

General Status

Harvest is well underway for our summer crops. All of our important management decisions (at least for agronomic and pest inputs) are behind us as dust rises from the gin and elevator alike. Cotton harvest had just gotten rolling well as humidity and a chance of precipitation this week slowed stripping for a few days. Combines have made their way through most of our 'normal' planted corn and starting biting into our late corn crop. Early planted sorghum has been out a while and picky progress continues on a fairly large crop of sorghum as fields mature. Despite some timely summer and fall rains, drought persists as much of our early planted and grazing wheat proclaims.

U.S. Drought Monitor Texas

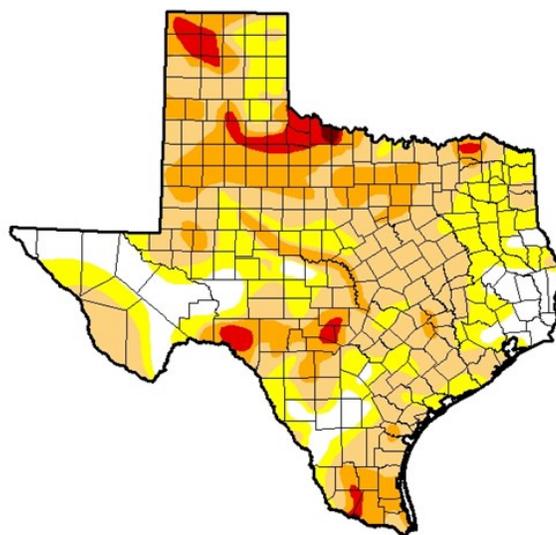
October 22, 2013

(Released Thursday, Oct. 24, 2013)

Valid 7 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	13.16	24.81	39.27	18.57	3.96	0.23
Last Week 10/15/2013	9.10	25.65	43.52	18.53	3.07	0.12
3 Months Ago 7/23/2013	0.62	6.85	25.12	39.11	21.96	6.35
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2013	3.04	9.96	21.61	30.35	23.07	11.96
Start of Water Year 10/1/2013	6.62	22.43	45.87	21.08	3.89	0.12
One Year Ago 10/23/2012	14.09	24.34	30.30	15.57	12.50	3.20



Intensity:

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

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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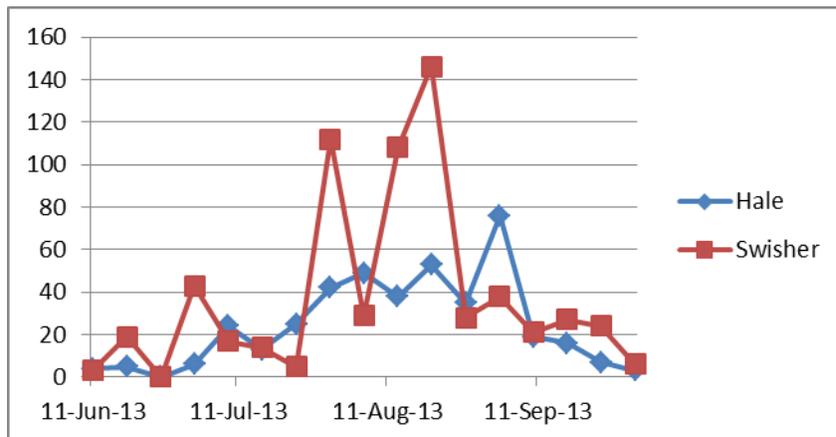


<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

For 80% of our crops or better, the freeze that occurred on October 18th was only a very heavy frost, site and field conditions depending. The frost helped most cotton fields prepare for harvest, acting as a second harvest aid application would have. Much of these fields' cotton is already at the gin, is ready for harvest, or very close to it. In other cases, it made the situation a little more complex. Those producers that made their first desperate ethephon applications in the days and hours just before the frost on their later fields can count on most of the harvestable bolls opening in good order eventually. The wait on these fields can be a slow and there are still some green leaves low on most plants. These fields look whiter by the day and will likely have some minor micronare issues but we should expect them to be better for their applied treatment. If desired, or needed, a second application for desiccation can be made to fields in this situation with affect, but I do not expect a second application to be as impactful as it would have been without the heavy frost.

Many area fields that had no ethephon applied will likely experience at least some level of yield and quality loss, field depending. If these fields still have green leaves, even just at the base, and a 'green' stalk, ethephon can still have good affect but again, I do not expect it to be as impactful as it would have been before or without the heavy frost. What little dry-land cotton is in the area mostly falls into this category. Most producers seem content to wait on additional freeze events for their later fields as they already have plenty of fields ready or almost ready for harvest.

Thus far, I have reports of good yields with some minor mic issues from time to time. Despite some outliers, vastly variable area crop maturity, and some strange field / weather situations this season, I do not expect that to change in any major way.



2013 bollworm trap data

I have had some reports, both from our program acres and from around the area, of sorghum fields lodging before harvest. This seems the exception and not the rule. In all cases I have investigated, a heavy weed population, combined with drought, looked to be the primary culprit.

Corn yields have been 'pleasantly' average compared to the extreme drought yields of 2011 and 2012 with some drastic outliers in both higher and lower. Sorghum yields have been a pleasant surprise, yielding 1-4,000 pounds above my estimates for irrigated fields. The very latest of our sorghum fields were nipped by the frost, but as most were at least 'coloring' well and we should expect the damage to be minimal. Dry-land sorghum yields look to range from 'at least I have cover for next year' to around 2,000 pounds with 1,100 pounds being about average.

Any sorghum type hay that was actively transpiring at the time of the freeze will need to be tested for nitrates and Prussic acid before it can be feed to cattle, especially mother cows.

Tree Pests

I am still noting a very active population of tree borers for this late in the season. I am finding several species of Coleoptera, but I have found some Lepidoptera near fruit trees. This fall is an outstanding time to combat these tree killing pests, especially if they are going to be this active and targetable. I recommend removing and destroying damaged and / or killed limbs, treating any tree where these pests can be found and active about the tree with a labeled insecticide, and to start leaching systemic insecticide toward the tree's root zone.



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Just a few examples of the many species of tree borers and damage

Our area trees have already been through quite a bit with drought, freezes, herbicide drift, etc. over the past few seasons. A heavy dose of borers could spell the end for several THIS YEAR. I strongly suggest taking a close look at any sickly tree that you do not want to lose and to act soon.

Wheat

I can find FAW (fall army worm), white grubs, and a few aphid pests in the area wheat this month, but all fields have been below ET (economic threshold) so far. These are the pests to keep an eye out for as our wheat struggles to establish during the drought.

I have noted one very early planted wheat field in Swisher County already showing signs of virus problems. This field is to be grazed out soon, so hopefully the disease will not spread to other fields. If you note any of your wheat showing early symptoms of virus, please call my office as soon as possible. We have been asked to assist district researchers with Texas A&M AgriLife in Amarillo with wheat virus studies. With your help, hopefully we will be able to develop better control options for the virus soon.

Please call or come by with any questions. Thanks,

Blayne Reed