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Dial-an-Expert Tip Sheet: Drought in the Southern Plains

April 4, 1996

BOULDER-Images of dust clouds and parched fields are again haunting residents of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. This year the heart of the 1930s Dust Bowl has experienced one of its driest winters of the century.

Dodge City, Kansas, recorded its driest July-to-February period in 120 years of records, even exceeding the worst of the Dust Bowl years. (See climate summary at end of this release.)

The winter wheat crop from Kansas to Texas has been decimated. At times, clouds of blowing dust have reduced visibility in Kansas to the point where streetlights and headlights are needed. Should the dryness persist into spring and summer, regional effects could be even more severe.

Here is a list of experts on drought assessment and the effects of drought on agriculture. Several of these experts are affiliated with the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado, or with one of the 61 universities that make up the University

Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), also based in Boulder. UCAR operates NCAR under sponsorship of the National Science Foundation.

Drought analysis and background

Michael Glantz, 303-497-8119, glantz@ucar.edu

Director, NCAR Environmental and Societal Impacts Group (ESIG)

Specialty: Societal effects of weather and climate; relationship between drought and agricultural practices

Linda Mearns, 303-497-1625, lindam@ucar.edu

Agricultural climatologist, NCAR Climate and Global Dynamics Division (CGD)

Specialty: Studies of variability in temperature and precipitation, especially across the Great Plains, and the resulting long-term impacts on agriculture

Kevin Trenberth, 303-497-1318, trenbert@ucar.edu

Head, NCAR/CGD/Climate Analysis Section

Specialty: Analysis of El Nino/Southern Oscillation and other global climate regimes, including

persistent patterns that can lead to drought or flooding

Donald Wilhite, 402-472-4270, dwilhite@enso.unl.edu

Director, National Drought Mitigation Center/International Drought Information Center

University of Nebraska at Lincoln *Specialty*: Drought mitigation and planning; drought preparedness and response

Current reports and statistics on the drought

Dave Miskus, 301-763-4670, miskus@climon.wwb.noaa.gov

Meteorologist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center, Washington, D.C.

Specialty: Tracking of drought and other global weather anomalies, particularly in North America, over the scale of two weeks to three years

Al Peterlin, 202-720-8651

Chief meteorologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Washington, D.C.

Specialty: Briefing the secretary of agriculture weekly on U.S. weather outlook

Douglas LeComte, 202-720-7919, lecomte@jawfsrv.wwb.noaa.gov

Meteorologist and editor, Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin (NOAA/USDA)

Specialty: Reporting on short-term U.S. weather situation and on global weather anomalies, particularly in Africa

Ken Hubbard, 402-472-6706, khubbard@hpcsun.unl.edu

Director, High Plains Climate Center, University of Nebraska at Lincoln

Specialty: Short-term monitoring of weather and climate over the High Plains

Fall and winter precipitation readings for selected locations

(courtesy National Weather Service; all readings are in inches)

Location	Total		Normal	Total	
	1/1/96 - 3/26/96			10/1/95 - 3/26/96	Normal
Kansas					
Concordia	1.28		2.82	2.82	7.13
Dodge City	1.44		2.37		
Topeka	1.72		4.00	3.16	10.42
Wichita	1.63		3.78		
Oklahoma					
Oklahoma City	0.87		5.04		
Tulsa	1.54		6.39		
Texas					
Abilene	0.91		3.34		
Amarillo	0.45		1.92		
Dallas-Ft. Worth	2.51		6.39		

Lubbock	0.26	1.85	1.25	4.99
Midland	0.09	1.52	0.88	4.51
San Antonio	0.83	4.78		

-The End-

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