

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mike King
Executive Director
Department of Natural Resources

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Department of Agriculture

Reeves Brown
Executive Director
Department of Local Affairs

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

Reagan Waskom, Co-Chair Agricultural Impact Task Force
Colorado Water Institute, Colorado State University

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

DATE: July 1, 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.

Since the last memo sent on June 10, 2011, the AITF has held weekly conference calls to coordinate efficient and rapid response to the deteriorating drought conditions in southeast and south central Colorado.

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, impacts and the process for ongoing communication between agencies.

Drought Task Force Call

As follow up to this memo, and to provide an update on the current wildfire situation, **there will be a Drought Task Force conference call at 1pm on July 14th**. The call in number is 303.866.3441 when you hear the woman’s voice recording, dial 7621.

Current Drought Conditions

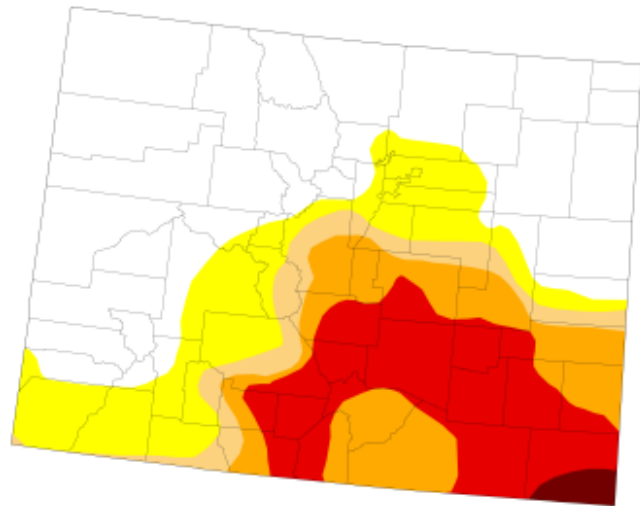
As of the June, 30, 2011, the U.S. Drought Monitor continues to show **D4** (exceptional drought) conditions in Baca County, **D3** (extreme drought) has been expanded to 18 different counties including all of Alamosa, Pueblo, Otero and Crowley counties and portions of Baca, Prowers, Bent, Las Animas, Kiowa, Costilla, Conejos, El Paso, Rio Grande, Saguache, Fremont, Custer, Huerfano, Lincoln Counties. Other parts of southeastern and south central Colorado are in **D2** status (severe drought). Abnormally dry (D0) conditions are also appearing in the southwest corner of the state.

U.S. Drought Monitor
Colorado

June 28, 2011
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	49.91	50.09	34.36	28.89	16.64	0.91
Last Week (06/21/2011 map)	59.62	40.38	31.54	25.86	11.95	0.91
3 Months Ago (03/29/2011 map)	40.99	59.01	53.08	39.67	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 (06/22/2010 map)	79.25	20.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



Intensity:

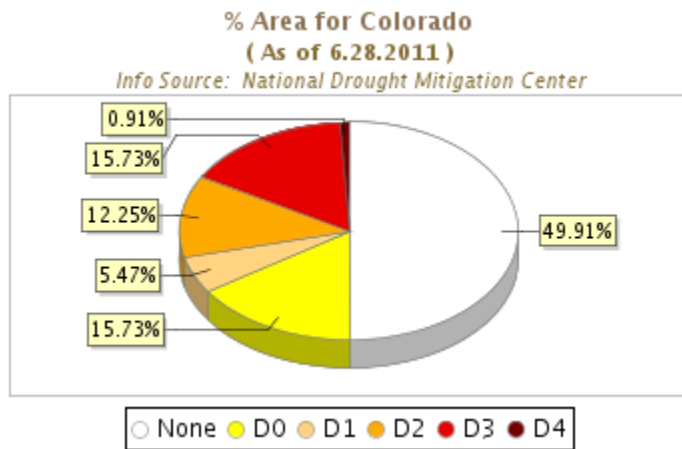
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

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 30, 2011
Richard Heim/Liz Love-Brotak, NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC



Federal Disaster Declarations/Drought Disaster Relief

Disaster declarations for Baca, Otero, and Crowley counties have been received from Secretary Vilsack following a request from Governor Hickenlooper on June 16th. An additional request was sent by Governor Hickenlooper on June 27th for Bent, Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Kiowa, Las Animas, Prowers and Pueblo counties. If granted this would designate them as primary counties for drought and lack of precipitation. A primary county status under a secretarial disaster designation opens up additional financial resources and benefits for agricultural producers in these counties.

It is anticipated that Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Rio Grande and Saguache counties will also seek primary declaration in the next week.

In addition, emergency grazing on CRP lands have been granted for Lincoln, Otero, Las Animas, Bent, Kiowa, Prowers, Baca, and Crowley counties. Ranchers will be able to use land in the Conservation Reserve Program through Sept. 30.

Drought Impacts Assessment

- High hay prices coupled with high cattle prices have led increased cattle marketing in southeastern and south central Colorado as ranchers choose to sell rather than pay high hay prices to feed cattle.
- The wheat harvest has just begun and data is not yet in of yields but it is expected that wheat producers will see revenue losses as well.
- The West Otero Timpas Conservation District, Olney- Boone Conservation District and Colorado State Land Board held a drought workshop June 29th in Rocky Ford aimed at agricultural producers in need of information regarding deferred payments, cost/benefit ratios, cash flow, weather patterns, drought management grazing techniques and government assistance for drought relief.
- Las Animas County has experienced a greater than normal number of fires this year.
- The United States Forest Service will shorten their grazing season in the Pike and San Isabel National Forest, Rio Grande National Forest and the Comanche National Grasslands this year in response to dry conditions.

- As of June 25th 111,808 acres of crop land have failed while an additional 56,329 acres have not been planted due to dry conditions. These acres are primarily in the southeastern portion of the state; however additional data from the San Luis Valley is also beginning to come in.

Member organizations represented on the calls included:

CO Department of Agriculture
 Division of Water Resources
 CSU Extension
 Natural Resources Conservation Service
 Department of Natural Resources- EDO

Colorado Water Conservation Board
 USDA Farm Service Agency
 Lower Arkansas Conservancy District
 Colorado Climate Center
 State Land Board

Communications

Veva Deheza and Taryn Hutchins-Cabibi, of the CWCB, will continue 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)

Weekly conference calls are held Wednesday at 2:00pm. The call-in number is 303-866-3441, when you hear the woman's voice recording, dial 7621.

For Additional Information

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