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USA Drought To Worsen, Drought Grips Nearly Half of U.S.
R. Precheur

March 13, 2000 - According to NOAA's National Weather Service, the United States is in the midst of a worsening drought, following the warmest winter on record. This threat to individuals, agriculture, and industry throughout the country brought together representatives of the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, and Interior, as the federal government issued its first spring drought forecast. Last year's National Weather Service (NWS) climate forecast anticipated drier conditions in the southern U.S. According to Jack Kelly, Director of the National Weather Service, "This year, for the first time, we are issuing a drought forecast. We are able to do this because of the advances made by the climate research community."

"The news is not good," declared Secretary William Daley of the U.S. Department of Commerce. "The drought of 1999 remains with us in the new century-and our data indicate drought conditions are probably going to get worse before they get better. "Several southern states experienced their driest February on record; and the spring drought outlook released today appears bleak.

"The La Nia pattern which has dominated the United States for the past two years has created a serious moisture deficit in many areas. This could seriously impact farmers, water resource managers, navigation interests and the tourism industry. Forewarned is forearmed," said NOAA Administrator D. James Baker.

The spring drought forecast (April to June, 2000) says the drought is going to persist and, in some areas, intensify. Hardest hit will be southern Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida and Georgia in the south, and Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana in the north central U.S.

Editors Note:

For OH, this band of possible drought intensification includes the northwest corner of the state. The area affected starts from about Darke county northward to Williams, eastward to about Lucas or Ottawa and then southward to about Hardin county. The NOAA map does not specifically identify counties but the general region affected. You can view the area affected in a graphic available at the following website:

<http://www.drought.noaa.gov/images/springoutlook.jpg> Secretary Dan Glickman of the U.S. Department of Agriculture noted, "We saw last summer just what a drought can do to farmers. Looking to the future, we need to be ahead of the curve, prepared for dry weather when it comes and equipped with the mechanisms that will protect farmers and prevent widespread losses."

US Drought Monitor, March 14, 2000

The extreme northwest corner of the state is under a severe drought and a slightly larger area is in a first stage drought. Portions of north central OH extending into

eastern OH and southwesterly to about Preble or Butler counties were classified as abnormally dry.

Editors Note 2: The recent rains on Sunday and Monday eliminated many of the abnormally dry areas that existed last week, in the eastern and southern parts of OH. A wide band of heavy rain, (2 to 3 inches) fell from south of Mansfield east to the OH border.

Rainfall amounts were generally 0.5 to 1.0 inches in western and northwest OH.

US Drought Monitor Updates can be viewed at the following website:

<http://enso.unl.edu/monitor/monitor.html>

Glickman Announces New Proposal for National Organic Standards

By Susan McAvoy 202-720-4623, Adapted by R. Precheur

The National Organic Program (NOP) proposed rule contains regulations that would ensure that organically labeled products meet consistent national standards.

Q. What agricultural operations are affected by the proposed standards?

Any farm, wild crop harvesting, or handling operation that wants to sell an agricultural product as organically produced will be affected by the proposed national organic standards. Handling operations include processors, manufacturers, and repackers of organic products. Once the NOP is implemented, production and handling operations will have to comply with all applicable standards. These requirements include operating under an organic system plan approved by an accredited certifying agent and using materials in accordance with the National List of Allowed Synthetic and Prohibited Non-Synthetic Substances. Operations that sell less than \$5,000 a year in organic products are exempted from certification and preparing an organic system plan, but they must operate in compliance with these regulations and may label products as organic. Retail food establishments that sell organically produced agricultural products but do not process them are also exempt from certification.

Standards apply to production process

The proposed national organic standards address the methods, practices, and substances used in producing and handling crops, livestock, and processed agricultural products. The requirements apply to the way the product is created, not to measurable properties of the product itself. Although specific practices and materials used by organic operations may vary, the proposed standards require every aspect of organic production and handling to comply with the provisions of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA).

Crop standards:

The proposed organic crop production standards say that:

* Land would have no prohibited substances applied to it for at least 3 years before the harvest of an organic crop.

* Crop rotation would be implemented.

* The use of genetic engineering (included in excluded methods), irradiation and sewage sludge is prohibited.

* Soil fertility and crop nutrients would be managed through tillage and cultivation practices, supplemented with animal and crop waste materials and allowed synthetic materials.

* Preference would be given to the use of organic seeds and other planting stock, but a farmer could use non-organic seeds and planting stock under certain specified conditions.

* Crop pests, weeds, and diseases would be controlled primarily through management practices including physical, mechanical and biological controls. When these practices are not sufficient, a biological, botanical, or allowed synthetic substance may be used.

Under the NOP, farm and processing operations that grow and process organic foods must be certified by USDA-accredited certifying agents. A certified operation may label its products or ingredients as organic and may use the "USDA Certified Organic" seal.

Labeling

Labeling requirements are based on the percentage of organic ingredients in a product.

Penalties for misuse of labels

A civil penalty of up to \$10,000 can be levied on any person who knowingly sells or labels as organic a product that is not produced and handled in accordance with the National Organic Program's regulations.

After the new regulations are finalized, organic farmers and handlers will be given a sufficient period of time to adjust their growing and processing operations and revise their labels to conform to the new standards.

The proposed national standard and additional steps Secretary Glickman announced today will help stimulate one of the fastest growing sectors of American agriculture. USDA estimates that the value of retail sales of organic foods in 1999 was approximately \$6 billion. The number of organic farmers is increasing about 12 percent per year and now stands at about 12,200 nationwide, most of them small-scale producers.

Fact sheets and other background materials on the proposed organic rule can be accessed on the web at

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/>

What's New At The VegNet Web Site

Visit: "The Library, Online Edition of the 2000 OH Vegetable Production Guide, NOW AVAILABLE.

The OH Vegetables Production Guide ranks #22 in top downloads from OSU Extension Ohioline with over 1,000 downloads. Most of the new features are available in the online edition including the New Insecticide Efficacy tables. The new Pumpkin Production Chart is not there but I hope to have it posted soon in "The Pumpkin Patch" section of the VegNet website.

NEW! VegWeb Fact Sheets.

This new feature offers some valuable information on certain aspects of vegetable production that you can print out directly in your home or office. The first two are by Dr. Mac Riedel, OSU Plant Pathology, and are available from the VegNet homepage.

Fungicides Labeled for Pumpkins

Confused by the many new fungicides now available for pumpkins. Check out this fact sheet to see how to use these fungicides.

Fungicide Activity For Control of Tomato Diseases Which fungicide is best for a particular tomato disease.

Available from the Vegetable Crops Homepage, [Click Here!](#)

The 1999 Pumpkin Review and Slide Show.

Yield Data plus pictures of pumpkin cultivars from this year's trials. Also, see pumpkin varieties rated for powdery mildew resistance. There are many new and interesting pumpkin varieties in all size categories.

Visit: 'The Pumpkin Patch' for pictures and yield data.

The 1999 Green Pepper Evaluation and Slide Show.

Yield Data Slide Show From The Muck Crops Branch at Celeryville,

From The Enterprise Center

Comparison of Disease Control on Fresh Tomatoes using TOMCAST and SKYBIT to Time Fungicide Applications.

Evaluation of WaterMelon Cultivars for Southern Ohio, 1999

1999 Ornamental Corn Evaluation

Evaluation of Eastern Style Muskmelons for Southern Ohio, 1999

[Link To Research Summaries From The Enterprise Center at Piketon.](#)

[Return to Vegetable Crops Homepage | Ohio State University Extension](#)

We appreciate very much the financial support for this series of vegetable reports which we have received from the board of growers responsible for the Ohio Vegetable and Small Fruit research and Development Program. This is an example of use of Funds from the "Assessment Program".

Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Ohio State University Extension is implied. Although every attempt is made to produce information that is complete, timely and accurate, the pesticide user bears the responsibility of consulting the pesticide label and adhering to those directions.

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