

Drought Task Force Meeting
Monday, August 6, 2012
2-3 pm CDT
State Emergency Operations Center Amphitheater

In attendance:

Kevin Fridley, SDDA	Jon Farris, SDDA	Kristi Turman, SDDPS-OEM
Mark Rath, SDDENR	Lynn Beck, SDDENR	Bob Wilcox, SDACC
Terry Woster, SDDPS	Katie Konda, SDDA	Aaron Jordan, SDNG
Paul Merriman, SDDPS-FMO	Tina Titze, SDDPS-OEM	Walt Bones, SDDA
Craig Schaunaman, USDA-FSA	Doug Hinkle, SDDPS –FMO	Jamie Crew, SDDA
Dennis Todey, SDSU	Steve Hasenohrl, WFS	Steve Harding, SDDM
Jason Bauder, SDDPS-OEM	Emmett Keyser – GF&P	John Hines – Capital Journal

Climatology update:

Dr. Dennis Todey reported there were only minor changes to the drought monitor this week. The far southeast part of the State is the farthest from normal precipitation and the highest above average temperatures in the range of 6 to 8 degrees above normal. The remainder of the state is in the 2 to 3 degrees above average. He reported there was some moisture in areas that will help the soybeans; however, the damage has already been done to the corn with no recovery possible even with some moisture. The 8 to 14 day outlook is continuing to show warmer than average temperatures and then moving into more normal temperatures to possibly cooler temperatures. Rain chances continue to remain the same with some isolated chances throughout the state, but really questionable on any major changes in precipitation chances. The longer range forecast does show signs of change because we will be transitioning into an El Nino pattern which typically brings increased chances of rain and a warmer than average winter.

FSA report:

Craig Schaunaman reported 11 counties are eligible for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP); however, there is no funding available for the program so far. He is still hopeful that funding will become available. Environmentally sensitive practices areas have been opened up for emergency haying and grazing; however, this end August 31st. Craig toured southeast SD and said there was a lot of corn silage being cut and a lot of the corn did not even have ears on them. He said the soybeans were still hanging on. Craig stated the high commodity prices will effect livestock producers in the future. Questions were asked if rangeland lost by fire on Rosebud would be covered by ag declarations and the answer was only through the livestock indemnity program, or if they took NAP coverage. Other questions asked were if any more environmentally sensitive practices areas will be opened up for emergency haying and grazing and the answer was most likely no. The final questions was if there would be any more ECP counties qualifying on the eastern side of the state and the answer was very possible if the county commissioners request that type of assistance.

SDDA report:

Jon Farris reported on a question that was asked last week about the possibility of lifting the hauling restrictions for hay and that neighboring states may have different hauling restrictions. Jon found out in talking with the SD Motor Carrier division within Highway Patrol that the trucking requirements for hauling are in-line with all neighboring states, so this is not an issue. He also found out that if the Governor did do an executive order for hauling hay, it only waves the permit required, all other rules for hauling hay must still be abided by.

DENR report:

Lynn Beck reported no new irrigation shut-off orders this week. There were some notifications sent out about the possibility of shut-off orders on the Big Sioux River.

Rural Water System report:

Morris Elcock reported no changes or issues from last week.

Wildfire report:

Steve Hasenohrl reported 7 new fires, all small ones, were started by lightning this last week. He also stated that Meade County and Fall River County fire departments are starting to become burdened by the costs of fighting all the fires within their jurisdiction and crews are becoming tired. This is something the FMO and WFS will monitor in the weeks to come.

GF&P report:

Emmett Keyser reported there has been some fish kills due to low oxygen on the Big Sioux River this past week. The high temperatures increase the water temperatures and reduce oxygen levels that result in fish kills. Also noted was that dropping water levels may preclude agency staff from being able to harvest walleye from some natural rearing ponds.

County Commissioners Ass'n. report:

Bob Wilcox reported that rural residents stress level is increasing due to the crop losses as a result of the drought. It was noted that the drought task force website does have information on it for counseling services to assist them.

The drought task force information sharing website is up and running and the address is

www.drought.sd.gov

The next Drought Task Force meeting will be held Monday, August 13, 2012, from 2-3 pm in the State EOC amphitheater.