

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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MEMORANDUM

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Department of Local Affairs

FROM: Jim Miller, Co-Chair Agricultural Impact Task Force
Department of Agriculture

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Colorado Water Institute, Colorado State University

Veva Deheza, Co-Chair Water Availability Task Force
Colorado Water Conservation Board

DATE: June 10, 2011

SUBJECT: **Status of Agricultural Impact Task Force, Current Drought Conditions, and Resulting Agricultural Impacts**

John Hickenlooper
Governor

Mike King
DNR Executive Director

Jennifer L. Gimbel
CWCB Director

This memorandum serves as an update and status report to the Drought Task Force from the Agricultural Impact Task Force (AITF) regarding current AITF activities, current drought conditions around the State, and the resulting agricultural impacts.

To date, the AITF has met twice via conference call – June 1 and 8, 2011. Member organizations represented on the calls included:

CO Department of Agriculture
Division of Water Resources
Colorado State University Extension Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Colorado Water Conservation Board
Farm Service Agency
Lower Arkansas Conservancy District

Much of the discussion on these calls has focused on current and evolving drought conditions, resulting federal disaster declarations, triggered federal agricultural disaster relief programs, and the process for ongoing communication between agencies.

Current Drought Conditions

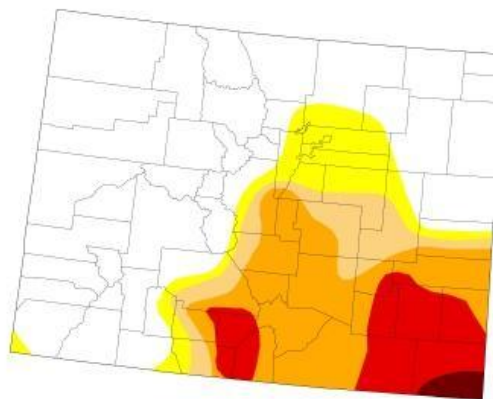
As of the June, 7, 2011, the U.S. Drought Monitor continues to show **D4** (exceptional drought) conditions in Baca County, **D3** (extreme drought) in Baca, Prowers, Bent, Las Animas, Otero, Crowley, Kiowa, Costilla, Alamosa, Conejos and parts of Rio Grande and Saguache Counties. Other parts of southeastern Colorado and the Rio Grande Basin are in **D2** status (severe drought).

U.S. Drought Monitor
Colorado

June 7, 2011
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	59.67	40.33	31.89	25.19	9.62	0.91
Last Week (05/31/2011 map)	59.67	40.33	31.89	25.19	7.78	0.91
3 Months Ago (03/08/2011 map)	41.65	58.35	52.08	35.24	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (12/28/2010 map)	40.40	59.60	49.57	10.13	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/28/2010 map)	28.86	71.14	10.70	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago (06/01/2010 map)	83.28	16.72	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

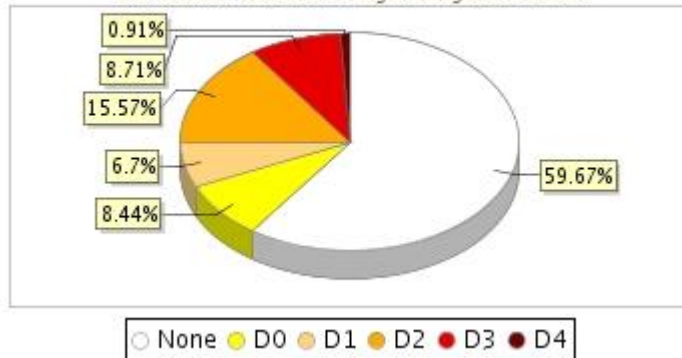
<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



Released Thursday, June 9, 2011
Matthew Rosencrans, NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC

**% Area for Colorado
(As of 6.7.2011)**

Info Source: National Drought Mitigation Center



Federal Disaster Declarations/Drought Disaster Relief

Baca, Otero, and Crowley counties are submitting recommendations to Governor Hickenlooper to seek a secretarial disaster declaration for these counties, designating them as primary counties

for drought and lack of precipitation. These counties had previously been designated as secondary counties contiguous to Kansas counties that had been designated as primary. A primary county status under a secretarial disaster designation opens up additional financial resources and benefits for agricultural producers in these counties.

In addition, requests from Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties for emergency grazing on CRP lands have been submitted. According to representatives from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), support for and concurrence on this request from several key federal agencies and cooperators is necessary, as the grazing on these protected lands would occur during primary nesting season. FSA reported that to date, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the NRCS, and Pheasants Forever will not oppose applications from these counties to emergency graze on CRP lands. As of June 10th, the CO Division of Wildlife has indicated that they will also support the application by the counties for emergency haying and grazing on CRP lands.

Additional impacts resulting from drought conditions in these parts of Colorado include the strong possibility that if producers decide to keep their herds and they are unable to get them onto grass, they will have to start buying hay and bringing it in, resulting in additional expenses for cattle producers. Currently hay prices are about \$200/ton and the quality is not high.

Wheat producers are expecting to see revenue losses as well.

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts has received funds from the NRCS for grazing lands and will use the funds to hold drought workshops throughout southern Colorado in the very near future. The Association has offered their assistance to the AITF in their activities, and the Tourism Impact Task Force (should they request it).

Communications and Drought Impacts Assessment

Veva Deheza and Taryn Hutchins-Cabibi, of the CWCB, will be working closely with the co-chairs and members of the AITF to collect field reported drought information and drought impact data, and will maintain a clearinghouse of data for analysis and future assessment.

Future Meetings of the Agricultural Impact Task Force (AITF)

The next meeting (conference call) of the AITF is June 15, 2011 at 2:00pm. The call-in number is 303-866-3441, when you hear the woman's voice recording, dial 7627.

For Additional Information

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