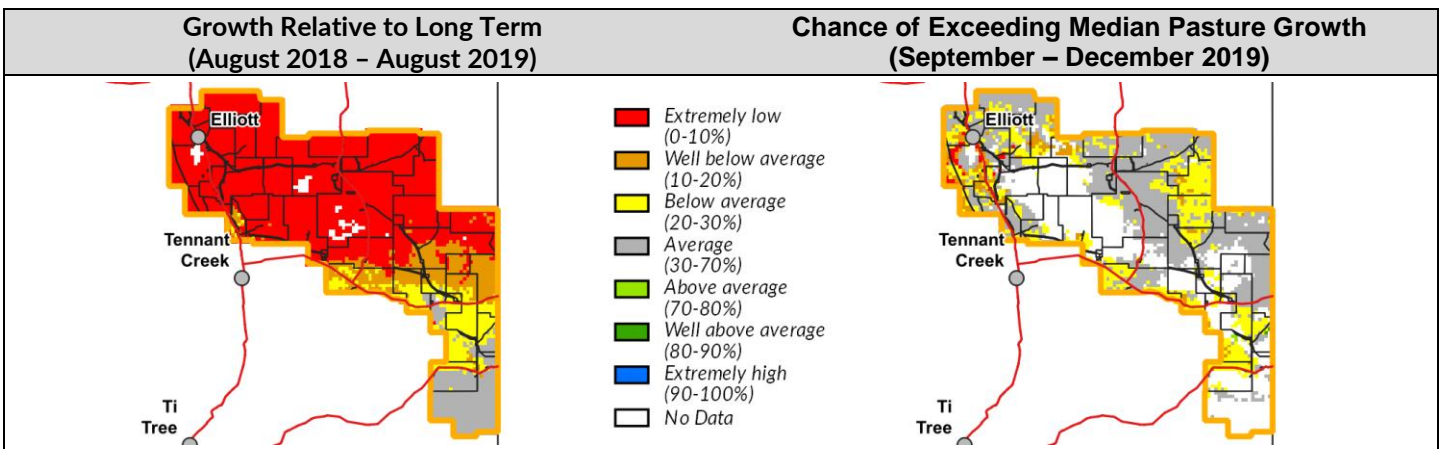
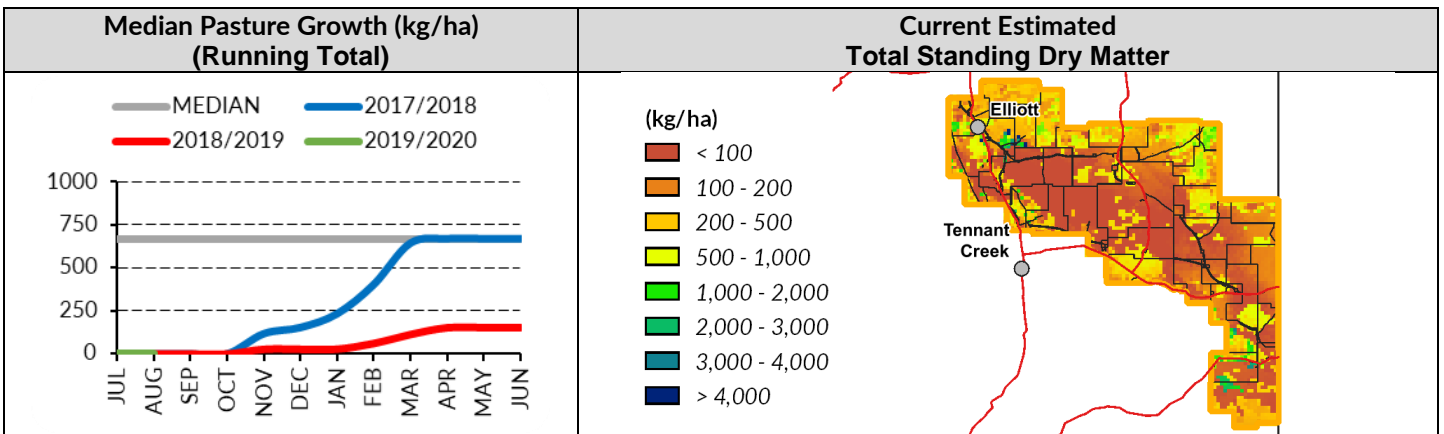


Barkly District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was extremely low (lowest 3% of years on record or about a 1 in 30 year event).
- Much of the district experienced extremely low to no pasture growth with the exception of the far south, which had average growth after receiving rainfall from ex-cyclone Trevor.
- 71% the district is showing low to extremely low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha). A large proportion of the district is now showing levels less than 100kg/ha.
- Less than 1% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019.

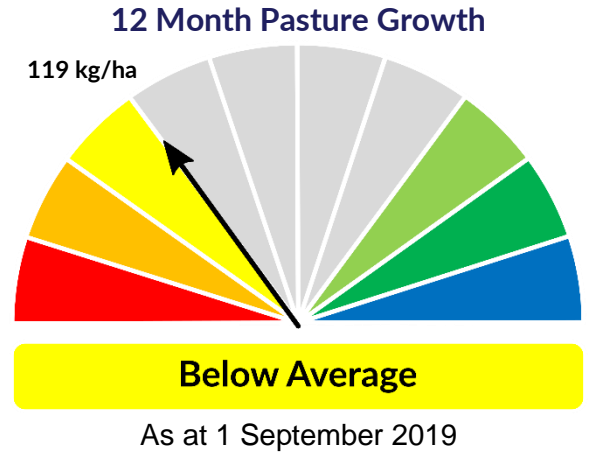


As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	55%	16%	21%	8%

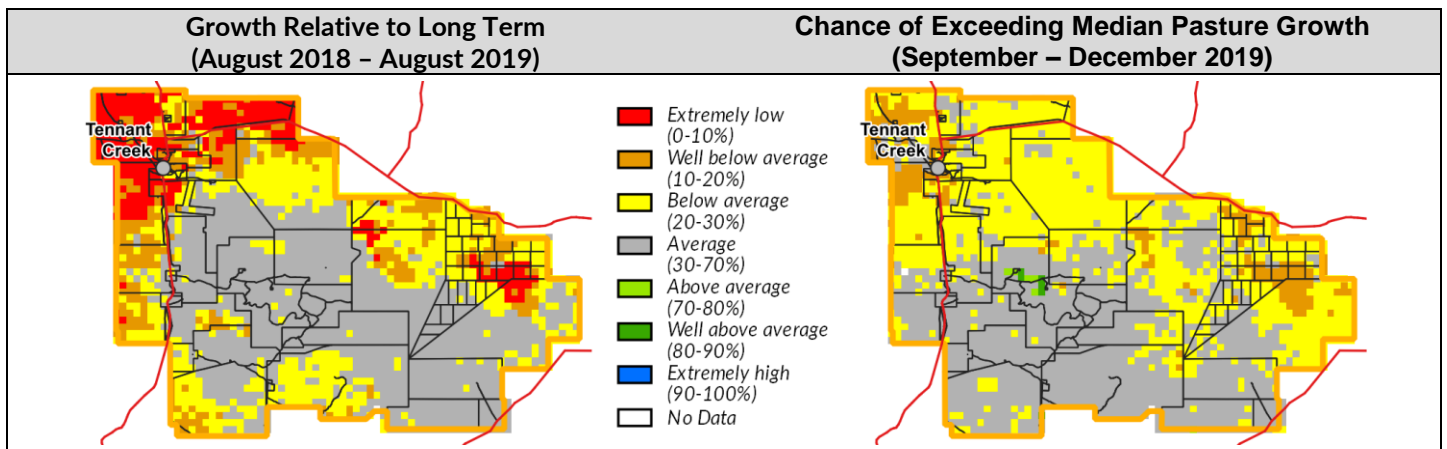
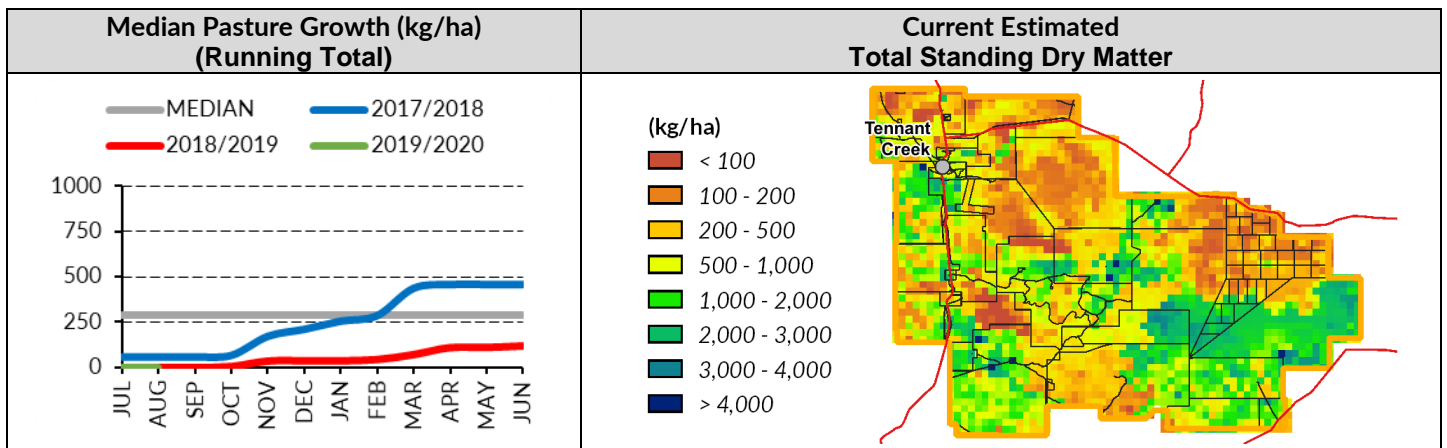


Tennant Creek District

- Some central and south-eastern areas experienced average growth largely due to ex-cyclone Trevor. However, the wider district has experienced below-average growth (lowest 30% of years on record) to extremely low growth (lowest 10% of years on record).
- This followed two above-average seasons.
- 31% of the district is now showing low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha); half of which is showing extremely low levels (<250kg/ha).
- 3% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019. All of this has occurred since 1 July 2019.

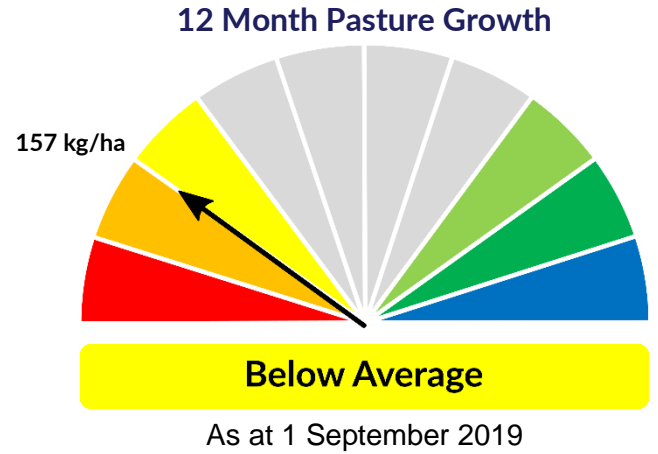


As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	15%	16%	28%	41%

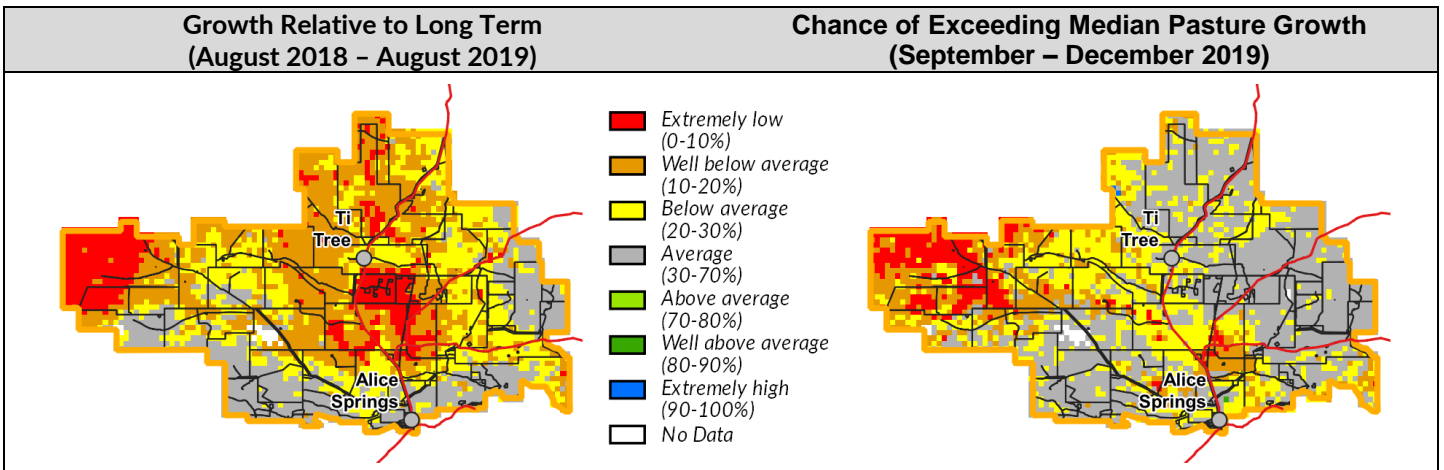
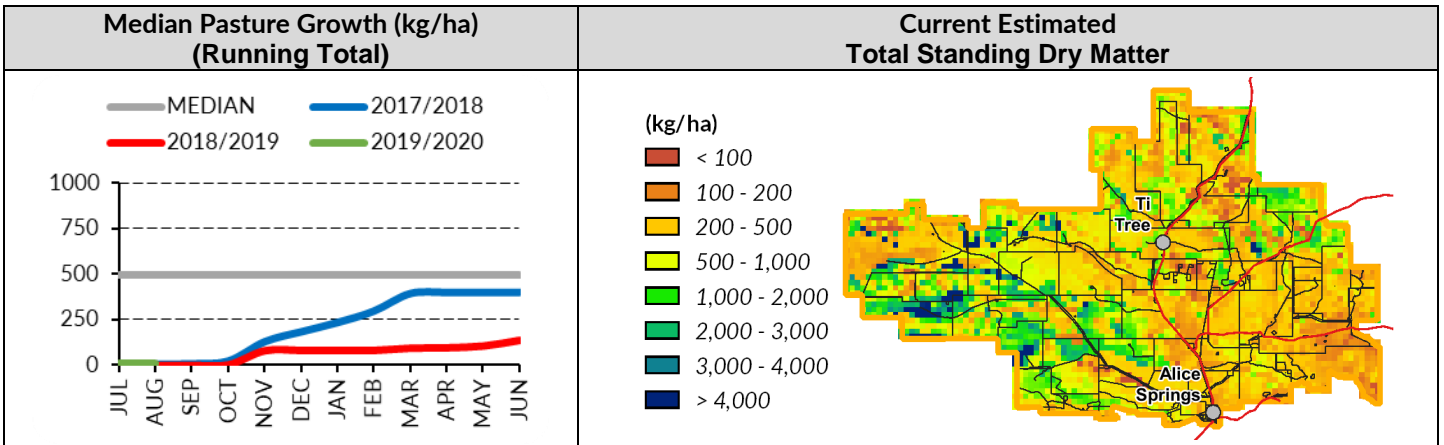


Northern Alice Springs District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was extremely low (lowest 6% of years on record or about a 1 in 20 year event).
- This followed a slightly below-average year in 2017/18 and a well-above average year in 2016/17.
- Patchy rain across the southern parts of the district in November 2018 and May/June 2019 resulted in some pasture growth. However, this growth was not widespread and large areas experienced virtually no growth.
- 33% of the district is now showing low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- 1% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019.

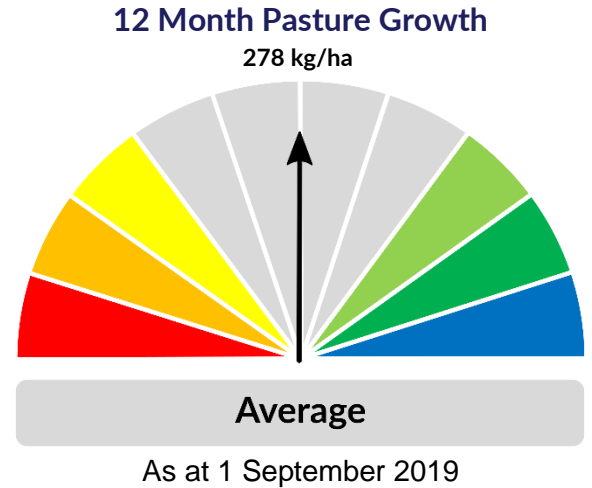


As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	6%	27%	38%	29%

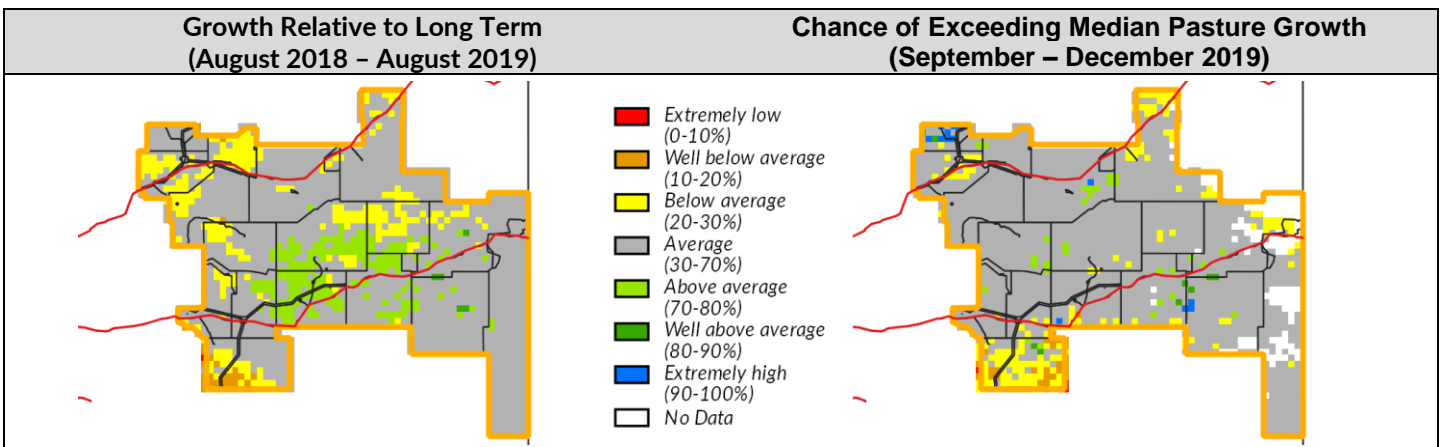
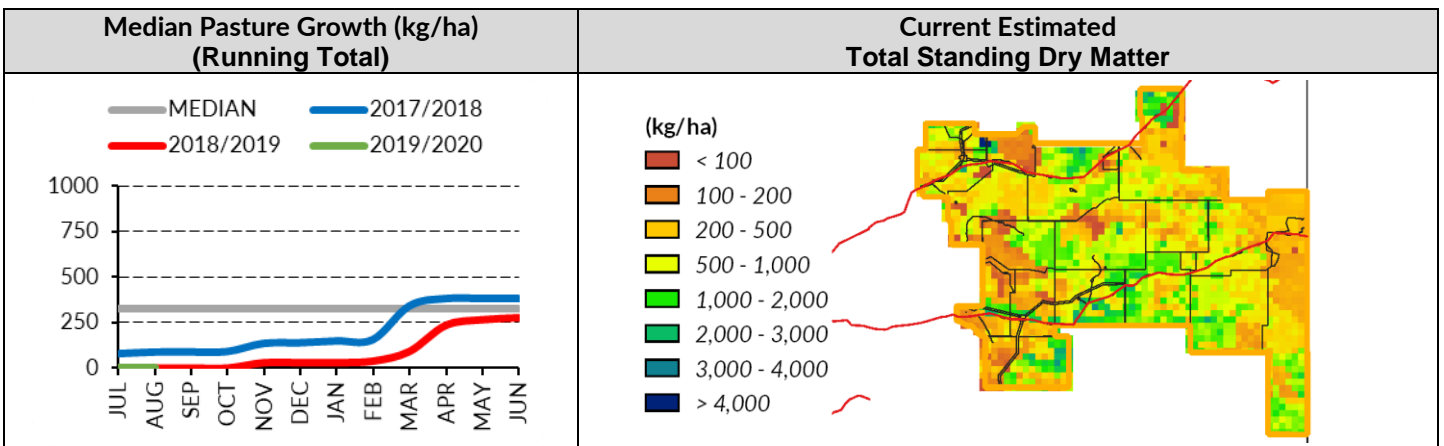


Plenty District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was average. This was largely due to rain received from ex-cyclone Trevor that resulted in above-average growth in the southern and eastern parts of the district.
- The exception was scattered areas in the west and northern parts of the district, which experienced below-average growth (lowest 30% of years on record).
- This followed an average year in 2017/18 and a well-above average year in 2016/17.
- 30% of the district is currently showing very low pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- Less than 1% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019.



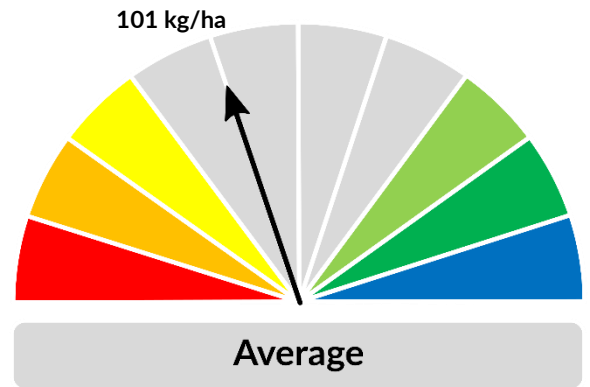
As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	7%	23%	33%	37%



Southern Alice Springs District

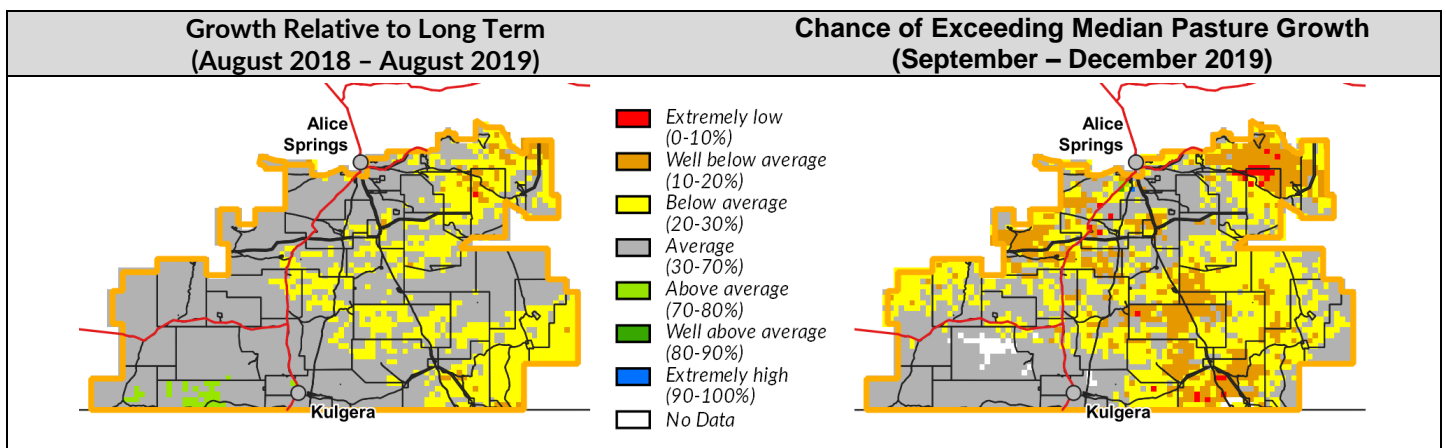
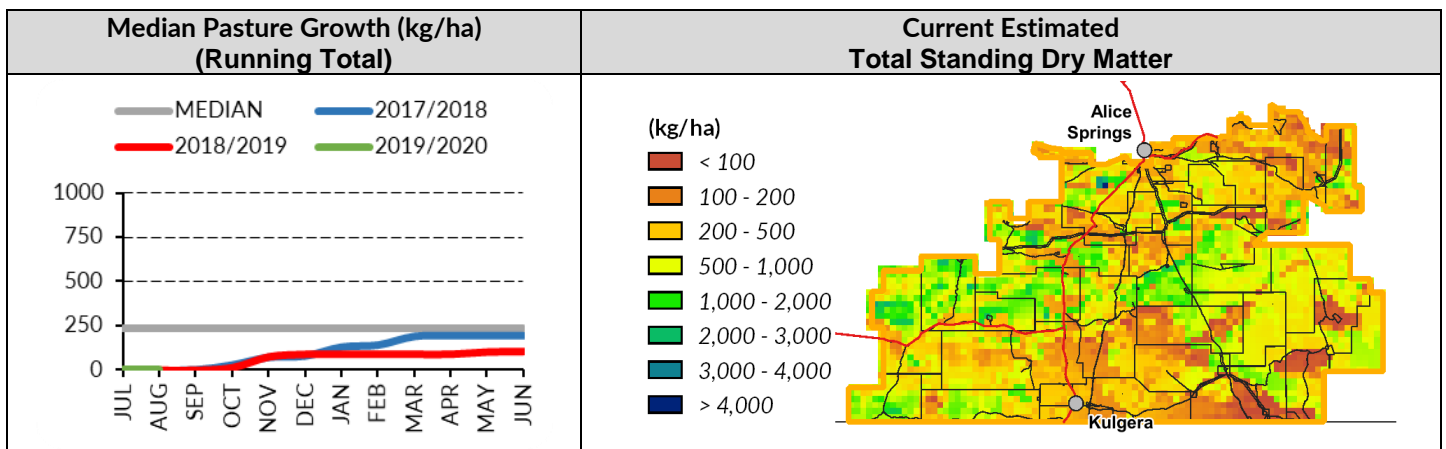
- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was below-average (lowest 29% of years on record).
- Much of the western half of the district experienced average pasture growth, and above average growth was experienced in the south-western part. Areas of below-average growth (lowest 30% of years on record) are now apparent in eastern parts.
- This followed a slightly below-average year in 2017/18 and a well-above average year in 2016/17.
- 35% of the district is now showing low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha), including 14% showing very low levels (<250kg/ha).
- Less than 1% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2019.

12 Month Pasture Growth



As at 1 September 2019

As at 1 September 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2019/20 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	14%	21%	35%	30%



Pasture information

The pasture and fire information in this document is derived from AussieGRASS. AussieGRASS is a model that simulates pasture growth and standing biomass using climate data, vegetation mapping, fire history and regional estimates of grazing pressure. The model can be used to track simulated pasture growth and total standing pasture biomass at the landscape scale.

Note that the model does not use stocking rate data for individual properties. Where stock numbers are significantly higher or lower than typical for a district, model estimates of total standing dry matter may be erroneous.

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