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## Katherine Rural Review

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# Katherine Research Station Farm and Garden Day, 1st April 2006

A record crowd of almost 2000 people enjoyed a highly successful Farm and Garden Day at Katherine Research Station (KRS) on Saturday April 1st.

Helicopter rides, a fashion parade, and cooking demonstrations were among the highlights of the Day, organised by Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines (DPiFM) staff at the Katherine Research Station. There were a total of 25 exhibitors including many from previous years – a mix of local business, NT Government departments and community groups. This year's Gold Sponsor was Brisk Contracting/Aerotech/Skysafari, our Silver Sponsors were Landmark and Top Saddlery, and the Bronze Sponsors were Livestock Nutrition Technologies, Katherine Times and Northern Feed and Cube.

Katherine Small Engines was awarded the annual Best Farm and Garden Day Exhibit Award. The company has been a part of the Day since its inception in 1994.



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The Katherine Rural Review is prepared by the Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries & Mines, Katherine.

It is designed to provide advice to people in primary industry in the Katherine Region.

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For further information please contact 08 8973 9739

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Children were well catered for with face painting and temporary tattooing, pony rides, a colouring-in competition and an animal nursery where they could pat piglets, chooks, goats and calves.

KRS Farm tours were again very popular this year. The tours took people to the KRS feedlot, the horticulture and sesame blocks, the biodiesel area, through the fine-cut Rhodes grass hay demonstration and onto the agroforestry plot. There was also a demonstration of fat depth testing on feedlot cattle and an explanation of the NLIS program.

The NT Fire and Rescue Service, in conjunction with St John's Ambulance, ran a 'Jaws of Life' demonstration.



For the first time, a horse sale was conducted on-site at KRS (during the Farm and Garden Day). The horse sale was organised and run by the Elliot Cattle Company, which proved to be very successful with approximately 31 horses going up for sale.

Harmony James, DPIFM Pastoral Production Technical Officer from Tennant Creek, performed country music, before the fashion parade and also at the after-event drinks.

The Farm and Garden Day has been held every year since 1994, except for 1998. It has grown from an extension exercise targeting local blockholders and producers to a multi-purpose event enjoyed by the wider community. The Day provides a regional focus on the research, productivity, enterprise and community activities conducted by the Department.

The event provides a forum for KRS staff to showcase the diverse range of industries they work with in the region. The services we offer throughout this vast area include advice on beef cattle and property management, animal health, rangeland management, horticulture, field crops and protection from local and exotic plant diseases.

The research and development the Department carries out is driven by the needs of the local industry. In all of this work we are aiming at sustainable development, bearing in mind our responsibility towards protecting the environment.

The 2007 KRS Farm and Garden Day is planned for Saturday 31st March - see you there!

## **FarmBis assists producers to discover their investment potential**

Twelve participants attended a two day "Discover Your Investment Potential" workshop in Katherine. The National Institute of Financial Studies presented a workshop in Katherine on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of April. This workshop is designed to give participants the basic financial skills and knowledge required to create wealth safely, build a solid personal asset base and achieve financial freedom. Topics covered included real estate and share market investment strategies, budgeting, loans and tax strategies.

Participants from the workshop commented that they felt they had gained a better understanding of the economic cycle and how it related to their potential investments, and solid strategies for future investments, particularly off-farm options.

For further info on FarmBis or the 'Discover Your Investment Potential' workshop, please call Simone White on 8973 9792.

# NT FODDER AND SEED PRODUCTION 2005

Arthur Cameron, Principal Agronomist Pasture Development ph 899 92214

DPIFM staff conducted a survey to estimate fodder (hay and silage) and seed production in the Northern Territory during 2005. These figures include the significant amount of mulching hay made in the Darwin Rural area, and the increasing amounts of silage made on a number of Top End properties. The figures are tabulated below.

Hay and silage production both increased this year, while seed production declined. Silage production has increased to a level where it will be recorded separately in the table. The value of the hay and silage produced is estimated at \$13.76 m and the seed at \$0.536 m.

These figures represent the majority of the production in the NT in 2005.

## Hay, Silage and Seed Production in the NT by District (tonnes)

District	Feed Hay	Silage	Mulch Hay	Seed
Adelaide River	810			
Alice & Barkly	5200			
Batchelor	160			
Darwin	3770		550	
Darwin River	500		2040	
Douglas Daly	14800	27300	200	7
DPIFM	680			9
Katherine & VRD	23410	7700		62.5
Mary River	350			
Miscellaneous				1.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49680</b>	<b>35000</b>	<b>2790</b>	<b>79.6</b>

Figures compiled with the assistance of Departmental Officers Ruth Allan (Tennant Creek), Ben Beumer (Darwin), Chris Materne (Alice Springs) and Phil Hausler (Darwin).

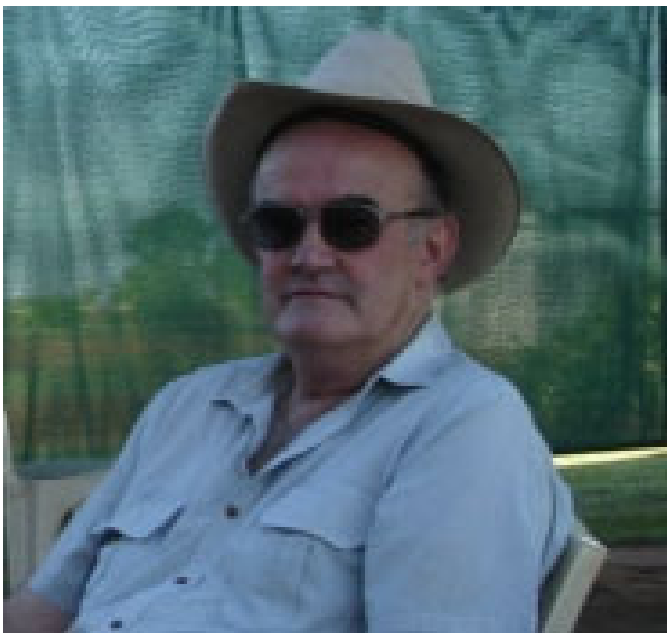
## Crops, Forestry and Horticulture Local Best Practice Groups

Local Best Practice Groups were set up for the Katherine Horticulture Industry in 2003. These groups aim to assist in developing local best management practices that will improve the management of pest and disease, soil quality, water use and supply chain for horticultural produce. In line with the latest restructure in DPIFM, these groups are now open to all crops, forestry and horticulture farmers in the Katherine area. Some previous topics covered include soft option pest control, gross margins, mango fruit handling, soil biology and bore reports. Upcoming topics include water management/irrigation, soil health, plant nutrition and entomology. For more information please contact Deb Rock on 8973 9769 or debbie.rock@nt.gov.au

## Jim Coulthard – winner of NABRC Medal for Innovation

Jim Coulthard Managing Director of Heytesbury Beef is the inaugural winner of the North Australian Beef Research Council's Producer Medal for his contribution to North Australian Research and Development. KPIAC nominated Jim for his innovative management of Heytesbury Beef and his ability to think outside the square.

Heytesbury Beef is breaking new ground using improved grazing management as the key to achieving improved profitability. They are also leading the way with their understanding of herd management, management of cost of production, and the integration of conservation and production. The Pigeonhole Project is a good example of their forward thinking.



DPIFM congratulates Jim Coulthard on this prestigious award. His positive attitude to change is helping to develop the industry as a whole.

Two other awards were made by NABRC, one to a scientist (Geoffrey Fordyce from Charters Towers in Queensland) and one to an extension officer (Peter Smith from Karratha in WA). The NABRC medals are to be awarded biennially.

## New Stock Inspector - Katherine

Hello all. My name is Grant Parker and I have commenced in my new position as Stock Inspector Katherine. I was born in Rockhampton and grew up in Kingaroy Queensland. After schooling I left for an education at the Longreach Pastoral College where I graduated with a Diploma of Applied Science in June 2001. Since graduating I have worked in the rural industry as a jackaroo, contract musterer and a pen rider at a feedlot. At the start of 2003 I took up a Stock Inspector position in Cloncurry with the Queensland DPI&F and was then transferred to Mount Isa in December 2004. I am looking forward to meeting you all in the near future.



## Did you know....

Operating from the Spinifex building at the Katherine Research Station, the Katherine Pastoral Production office services the Katherine, Victoria River District (VRD), Stuart Plateau, Roper and eastern Gulf districts. The Pastoral Production group assists the pastoral industry in Rangeland Management and Animal Production issues.

# Tiny wasp released to tackle the spiraling whitefly

***NT Government Media Release, 31st March 2006***

Northern Territory Government quarantine officers today (Friday 31st March) released a tiny, yellow wasp to control a pest that has infested several backyards in Darwin.

The pest, the 2mm spiraling whitefly, has been found in Malak, Anula and Wulagi in Darwin's northern suburbs, plus Marlow's Lagoon and Humpty Doo.

Plants that can be affected include acalypha, poinsettia and euphorbia (a milkweed).

It is believed to have been brought into the Territory from Queensland in January, but Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM) experts were not alerted until last week and it was confirmed as spiraling whitefly last Friday.

A number of the 0.1mm wasps – almost invisible – were released in Malak today. A second consignment will be released in Humpty Doo over the weekend.

DPIFM Chief Inspector Stuart Smith said today: "The wasp, known colloquially as the spiraling whitefly parasite, will quickly establish itself and control this infestation. In the wild – in South and Central America, Hawaii, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea – it goes wherever the spiraling whitefly goes and virtually wipes it out."

"I would urge the public to notify us promptly of any damage to their plants caused by unusual insect activity and contact our hotline on 1800 084 881 for advice. Affected plants should be placed in plastic bags, sealed, and destroyed by being left in the sun for a few hours. Sealed bags of dead plants can be taken to the dump but please do not transport live, affected plants.

"We also remind people not to take any plants with them when they travel long distances within the Territory without first seeking quarantine advice."

Mr Smith said the spiraling whitefly should not cause any major problems for the lucrative nursery, cut-flower or fruit industries. Industry organisations and interstate authorities have been alerted. Fact sheets and other market access information are being distributed to nurseries, retail outlets and cut-flower growers. Fact sheets are also being translated into Vietnamese for market gardeners in the Darwin rural area.

"We don't believe it will have any detrimental effect on commercial activity in the Territory, providing the proper steps are taken," Mr Smith said.

"Cut flowers destined for most southern states do not require a certificate of inspection for spiraling whitefly, although a certificate may be required for some plants. Western Australia requires plants and cut flowers to be treated with chemicals followed by an inspection and certification. Our officers will assist the industry in complying with these requirements and, providing growers take the necessary steps, the industry should not be affected."

Further details about spiraling whitefly can be found on the department's website, [www.nt.gov.au/dpifm](http://www.nt.gov.au/dpifm)

The fact sheet is now available in Vietnamese on the website

# KPIAC - setting the direction of Pastoral R&D in the Katherine Region

The Katherine Pastoral Industry Advisory Committee (KPIAC), has been an active group for at least 15 years setting the direction of pastoral research and development, and ensuring that the Department's program meets producers' expectations.

The current committee is as dynamic as ever. Members are:

Keith Holzwart (Chairman)	Avago Station
Jim Kerr Victoria	River Downs
Michael Underwood	Riveren Station
Steve Craig	Mistake Creek Station
Rod McColm	Newry Station
Allan Andrews	Auvergne Station
Henry Townsend	Tanumbirini Station
Tony Larsen	West Elsey Station
Steve Petty	Heytesbury Beef
Lachlan McKinnon	NTLEA
Brian Heim	CDU Rural College
Graeme Faan	DNRETA

KPIAC met in Katherine on the 24 February to undertake the large task of priority setting for future research and development. This was particularly timely as there is an opportunity to undertake a new program at Kidman Springs starting in 2007.

The committee also based their priorities on the issues raised by producers in the 2004 Katherine Pastoral Survey. Priorities included:

## Must Do

- Weeds
- Grazing Management
- Fertility of the herd
- Market issues
- Attracting and maintaining staff
- Getting cattle to eat nutritional but unpalatable species
- Sustainable infrastructure development and intensification

## Should Do

- Training and extension
- Threat of greater animal welfare scrutiny
- Best Practice
- Management of growing stock (steers and heifers) to increase weight gain
- Efficiency/Cost price squeeze
- Combining grazing and conservation of biodiversity
- Managing for climate variability
- Grazing systems - spelling, cell grazing etc

## Would be nice to do

- Introduced pastures
- Infectious diseases limiting productivity
- Minimising mortality
- Water quality and availability
- Genetic evaluation
- Labour saving technologies
- Electronic ID
- Environmental management systems

A number of issues surfaced in the Pastoral Survey which fall outside of the capability of DPIFM (eg wild dogs, water access, land tenure, roads, access and wildfire). These will be referred to the appropriate bodies (eg NTCA or DNRETA) letting them know how important pastoralists consider these issues to be. The highest priority was given to weeds. This subject technically falls under DNRETA but it was felt there are also a number of ways we can address weed problems through improved grazing management.

The Pastoral Production team have started preparing a document outlining the work we can do to address these issues, which will be presented at the next KPIAC meeting. If you have any comment on these priorities please call Keith Holzwart at Avago on 89759974, any of the other KPIAC representatives, or Neil MacDonald at Katherine on 89739746.

# Field Day at Newry Station on Heifer Management

**Wednesday 5 July 2006**

Newry is a demonstration site for heifer research in the VRD area, as part of a major project by DPIFM and MLA to improve heifer performance.

- topics to be covered include:
- heifer segregation
- control mating
- supplementation
- vibrio vaccination
- the importance of joining weight
- demonstration of electronic identification devices being used to collect herd performance data
- NLIS information
- summary of other heifer research occurring throughout the NT

Meet at 12 noon for lunch at Newry station. Station tour to Glenarra yards and through the heifer paddocks.

Stay for tea and catch up with friends over a few drinks afterwards.

Producers please RSVP to Karley at Katherine Research Station (89739737) for catering purposes.

Please note that this day is designed for commercial producers who wish to improve their heifer performance. Attendance by others is by invitation only.

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## AMIA Mango Forum

The Australian Mango Industry Association (AMIA), is holding a mango forum at Katherine Research Station on Monday 29th May from 1.00pm. For further info please contact Peter Marks on 89722721.

# North Australian Beef Research Update Conference March 2007

Following the success of the North Australian Beef Industry Conference held in Kununurra in late 2001, its successor will be held in Townsville on Tuesday 20 – Thursday 22 March 2007. The first day, Tuesday 20 March 2007, will be a field day.

It is a very good way of catching up with the latest ideas in cattle research and development.

The conference will be hosted by NABRC, run by Queensland DPIF and sponsored by MLA. Details to follow in due course.

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## An introduction to the National Agricultural Monitoring System

The first phase of the National Agricultural Monitoring System (a) is due to be up and running by July 2006. This means that all available climate and production data from the extensive pastoral and agricultural areas will be available from a single website. A pilot version is now publicly available ([www.nams.gov.au](http://www.nams.gov.au)) which shows most of the information that will be available once the full version is operational.

The primary purpose of NAMS is to streamline Exceptional Circumstances (drought assistance) application and assessment processes, but many in the industry will find it useful for easy access to seasonal climate summaries. Currently the Bureau of Meteorology website is the most heavily used government site and NAMS is expected to be almost as popular.

Bringing this about has been a joint initiative of the Federal Government and the States including the NT. For producers it is important to note that the site contains no information that is not publicly available elsewhere. It is just the bringing the information together into a single site that is new. Further development of NAMS is proposed over the next few years to encompass intensive and irrigated industries.

*Continued on page 8*

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The website allows you to either download the monthly NT report or to focus in on a smaller region and look at the range of available information.

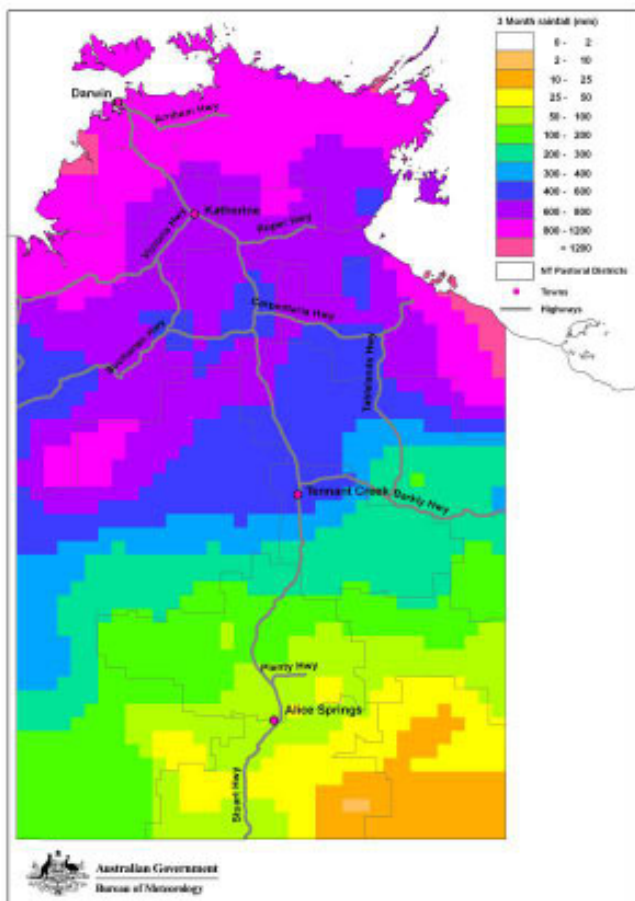
To get the NT report, click on *choose a region* and then with the whole NT map displayed click on *select reports or analyses*. The NT report is updated on the last day of the month and presents:

1. Maps of actual rainfall and rainfall compared to historical record (percentiles) for the last month, last 3 months, last 12 months, last 24 months and financial year and growing season to date.
2. Variation from normal maximum and minimum temperatures
3. Analysis of vegetation greenness from the satellite (monthly over last 12 months)
4. Modelled pasture growth (AussieGRASS)
5. Exceptional circumstances declared areas
6. Climate outlook based on El Niño and the SOI (note that the reliability of the SOI as a predictor of seasonal rainfall varies across the NT, generally less useful in the west than the east. MLA are sponsoring a new project to improve wet season prediction in the north).

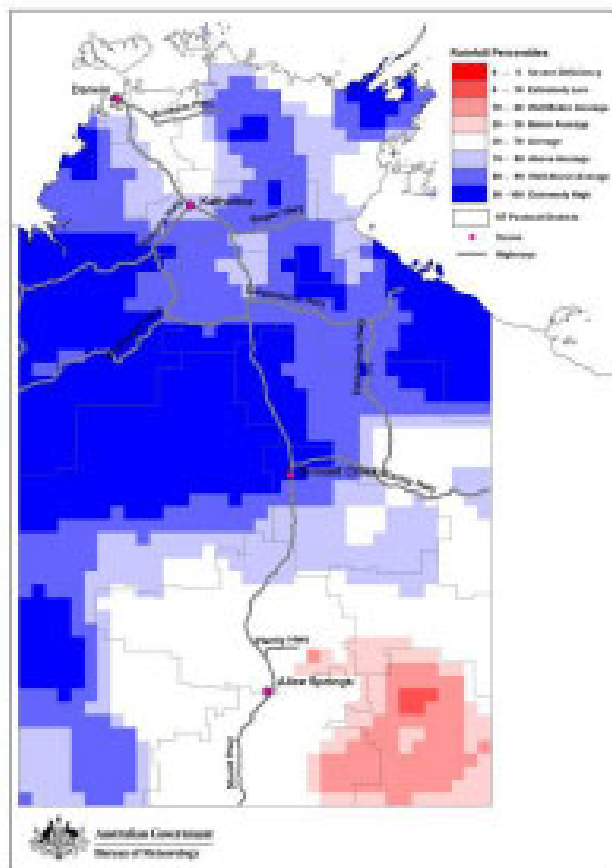
To get information on a smaller area, selection region type (say pastoral district) and region (say Victoria River District) and then you can either explore the data (very fast) or generate a report (much slower). Do test the website out. It is simple to operate and very informative. Further information can be obtained from Neil MacDonald 89739746.

Here is some information taken from the March NAMS report of this season's rainfall and the current El Niño prediction.

### Rainfall over the last three months (January 2006 to March 2006)



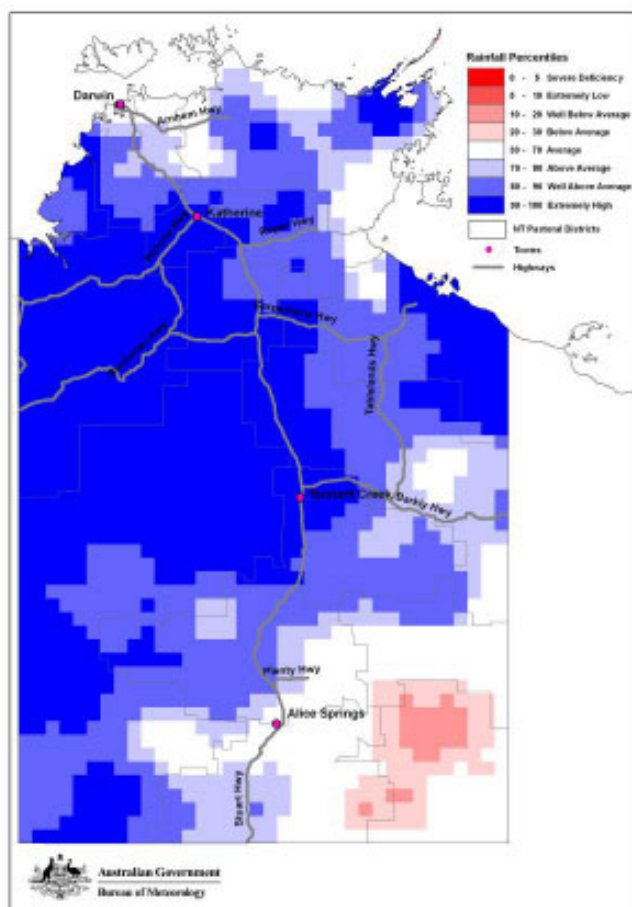
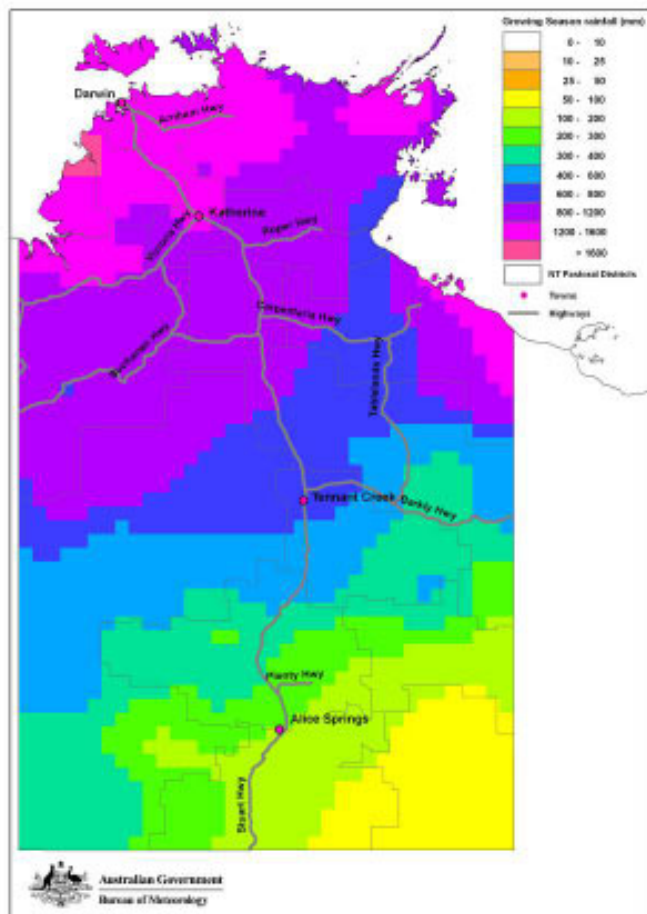
Actual rainfall for January 2006 to March 2006



Rainfall percentiles for January 2006 to March 2006



## Rainfall for the 2005/06 summer growing season to date (September 2005 to March 2006)



Actual rainfall for the 2005/06 summer growing season to date (September 2005 to March 2006).

Rainfall percentiles for the 2005/06 summer growing season to date (September 2005 to March 2006).

### El Niño and the Southern Oscillation Index

The Bureau of Meteorology is stating that current conditions are neutral in the Pacific but with some features of a weak La Niña. Subsurface waters in the eastern equatorial Pacific remain significantly cooler than average, thereby raising the potential for a basin-wide La Niña event to develop. However, considering all indicators, the current conditions across the Pacific are looking less like a La Niña than they were two months ago. Most international computer models suggest neutral conditions will continue through until at least mid-2006. It should be noted that the autumn period is generally the time of maximum uncertainty for computer model projections.

## Date claimer for Kidman Springs Field Day

9-10 of August 2006

This year's theme is 'Protecting our Future'

Proactively addressing many of the possible threats to the future prosperity of the NT Pastoral Industry, including markets, disease, the cost/price squeeze, animal welfare, climate change and staffing.

Features include commercial stands, a station tour, speakers from a wide range of backgrounds relating how we can protect the future of our industry and great entertainment.

See next months KRR for a full program of events.



# Pastoral Market Update

## Live Cattle Exports via Darwin Port – APRIL 2006

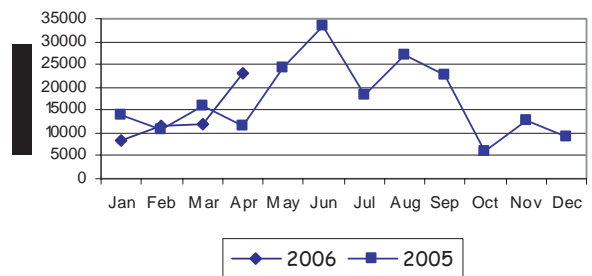
# Please note that the "NT CATTLE" figures are NT cattle exported through the Port of Darwin only, some NT cattle are exported through interstate ports.

Destination	TOTAL CATTLE (including interstate)							# NTCATTLE						
	2004	2005	Last year 30/4/05	YTD 30/4/06	1-30 April	Previous Month	Difference	2004	2005	Last year 30/4/05	YTD 30/4/06	1-30 April	Previous Month	Difference
BRUNEI	14,101	6,642	1,559	3,204	844	1,230	-386	10,492	6,462	1,559	3,204	844	1,230	-1,230
INDONESIA	158,600	186,031	48,839	49,187	20,093	10,586	+9,507	150,048	184,767	48,839	49,187	20,093	10,586	+9,507
PHILIPPINES	31,623	13,052	1,601	0	0	0	0	29,393	12,438	1,601	0	0	0	0
SABAH	304	1,905	0	0	0	0	0	304	1,905	0	0	0	0	0
SARAWAK	320	04,893	0	1,883	1,883	0	+1,883	0	4,893	0	1,883	1,883	0	+1,883
W-MALAYSIA	6,379	93	93	475	363	112	+251	6,272	93	93	70	70	0	+70
EAST TIMOR	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>211,042</b>	<b>212,616</b>	<b>52,092</b>	<b>54,749</b>	<b>23,183</b>	<b>11,816</b>	<b>+11,367</b>	<b>212,520</b>	<b>210,558</b>	<b>52,092</b>	<b>54,344</b>	<b>22,890</b>	<b>11,816</b>	<b>+11,074</b>
				<b>+2,657</b>							<b>+2,252</b>			

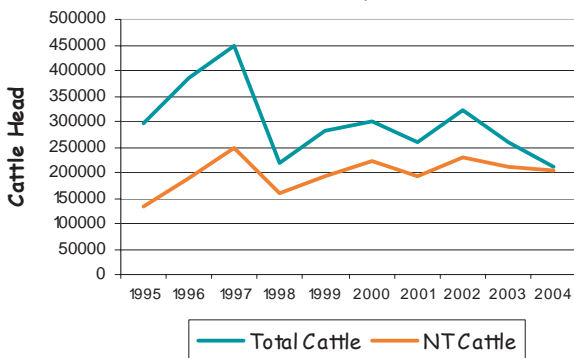
### "April at a glance"

- 20,093 head of cattle through the Port of Darwin during April, 11,367 head more than March, and 11,482 more than April last year.
- YTD figures indicate 2,657 head more than the same time last year.
- 293 Jersey heifers from Vic & NSW were exported to Malaysia.
- 1,199 buffalo were exported to Malaysia.
- 167 more buffalo have been exported so far this year, than all of last year

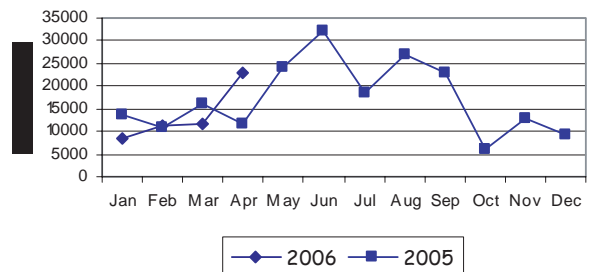
TOTAL Live Cattle Exports thru Port of Darwin  
2005 v 2006



Live Cattle Exports thru the Port of Darwin  
(last 10 years)



NT Live Cattle Exports thru Port of Darwin  
2005 v 2006




### PREVIOUS 7 YEARS

Total Cattle, Port of Darwin							NT Cattle, Port of Darwin							
1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
219,439	280,011	289,179	258,127	322,602	260,618	211,042	160,412	192,441	222,669	193,172	229,796	212,520	205,204	210,558

**OTHER LIVESTOCK EXPORTS VIA DARWIN PORT (includes NT and Interstate Stock)**

Destination	Buffalo			Camels G			oats			D eer			Horses S			heep			Pigs		
	2005	2006	1-30 APR	2005	2006	1-30 APR	2005	2006	1-30 APR	2005	2006	1-30 APR	2005	2006	1-30 APR	2005	2006	1-30 APR	2005	2006	1-30 APR
BRUNEI	816	120	50	34	0	0	1,097	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INDONESIA	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
PHILIPPINES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	450	0
W-MALAYSIA	672	1,949	1,199	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SABAH	314	0	0	0	0	0	3,016	87	87	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,902</b>	<b>2,069</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,113</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>0</b>

**NATIONAL CATTLE PRICES - W/E 28/4/06**

JAPAN OX									MEDIUM STEER								
Estimated dressed weight price (cents/kg)									Estimated dressed weight price (cents/kg)								
SALEYARDS				O.T.HOOKS					SALEYARDS				O.T.HOOKS				
NSW	QLD	SA	AV (Aust)	NSW	QLD	SA	AV (Aust)	NSW	QLD	SA	AV (Aust)	NSW	QLD	SA	AV (Aust)		
This week	338	335	nq	336	305	342	335	325	This week	334	337	350	336	306	336	326	322
Last week	340	331	346	334	296	336	335	321	Last week	336	339	353	339	302	330	326	320
Year ago	303	312	nq	310	312	306	323	313	Year ago	304	305	342	310	310	303	319	312
USCOW									TRADESTEER								
Estimated dressed weight price (cents/kg)									Estimated dressed weight price (cents/kg)								
SALEYARDS				O.T.HOOKS					SALEYARDS				O.T.HOOKS				
NSW	QLD	SA	AV (Aust)	NSW	QLD	SA	AV (Aust)	NSW	QLD	SA	AV (Aust)	NSW	QLD	SA	AV (Aust)		
This week	291	288	297	290	267	284	265	257	This week	357	345	359	358	325	321	311	333
Last week	288	298	294	290	264	279	265	256	Last week	362	354	378	371	318	316	311	330
Year ago	256	265	290	265	251	251	257	243	Year ago	344	317	nq	343	307	269	300	316
LIVE EXPORT QUOTES									<p align="center">Prices courtesy of Meat &amp; Livestock Australia</p>  <p align="center">www.mla.com.au</p>								
Estimated <u>live</u> weight price (cents/kg)																	
LIGHT STEERS (280-400 kg)				HEAVY STEERS (400+ kg)													
Darwin		Fremantle		Darwin		Fremantle											
This week	180		nq		165			nq									
Last week	180		nq		165			nq									
Year ago	160		nq		155			nq									

**CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES**

Key Currencies 1AUD =	Current 28.4.2006	Previous month 31.3.2006	3 months ago 31.1.2006	1 Year ago 30.4.2005	Pre-devaluation 01.07.1997
Brunei Dollar	1.20935	1.22097	1.23830	1.2742	1.076
Indonesian Rupiah	6,614.14	6,832.36	6,962.50	7,3335.44	1830
Philippine Peso	39.04997	38.18171	38.58396	42.1987	19.84
Malaysian Ringgit	2.73630	2.76264	2.79289	2.9272	1.9
Euro	0.60442	0.61996	0.62194	0.5964	N/A
US Dollar	0.75335	0.74541	0.74638	0.7702	0.752

Prepared by the NT Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines

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# Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements

Primary Producer's who have been financially affected by April's flooding and have been unable to obtain commercial finance can contact the Northern Territory Government on 89995303 to discuss their situation.

**POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA**

If undelivered  
please return to:  
PO Box 1346  
Katherine NT  
0851

## Temporary position available at KRS

DPIFM has a temporary position in Katherine available for 4 months for a graduate to assist with compiling a cattle industry publication. The successful candidate will need to have very good writing skills, to understand how to research topics and have a fair general understanding of the cattle industry. Interested candidates should contact Neil MacDonald (89739746) by 15 May.

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