

The Manning Valley

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The Manning Valley covers an area of 10,000 square kilometres and the first land grant in the lower valley went to John Guiding who settled at Cooperbrook in 1828. Then followed William Wynter in 1831 on Taree Estate, which became the site of the present city.

Beef and timber are the major industries in the hinterland, while dairying, beef and cash cropping occupy the flats and lower slopes. Tourism, sand mining and fishing are conducted on the coastal strip.

Climate

The Taree district lies in the sub-humid temperate zone. Rainfall is summer-dominant and temperatures are suitable for both warm season and cool season species.

Soils

The valley contains 14 major soil groups, with 42 sub-groups. Of these, only Alluvials, Black Earths,

Kraznozems and Euchrozem are considered to have natural fertility.

In area, the Yellow Podzolics are the main soil type, followed by the Lateritic Podzolics.

The agricultural importance of the major soil groups is led by the Alluvials, followed by Lateritic Podzolics, Red Earths and Brown Podzolics.

From 53 pot trials with soils from the Manning Valley, phosphorus was deficient in each trial. Other elements to stand out as deficient were molybdenum (38), sulphur (22), calcium (14) and potassium (11).

Land Use

Land use is diverse and is related to the topography and soil types within the area.

1. Pastures

Most holdings contain improved pastures on the alluvial flats and low slopes, with native pastures on the adjacent hillslopes.

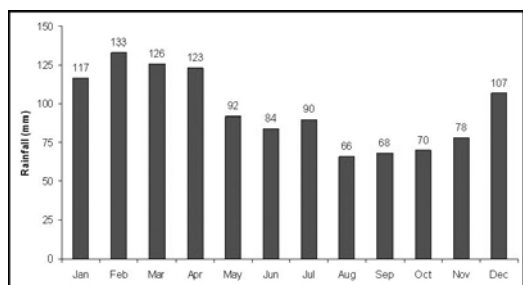


Figure 1: Rainfall at Taree

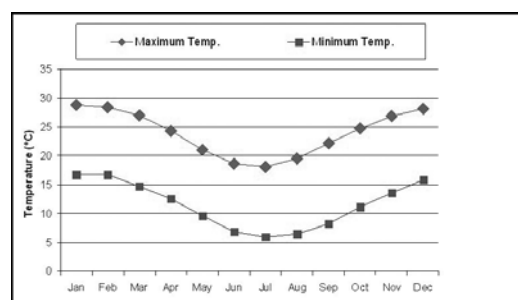


Figure 2: Temperature at Taree

Table 1: Cattle numbers in the Manning Valley

Item	Beef		Dairy		All Cattle	
	Total Number	No. of Holdings	Total Number	No. of Holdings	Total Number	No. of Holdings
Manning Valley	156,138	1,157	31,875	170	188,013	1,243
NSW	5,861,972	29,675	349,314	1,441	6,211,186	30,373
% of State	2.7	3.9	9.1	11.8	3.0	4.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2005-06

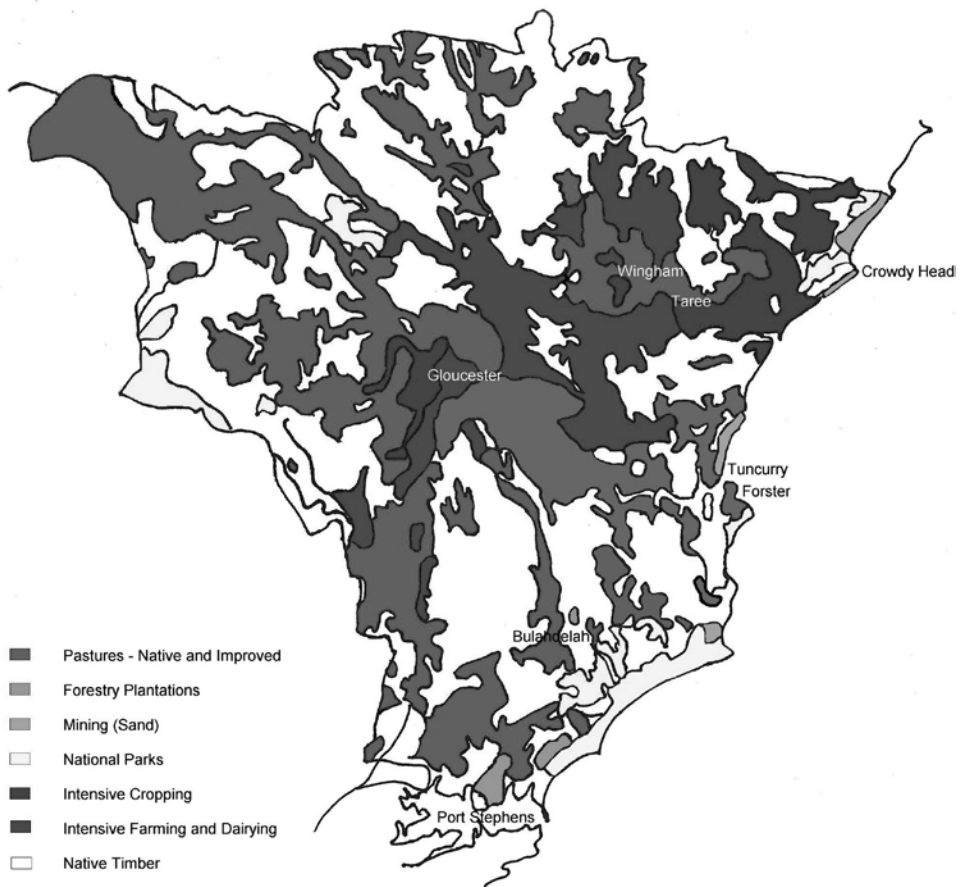


Figure 3: Land use map of Manning Valley

(a) Improved Pasture

This is found on land sown to an introduced or improved grass or legume, while semi-improved refers to land fertilised, usually with superphosphate, to increase productivity.

Introduced species which have improved pasture include paspalum, kikuyu, Rhodes grass, setaria, ryegrass, white clover and red clover.

Carpet grass and whisky grass are two introductions which have not improved pasture.

(b) Native Pasture

This is located on country which has been cleared, but not sown or fertilised, and allowed to develop grass cover (often carpet grass).

Species present in native pasture are blady grass, love grass, blown grass, barbed wire grass, rat's tail grass, wallaby grass, kangaroo grass and windmill grass.

2. Intensive Cropping

The alluvial deposits adjacent to the major streams are used for cash cropping and/or forage cropping, often with dairying.

Maize and forage crops (such as sorghum, millet, cowpeas etc) are the principal crops involved, although soybeans are a more recent addition with some application.

Market gardens and orchards are other intensive crops.

3. Intensive Farming and Dairying

Dairying is still a major industry in the valley, often in conjunction with intensive cropping. Many such farms contain native pastures used as a run for dry cows or a beef sideline.

4. Forestry Plantations

Privately owned pine forests were established in the Hawks Nest area but have been badly damaged by bushfires. The Forestry division of NSW DPI is also active in this area of land use. More recently, there has been an increase in small woodlots on private properties.

5. Native Timber

There are extensive areas of native forest used for timber production. Much of the remaining

timbered area is poor quality forested land unsuitable for clearing and development.

6. Mining

Sand mining was practised along large areas of the beach and dunes along the coast but has declined in recent years.

There are two open-cut coal mines operating in the Avon River Valley near Gloucester.

7. National Parks

These occupy vast areas along the coastline and at Barrington Tops.

Reference

Soil Conservation Service of NSW, Taree District Technical Manual