

# Re: DON'T PANIC THE BIG DRY WILL END : ACADEMIC

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.astro/2006-10/msg00238.html>

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  - *Date:* Thu, 26 Oct 2006 21:22:01 -0700
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I sure hope those aren't YOUR predictions, Turdball! We know how inaccurate you are. Remember Sydney? It's still there!

Saul Levy

On 25 Oct 2006 21:58:47 -0700, [sir.jpturcaud@xxxxxxx](mailto:sir.jpturcaud@xxxxxxx) wrote:

FARMERS have been warned not to panic and rush into dramatically reducing their operations, with university research forecasting strong odds on drought-breaking rain in Victoria by the middle of next year.

An associate professor of veterinary science at Melbourne University, Andrew Vizard, predicts a 50-50 chance of significant rain across most of Victoria before May, and 80 to 90 per cent by June.

Having analysed rainfall patterns and calculated how much rain is needed for pasture and crop growth, he said there was only a "very remote possibility" that 2007 would be another year of little rain and failed crops.

"I can't rule it out, of course, but you would say based on history and the evidence we've got, the odds are with the farmers, thank God," he said.

"It will come to an end, this one, and there will be pasture growth some time next year - it's a matter of when."

Autumn is a notoriously difficult season to forecast rainfall in southern Australia. Given that difficulty, Professor Vizard based the "probabilities" of rain on historical data. Like the current drought, most major droughts in Victoria's history were a result of failed spring rains, he said.

"The run we've got is severe, but we've had similar runs. The driest 11-year period was 1935-1945, which was immediately followed by the wettest 11-year period on record.

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"Extreme dry runs are nothing unusual in the Australian environment, and we've just got to deal with them, with or without climate change."

The Bureau of Meteorology's latest forecast for October to December has a 60 to 75 per cent chance of below-average rains.

Addressing about 100 farmers at a seminar in Werribee on drought management, organised by the university's agriculture research and consultancy service Mackinnon Project, Professor Vizard urged farmers not to panic and make rash decisions.

It was important for farmers to separate their tactical response in dealing with the immediate drought from long-term strategies needed to prepare for climate change.

"What you do at the very start of drought matters," Professor Vizard, senior consultant for the Mackinnon Project, sa