

Texas crop, weather

July 01, 2009

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COLLEGE STATION - Texas conditions could be simply summed up as "hot and dry." But read between the lines and you'll find drought severely stressing crops, livestock, agricultural producers and rural communities, according to [Texas AgriLife Extension Service](#) personnel.

"The crops continue to be affected adversely by the continuing drought," said Ron Holcomb, AgriLife Extension agent for [Liberty County](#), northeast of Houston. "Pastures are also being adversely affected by the drought. They decline each day without rain. Some pastures are almost at the point of bare ground."

"Feeding and/or selling of cattle due to the drought is becoming common now," said Joe Janak, AgriLife Extension agent for [Victoria County](#), southeast of San Antonio. "Conditions are remaining dry too long to continue in the cattle business without rain or feeding."

"Range and pasture conditions continue to decline with the high heat and dry conditions," said Isaac Cavazos, AgriLife Extension agent for [McMullen County](#), between Laredo and San Antonio. "Forage supply is declining and stock tank water levels remain at critically low levels, which is causing cattle to bog down. Herds are being liquidated in (areas in)? which water in stock tanks have dried up."

"Temperatures have soared well over 100 degrees for more than two weeks now," said Rogelio Mercado, AgriLife Extension agent for [Jim Wells County](#), west of Corpus Christi. "No rainfall has been received and conditions continue to decline. Livestock producers are forced to cull extensively, and many are early weaning calves to avoid further stress on their remaining herds."

"We had a very hot and dry week with temperatures reaching over 106 degrees," said George L. Gonzales, AgriLife Extension agent for [Webb County](#), Laredo. "High evaporation rates on stock tanks and an increase in supplemental feeding is being reported. Ranchers are trying to hold on waiting for good rainfall."

More information on drought in Texas can be found at the Web site of the [Drought Joint Information Center](#) at <http://agriflife.tamu.edu/drought/>.

The following summaries were compiled by AgriLife Extension district reporters:

CENTRAL: The region was extremely dry, and high temperatures were stressing crops and animals. Producers began supplemental feeding of livestock. Sorghum yields were expected to be low. Without rain, it was doubtful that there would be



sufficient water to finish the cotton crop.

COASTAL BEND: Severe drought conditions persisted. No rainfall was received, and above-normal temperatures were recorded. Crop yields were expected to be limited. Producers were baling sorghum that was zeroed out for insurance. Hay for sale was scarce and expensive when it could be found. Cattle were being sold due to the cost of supplemental feeding.

EAST: Conditions throughout the region were very dry and hot. Pastures and stock ponds were drying up. Most producers made only one cutting of hay with lower-than-average yields. Hay growth slowed so much that many producers were looking to purchase hay, some for feeding right away. Burn bans were posted in many areas. Fruits and vegetables were still being harvested, but some areas saw fields start to dry up. Livestock remained in good condition.

FAR WEST: Scattered showers visited the region with accumulations of 0.3-2.2 inches. Much of the dryland cotton emerged. May-planted cotton was squaring. Rangeland grasses in the areas that received significant moisture were rapidly growing. Wildfire danger was still high in many areas.

NORTH: The region was hot and dry with temperatures in the high 90s and heat indexes above 100. Soil moisture was short. Corn, grain sorghum and soybean crops were in fair condition but showing signs of stress by mid-day. The high temperatures and winds have caused pastures to deteriorate. Hay yields were below average even with tremendous rains in May. The wheat and oat harvests were complete with averages far below normal, mainly due to the late freezes in early April. Cotton was in good condition. Peanuts were planted. Livestock were in fair to good condition. Rangeland and pastures were fair to good.

PANHANDLE: The northwest counties received some rain, but most of the area was hot and dry. Soil moisture was short. Rangeland and pastures were fair. Corn looked good, was 100 percent emerged and growing well. Peanuts and sorghum were fair to good. Winter wheat was reported to be in fair condition in most of the region. The wheat harvest was from 35 percent to fully completed, depending on how much rain was received the last two weeks. Yields ranged from fair to good. Cattle were in good condition.

ROLLING PLAINS: Temperatures in the 100s dried out soils and livestock watering supplies. Soil moisture remained adequate, but with no chance of rain in the forecast producers were worried that it won't last long. Producers finished planting cotton. About 20 percent of the crop had to be replanted after being hailed out. Cotton made good progress despite topsoil drying out. Thrips numbers increased in some areas. Sorghum was doing fine in most areas. Many haygrazer fields were starting to burn up, causing concern about rising nitrate levels. Beet armyworm and fall armyworm numbers were rising in many sorghum fields.

SOUTH: Extremely hot, dry weather continued. Soil moisture was very short. For much of the last two weeks of June, temperatures were well above 100 degrees. In the eastern parts of the region, small amounts of grain that had not been zeroed out for insurance matured and were expected to be carried to harvest. With heavy irrigation, corn and cotton progressed well in the western parts of the region. Watermelon harvesting should be completed soon. Onion harvesting was complete, and some early-planted sorghum fields were harvested with very low yields. Pecans did not look good in the western counties as a result of lack of irrigation water. Producers were not allowed to use Nueces River water due to the extremely low stream flow. In the southern parts of the region, grain sorghum harvesting continued. Many livestock producers were moving their herds to other areas, while others were extensively culling them. To avoid further stress on remaining herds, producers were early weaning calves. Livestock under supplemental feeding were in good to fair condition.

SOUTH PLAINS: Temperatures were in the upper 90s this week, which was good for crops. Soil moisture was short to adequate. Corn was in good to excellent condition. Sorghum was in fair to good condition. The wheat harvest was ongoing with extremely low yields. Cotton was in fair to good condition, having made progress with rain the previous week. However, many cotton fields were late planted and will need open weather this fall to finish. Pumpkins were off to a good start under irrigation. Pastures and rangeland were in poor to fair condition. Cattle were in good condition with continued supplemental feeding.

SOUTHEAST: Most of the region experienced extreme drought conditions. Burn bans were placed in several counties. Pastures were declining, appearing as almost bare ground in some counties. Dryland corn was baled for hay. Cattle producers sent calves to market earlier than normal to ease grazing pastures. Overall, crop conditions were poor. Areas still salty from the Hurricane Ike storm surge were burning up. Dryland corn was rolled up for hay. Livestock owners were feeding hay they just baled.

SOUTHWEST: Dry weather with record or near-record high temperatures continued. The soil profile was very dry. The San Antonio Water System has been in Stage II emergency water rationing for almost a month. On June 27, the Edwards Aquifer water level was only 2 feet above the mandatory Stage III declaration requirement which will call for the curtailment of lawn watering and other industrial water uses. Forage availability was very short. Pastures and rangeland made almost no progress. The cabbage, onion, green bean, potato and sweet corn harvests were completed. The harvesting of cantaloupes and watermelon was ongoing. Corn and sorghum dried down with the harvest expected to begin soon, but below-average yields were expected. Cotton made excellent progress under heavy irrigation.

WEST CENTRAL: Extremely hot, dry conditions continued, stressing crops and causing hay to be in short supply. Cotton planting was nearly completed. Rangeland and pastures declined. Livestock producers had major problems with flies and other insects.

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