

POLK COUNTY GRAZIER

August 1, 2022



*An eNewsletter by the Rich Mountain
Conservation District*

Five Facts About the United States Drought Monitor

This is likely no surprise to you, but drought persists across the western U.S. and is intensifying in some areas. No geographic area is immune to the potential of drought at any given time. The [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) provides a weekly drought assessment, and it plays an important role in USDA programs that help farmers and ranchers recover from drought.

Fact #1 - Numerous agencies use the Drought Monitor to inform drought-related decisions.

The map identifies areas of drought and labels them by intensity on a weekly basis. It categorizes the entire country as being in one of six levels of drought. The first two, None and Abnormally Dry (D0), are not considered to be drought. The next four describe increasing levels of drought: Moderate (D1), Severe (D2), Extreme (D3) and Exceptional (D4).

While many entities consult the Drought Monitor for drought information, drought declarations are made by federal, [state](#) and local agencies that may or may not use the Drought Monitor to inform their decisions. Some of the ways USDA uses it to determine a producer's eligibility for certain [drought assistance programs](#), like the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) and [Emergency Haying or Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres](#) and to "fast-track" [Secretarial drought disaster designations](#).

Fact #2 - U.S. Drought Monitor is made with more than precipitation data.

When you think about drought, you probably think about water, or the lack of it. Precipitation plays a major role in the creation of the Drought Monitor, but the map's author considers [numerous indicators](#), including [drought impacts](#) and local insight from over 450 expert observers around the country. Authors use several dozen indicators to assess drought, including precipitation, streamflow, reservoir levels, temperature and evaporative demand, soil moisture and vegetation health. Because the drought monitor depicts both short and long-term drought conditions, the authors must look at data for multiple timeframes. The final map produced each week represents a summary of the story being told by all the pieces of data. To help tell that story, authors don't just look at data. They converse over the course of the map-making week with experts across the country and draw information about drought impacts from media reports and private citizens.

Fact #3 - A real person, using real data, updates the map.

Each week's map author, not a computer, processes and analyzes data to update the drought monitor. The [map authors](#) are trained climatologists or

meteorologists from the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (the academic partner and website host of the Drought Monitor), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and USDA. The author's job is to do what a computer can't – use their expertise to reconcile the sometimes-conflicting stories told by each stream of data into a single assessment.

Fact #4 - The Drought Monitor provides a current snapshot, not a forecast.

The Drought Monitor is a “snapshot” of conditions observed during the most recent week and builds off the previous week's map. The map is released on Thursdays and depicts conditions based on data for the week that ended the preceding Tuesday. Rain that falls on the Wednesday just before the USDM's release won't be reflected until the next map is published. This provides a consistent, week-to-week product and gives the author a window to assess the data and come up with a final map.

Fact #5 – Your input can be part of the drought-monitoring process.

State climatologists and other trained observers in the drought monitoring network relay on-the-ground information from numerous sources to the US Drought monitor author each week. That can include information that you contribute.

The Drought Monitor serves as a trigger for multiple forms of federal disaster relief for agricultural producers, and sometimes producers contact the author to suggest that drought conditions in their area are worse than what the latest drought monitor shows. When the author gets a call like that, it prompts them to look closely at all available data for that area, to see whether measurements of precipitation, temperature, soil moisture and other indicators corroborate producer-submitted reports. This is the process that authors follow whether they receive one report or one hundred reports, although reports from more points may help state officials and others know where to look for impacts.

There are multiple ways to contribute your observations:

1. **Talk to your state climatologist** - Find the current list at the [American Association of State Climatologists](#) website.
2. **Email** - Emails sent to droughtmonitor@unl.edu inform the USDM authors.
3. **Become a CoCoRaHS observer** - Submit drought reports along with daily precipitation observations to the [Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network](#).
4. **Submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR)** - go.unl.edu/CMOR.

For more information, read our [Ask the Expert blog with a NDMC climatologist](#) or visit farmers.gov/protection-recovery.






Source: USDA Farmers.gov email bulletin

Please see the attachment to get more information about the US Drought Monitor!

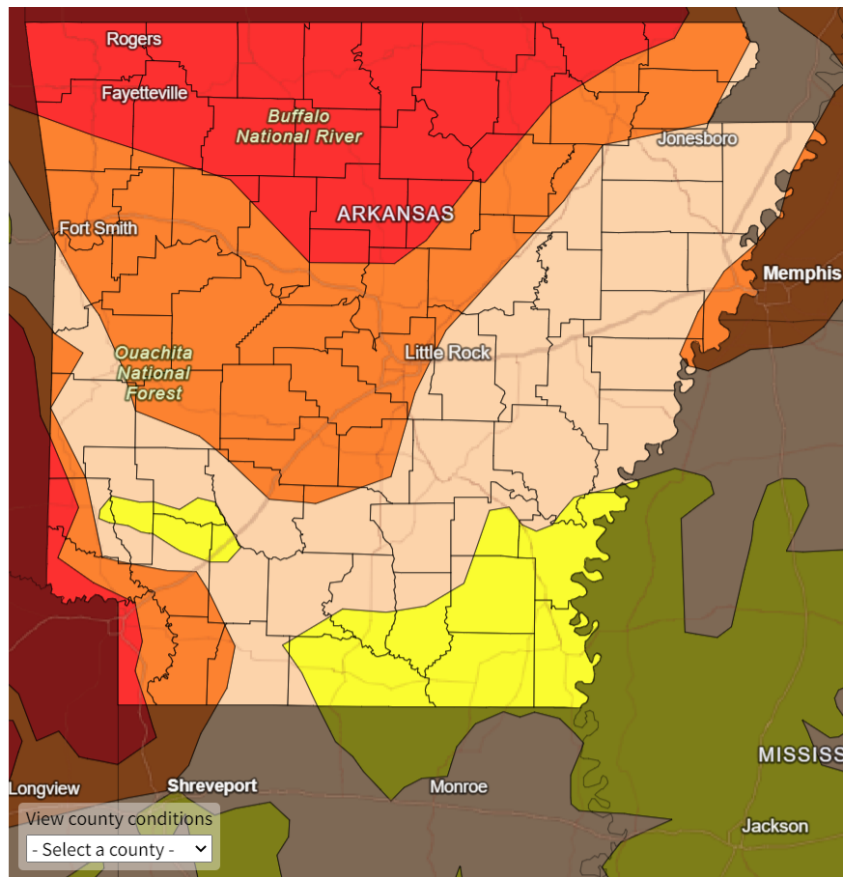
Drought Monitor

The most recent version of the drought monitor shows western Polk County to be in a D2 (Severe Drought) or D3 area (Extreme Drought) and eastern Polk County to be in a D1 (Moderate Drought). A new version should be released on August 7th. You can go to the drought monitor site by clicking here: Arkansas | Drought.gov

The following state-specific drought impacts were compiled by the [National Drought Mitigation Center](#). While these impacts are not exhaustive, they can help provide a clearer picture of drought in Arkansas.

	D0 - Abnormally Dry • Fire danger increases	100.0% of AR (D0–D4)
	D1 - Moderate Drought • Forage crops are stunted • River levels decline • More wildfires occur than normal	89.1% of AR (D1–D4)
	D2 - Severe Drought • Crops are negatively impacted; some crops are not planted; hay yield is low; farmers begin feeding cattle early • Burn bans begin • Reservoirs decline; rivers are very low; rivers are dredged	54.4% of AR (D2–D4)
	D3 - Extreme Drought • Pastures are depleted; hay is short; cattle are sold • There are more insects than normal; trees show drought stress; wildlife seek food and water • Water shortages are noted; water table is low; stock ponds are dry	22.4% of AR (D3–D4)
	D4 - Exceptional Drought • Crops have little or no yield; cattle weights are low; milk production is low • Trees and wildlife are dying • Daily life is impacted for outdoor workers	0% of AR (D4)

Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA



Updates Weekly - 07/26/22

*"Take Care of the Land and the
Land will Take Care of You"*

Plant of the Week

Crabgrass



- Crabgrass is an annual warm season grass originally from southern Africa.
- Mature Crabgrass plants can reach a height of 2-4 feet.
- Crabgrass is adapted statewide in Arkansas and is productive in pastures for livestock grazing.
- It's nutritive quality is considered superior to most other warm season perennial grasses and is preferred by cattle.
- It reseeds itself each year very well and is productive from May to September.
- Since it needs to reseed itself each year it should be allowed rest periods from grazing in the summer so it will volunteer the next spring.
- It is aggressive, spreads by seed and is considered an invasive weed in gardens and flower beds.
- See attachment for a fact sheet on Crabgrass.

You can learn more about plants at the USDA – NRCS PLANTS Database ([USDA Plants Database](#)).

Upcoming Grazing Meetings and Seminars:

⇒ **TOMMOROW! August 2, 2022 – Drought Monitor: Factors and Considerations Associated with the Weekly Map**

Presenter: Dr. Deborah Bathke, US Drought Monitor Author (1PM - online seminar)

You are invited to attend the weekly grazing training sessions by Jeremy Huff, the USDA/NRCS state grazing specialist. He offers these training sessions as a Zoom meeting and the instructions for logging in are included in attached flyer. If you have the Zoom app on your phone you can just scan the QR code on the flyer. If you want to watch the presentation on your computer there is a link included in the attachment. The sessions are normally every Tuesday at 1pm so **see the flyer**.

⇒ **August 9, 2022 – Pasture Management during a Drought**

Presenter: Dr. John Jennings, Extension Forage Specialist and Professor,

**University of Arkansas
(1pm - online seminar)**

Next week's weekly grazing training sessions by Jeremy Huff, the USDA/NRCS state grazing specialist. The sessions are normally every Tuesday at 1pm so **see the attached flyer.**

**Rich Mountain
Conservation
District**

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Take a picture with your cell phone to visit the RMCD website —>



DID YOU KNOW?

Archived copies of the "POLK COUNTY GRAZIER" are now available on the Rich Mtn. Conservation District website at:

[Publications - Rich Mountain Conservation District \(rmcd.org\)](http://rmcd.org)

Sent on behalf of the Rich Mtn Conservation District.

Thanks for your interest in grazing management and conservation,

Steve Swall

District Conservationist

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Mena Service Center (Polk & Montgomery Counties)

(479)437-6054

Please reply to unsubscribe if you do not wish to receive this newsletter.

The Tuesday Pasture Talk

Learn about Pasture Topics with us



Anyone is welcome to join



●	●	●	●	●
August 2, 2022 1:00pm CST	August 9, 2022 1:00pm CST	August 16, 2022 1:00pm CST	August 23, 2022 1:00pm CST	August 30, 2022 1:00pm CST
Drought Monitor: Factors and Considerations Associated with the Weekly Map	Pasture Management during a Drought	Armyworms and Bermudagrass Stem Maggot	Effect of herbicide sod-suppression on yield of late-summer planted forages for fall grazing	Shade: Perspective from the Soil, Plants, and Animals
Presenter: Dr. Deborah Bathke, US Drought Monitor Author	Presenter: Dr. John Jennings, Extension Forage Specialist and Professor, University of Arkansas	Presenter: Dr. Kelly Loftin, Extension Entomologist, University of Arkansas	Presenter: Kenny Simon, Program Associate, University of Arkansas	Presenter: Jeremy Huff, State Grazing Lands Specialist, Arkansas NRCS

Expect to Learn:



What can you do to help the authors of the US Drought Monitor?



What can producers do now to help manage pastures in a drought.



What to do when pastures are affected by armyworms and/or bermudagrass stem maggot.



How do you get earlier growth from fall planted forages?



What type of shade is the best for livestock?

Join by these Methods:

Direct Link:

Website:

[Click Here to Join](#)

Zoom Meeting ID: 836 1963 7075
Passcode: 650511

Phone:



Questions or Comments:

jeremy.huff@usda.gov
or (501) 413-0527

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Crabgrass



Life Span: Annual

Varieties: Quick and Big, Quick and Big Spreader, Red River, Mojo, Impact

General Seeding Info:

- Planting Rate (Drilled): 2-4 lbs per acre
- Planting Rate (Broadcast): 4-6 lbs per acre
- Planting Depth: 0-¼ inch
- Preferred Planting Dates: March 1-May 1

General Grazing Guidelines

- Begin Grazing: 5-6 inches
- End Grazing: 3-4 inches
- Typical Rest Days Needed: 10+ days

Seed Cost: \$20-\$60 per acre

Portions of the state best adapted: All

Soil Texture Preferred: Loam to Clay Loam

Financial assistance available through EQIP?

No, not currently for forage.

Local Seed Availability: Plan to check with local seed suppliers well ahead of planting dates. Crabgrass seed can be purchased directly from growers too.

Key Decision Characteristics

Ease of Establishment	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
Drought Tolerance	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
Wet Site Tolerance	★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Close Grazing Tolerance	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Seedling Vigor	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Hay Use	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
Tolerance to Soil Acidity	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Common Advantage

Crabgrass is an excellent, high quality forage for summer grazing. Crabgrass has excellent re-growth potential and is a prolific re-seeder.

Common Disadvantage

Livestock’s preference for crabgrass declines in early fall months. Crabgrass isn’t able to hold its leaf structure and quality past first frost. Crabgrass is more desirable for grazing rather than hay.

Establishment Procedures:

Conventional Seedbed Preparation: This is the preferred method depending upon site conditions. Seed can be broadcasted on a tilled seed bed. Ideally, use an off-set disk and followed by tandem disk to break up the soil. A drag is effective in smoothing the ground. The seedbed must be firm prior to seeding. This is accomplished with either a roller or cultipacker. After the seed is broadcast on a firm seedbed, use a roller or cultipacker again over the seedbed.

No-till drill: Seed can be placed into the soil with a no-till drill. This is an option for rocky or erosion susceptible soils. Not placing the seed too deep is a typical challenge with this option.

Quick Tips:

Certain crabgrass varieties have chaffy seeds which can be difficult to properly seed with a no-till drill or broadcast seeder. For these varieties, use a carrier such as fertilizer, dry sand, or pelletized lime to improve broadcasting abilities. Do not let the crabgrass have prolonged exposure to fertilizer.

Planting crabgrass into existing stands of cool season small grain annuals grasses (e.g. wheat, cereal rye) is another option to establish crabgrass. Broadcast crabgrass seed onto existing cool season small grain pastures in February and then graze the forages which will cause animals to tread in the seed.

Crabgrass varieties will differ in maturity, growth rate and characteristics.

Fertility

Use nutrient recommendations from a current soil test.

Establishment: Apply lime 6-12 months prior to targeted planting date. Incorporate phosphorus and potassium into seedbed if the site is tilled for site preparation. If the no-till drill planting option is used, surface apply the phosphorus and potassium one month prior to planting. Do not apply nitrogen fertilizer at or before planting. Wait until crabgrass begins to form “shoots” before applying nitrogen. If diammonium phosphate (DAP) is the only source of phosphorus available, waiting until the crabgrass forms “shoots” before phosphorus application is appropriate.

Do not over apply nitrogen to crabgrass pastures.

Consult with your local cooperative extension service for specific nutrient recommendations.

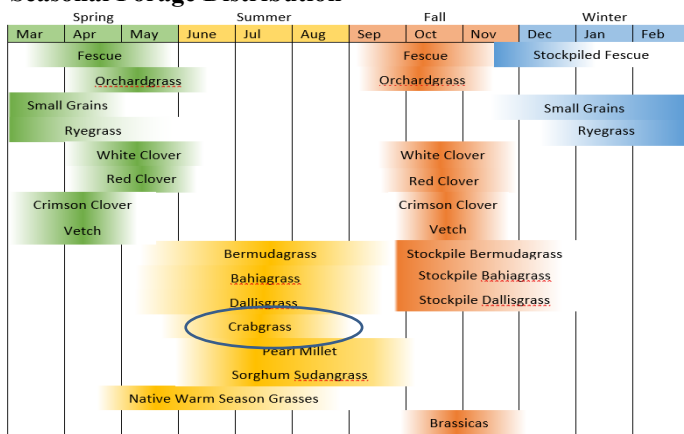
Grazing Management

Overall yield, productivity, and longevity of the stand can be enhanced by rotational grazing. The new growth and re-growth from crabgrass is most palatable and preferred by livestock. Take advantage of crabgrass re-growth potential during key summer months. Crabgrass that has matured will be much less preferred by livestock. Crabgrass will need to become mature and produce a seed head for it to re-seed and be present for the next year.

Compatibility with Other Forages

Crabgrass can be considered a prolific re-seeding annual that can serve as warm season base. Crabgrass is typically very aggressive and will out-compete many other warm season forages. Incorporating a cool season small grain forages (e.g. cereal rye or wheat) into crabgrass pastures is an effective strategy to bridge forage gaps. Additionally, clovers and legumes such as crimson clover and vetch can be used on crabgrass pastures. Cool season small grain forages are more preferred than annual ryegrass. A crabgrass and annual ryegrass combination can work but it's less preferred because annual ryegrass growing season stretches into late May and early June. Therefore, this can set-back crabgrass growth for summer grazing.

Seasonal Forage Distribution



Most common reason for establishment failures

Two common reason for establishment failures include seeding too deep and excessive competition. Crabgrass prefers sunlight for quick germination and seedling growth.

Most common reason for existing stand failures

Crabgrass stands will decline if the plant isn't allowed to produce a seed head. In addition, excessive competition by other grasses at germination will cause stand declines.

For further information on crabgrass:

[University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service FSA3138 Crabgrass for Forage](#)