



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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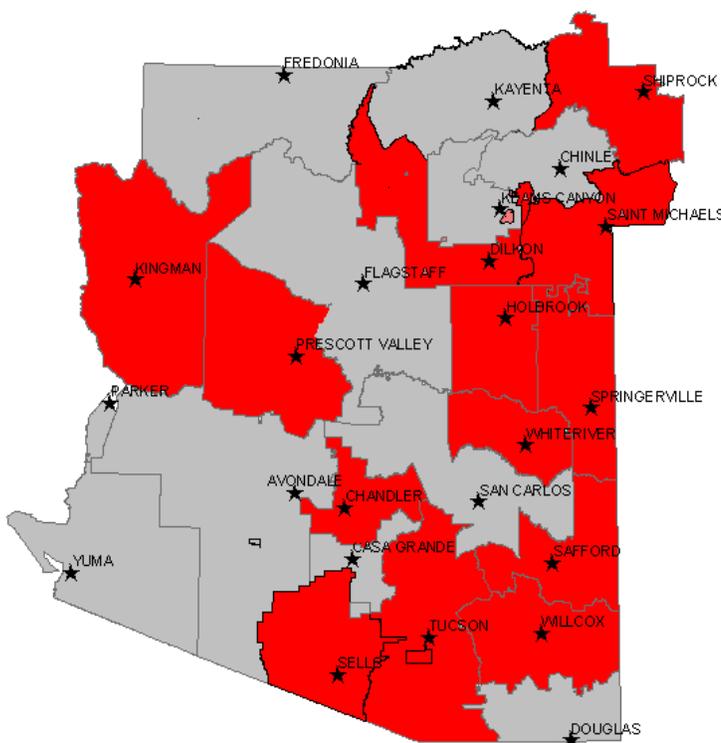
Arizona 2012 Forage Loss Report

Drier than average precipitation in the 2011-2012 winter, related to a continuing La Niña pattern, resulted in a worsening in drought conditions prior to the summer monsoon season. Spring and early summer were relatively dry, but the monsoon did bring some precipitation and drought relief to the state. The southeastern portion of the state did not benefit as much from the monsoon season as the rest of the state, but conditions did improve overall.

NRCS uses Major Land Resource Areas (MLRAs) to differentiate major ecological regions and their climate and vegetation subdivisions within the state. Forage loss estimates for each of the Major Land Resource Areas in Arizona are shown in the table below. Because of the sample size, the forage loss estimates are generally reliable at the MLRA or State level.

NRCS evaluated 2012 forage losses in Arizona from range study data and from Field Office Drought Reports. NRCS has 24 Field Offices located throughout the state with 14 submitting reports for this year. The District Conservationists and staff from these offices provide the on-the-ground knowledge and data collection to support the report. Based on the above information the average forage production across Arizona was approximately 63 percent of normal for 2012.

Offices Reporting Livestock Forage Shortages



Arizona 2012 Forage Loss

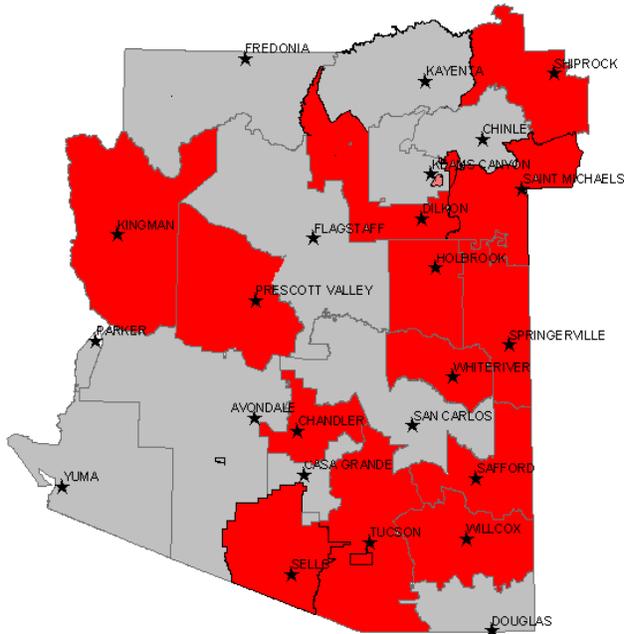
<u>MLRA</u>	<u>MLRA Name</u>	<u>% Forage Loss</u>
30	Mohave Basin and Range	20
35	Colorado Plateau	55
38	Mogollon Transition	25
40	Sonoran Desert	46
41	Southeastern Basin and Range	43
39	Az and New Mexico Mountains	<u>35</u>
Statewide Average		37%



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Offices Reporting Livestock Water Shortages



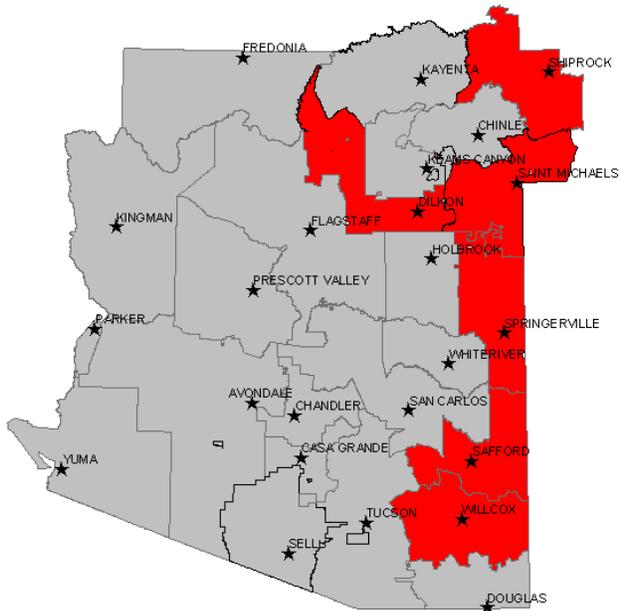
■ = Areas with Livestock Water Shortages

2013 Outlook

As part of the report, NRCS Field Offices were asked to assess the outlook for forage production for the 2013 spring season. The offices that reported indicated approximately 63% of normal forage production would likely occur. With current conditions indicating average or slightly above average precipitation it is probable that available forage could meet the estimate submitted.

In addition to forage production loss, livestock water shortages were indicated from the offices that reported throughout the state. Dirt ponds, water harvesting catchments, springs, and wells were all impacted by water shortages and in many cases livestock operators are relying on water hauling.

Offices Reporting Impacted Irrigated Cropland



■ = Areas with Cropland Water Shortages

Several Field Offices reported irrigation water shortages due to drought conditions. Crop production losses ranging from 20 to 80 percent were expected. Crops affected include corn, cotton, wheat, barley, melons, squash, beans, small grains, alfalfa, nut orchards, and irrigated pasture. Affected water sources included wells, direct diversion from streams, and reservoirs.

Below are additional comments submitted by field offices.

Safford

Well output is severely decreased this year - pumps that were pumping 300-400 gmp are down to 50 or completely dry/ surface diversion output to canals is decreased from the Gila River, low flow in Gila River all year.

Rainfall, while significantly better than last year was spotty (as monsoon moisture is). Some people have seen significant relief from last year's drought during the growing season while others are only marginally better.

Estimate right now - across the whole area that there is a 65-70% forage loss. Part of this can be attributed to last year's debilitating drought that followed a poor winter precipitation year.

Springerville

Past prolonged drought is still having a negative impact on the FO work area. Past years of below average winter precipitation reduced spring runoff and water production from wells and springs are still below pre-drought levels.

This year's snow fall was low, snow melt was early and shortened the runoff period from the mountain. Summer rains were very spotty and for the most part, below average. Some areas had enough summer rain to grow forage but did not produce any tank water. Some areas are both very short on feed and have no tank water.

Due to prolonged drought and the Wallow fire, many producers liquidated a large percentage of their herd. Some traditional winter grazing areas are being used during the summer. In addition to loss of summer forage, winter forage may also be short. Grazing forage was weak through the spring until rains started in mid July.