Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch
An Introduction

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Mission: To lessen societal vulnerability to drought by promoting planning and the adoption of appropriate risk management techniques.

http://drought.unl.edu
Drought is a Normal Part of Climate

1930s

1952-56

Farms wither
Wells dry, herds cut
JUN 21, 1938
By Robert C. Bjorklund

"Farms are cut off from the water that they need to survive."

Flowers, a native of the area, said: "They are harvesting hay and waiting for rain."

The Drought Task Force reported that farmers may not have any crops to harvest if these conditions persist.

Farmers are cutting everything green but the trees," he said. "They are harvesting hay and waiting for rain."

1974-77

1988-89

1999-2007
Planning: Can it REALLY Help?

- Many recommend having a plan for drought
- Just paperwork and busywork?
- What difference will it make?
Let’s Ask Some Folks Who Have a Drought Plan

- Daybreak Ranch
- Reed-Hamilton Ranch
- Tippets-Myers Ranch
- Shamrock Ranch
- Adams Ranch
- Alexander Ranch
- Welch Ranch
- Johnson Ranch
Common Strategies

- Maximize health and flexibility of the overall operation
- Drought Plan: WHAT to do during drought and WHEN
- When conditions require it, implement the plan and don’t second-guess it
- After drought, plan to restore the health of all parts of the ranch operation
- Monitor the plan, and improve as you learn
Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch
A Planning Guide for Great Plains Ranchers

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
National Drought Mitigation Center

Available Online at:
www.drought.unl.edu/ranchplan

2012

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http://drought.unl.edu/ranchplan
DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPONENTS:

⇒ Communication and Planning Partners
⇒ Ranch Vision and Objectives
⇒ Understanding of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats during Drought
⇒ Inventory of Ranch Resources
⇒ Critical Dates for Making Decisions
⇒ Monitoring Schedule
⇒ Management Strategies: Before, During, and After Drought
⇒ Ongoing Review of Drought Plan
WORKSHEET 4: CRITICAL DATES AND TARGET CONDITIONS

Date_________________ Form Completed by __________________________

Critical dates are timely monitoring points in annual management cycles. Current and predicted forage resources are the primary focus of critical dates.

Each critical date should have an action plan that clearly states target points for initiating the plan.

Target points may be based on carrying capacity of current forage or a percentage of average precipitation, i.e., 75%.

See "Identify Critical Dates and Targets" at http://www.drought.unl.edu/ranchplan for suggested critical dates by region.

On your critical date  Monitor and compare to "target points"  Take appropriate action (action plan)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL DATE</th>
<th>TARGET CONDITION</th>
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WORKSHEET 7: EVALUATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING DROUGHT

Date_________________ Form Completed by __________________________

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<tr>
<th>DROUGHT STRATEGIES</th>
<th>IS IT FEASIBLE?</th>
<th>WILL IT HAVE AN IMPACT?</th>
<th>WILL BENEFITS OUTWEIGH COSTS?</th>
<th>TO CONSIDER?</th>
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FORAGE SAVING STRATEGIES

FINDING ALTERNATIVE FEEDS & FORAGES

FINANCIAL STRATEGIES

FAMILY & PEOPLE STRATEGIES

OTHER

http://drought.unl.edu/ranchplan
Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch

Drought is a normal part of climate...it will happen again. Fortunately, there are things you can do before, during, and after drought to reduce your risk. Ranchers are increasingly implementing new ways to better prepare for and respond to drought.

The information, strategies and resources on this site are designed to provide livestock producers in the Great Plains region with information on how to incorporate management strategies to reduce the threat drought poses to livestock and forage operations.

Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch: Great Plains Examples

South Dakota
Daybreak Ranch (Central)

Nebraska
Tippett-Myers Ranch (Western Sandhills)
Reed Hamilton Ranch (Sandhills)
Shamrock Ranch (Southwestern)

Kansas
Alexander Ranch (South Central)

Colorado
Welch Ranch (Southern)
Johnson Ranch (West Central)

Texas

Download "Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch" Handbook

2012
Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch
A Planning Guide for Great Plains Ranchers

How to use this site

Drought Conditions
U.S. Drought Monitor
Water Year Precipitation (Oct. 1st to present)
Today!

- Use cards to ask questions. We will use these during discussion in final ½ hour of the workshop.
- Use the handbook to keep notes and thoughts, it may be a start to your plan.
- Please fill out the workshop info form now as we get started. We’ll collect those at break.
Thank you!

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http://www.drought.unl.edu/ranchplan