

MANAGEMENT NOTES May through July

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The United States Seasonal Drought Outlook through June predicts the drought will persist or deepen by April (Figure 1). Likewise, the three month temperature outlook from the Climate Prediction Center adds above average temperatures over the same period (Figure 2). Despite some recent good rains, this pattern appears to be continuing. In 2012, many areas of the state had periods of little or no precipitation followed by above average rainfall. As we move through spring into summer, it will probably be either hot and dry or cool and dry if the forecasters are right. Regardless of what the weather has done over the last year, major damage continues across the rangeland and woodlands of Texas. Wildlife continues to suffer. You can blame it on lack of water, reduced natural forage and feed, heat and all the other things that drought and heat bring. Needless to remind most of you, once we get good rains and see recovery starting, it will take a long time, actually years, for the vegetation to recover. It may never recover in some areas.

Hope your land resources weathered the winter and the drought because of your management. Continue to monitor the current resource use to determine if the resources will be adequate for this year. By now, you should have adjusted your 2013 management plans and updated adjustments to both your 2013 and five-year plans.

Here are some points to consider in the next few months.

- Water must always be your highest priority. Run out of water and you may be out of business!

- Monitor your water resources for availability and quality. Have options in place if sources appear to be less than optimal. Continually evaluating and planning water needs for the rest of the year will be important. Be prepared to move animals to where water is available if possible.

- If the drought does continue, check

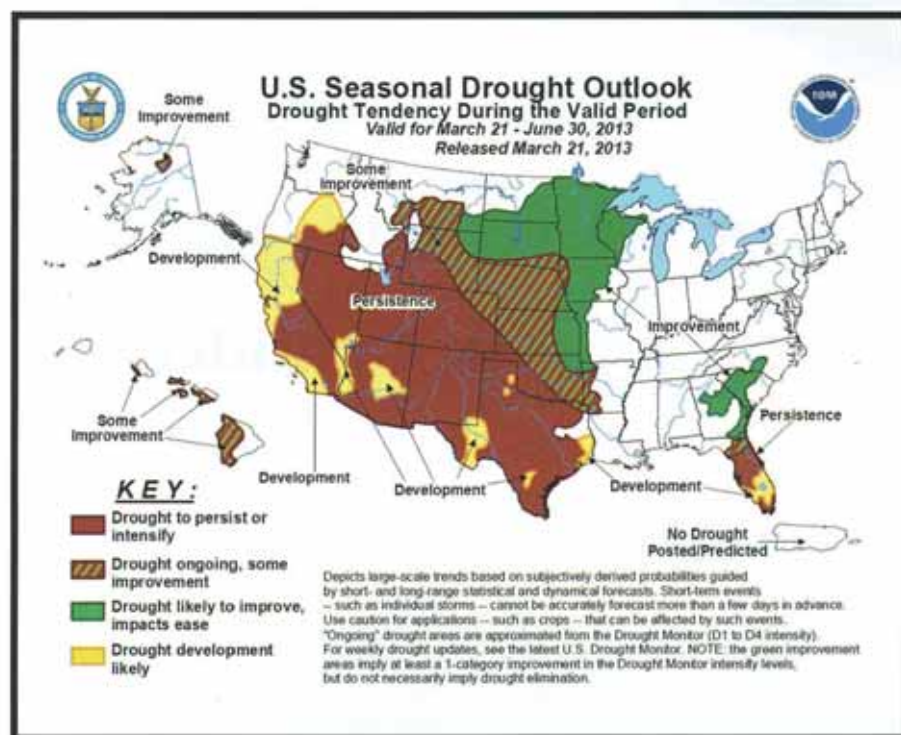


Figure 1. The March 21 through June 30 Drought Outlook.

water sources more often.

- Review rainfall records for the past 12 months, the forecast for the next three to six months and determine if the current soil moisture availability is adequate for the next three months. Even if current soil moisture is fair to good, projected plant growth will probably be below average if drought conditions continue as predicted. If drought conditions do continue, prepare for growth below the 2013 growing season.

- Continually evaluate grazing and browsing use. Reducing the amount of use on highly desirable species is critical during drought. If use has been heavy over the past several months, consider how you can reduce the pressure if possible. Reducing the use of preferred species will allow some recovery for the future.

- Routinely check and repair or replace, where possible, all improvements such as fences, water sources and equipment. If herd size has been reduced and

resources are available, there may be opportunities for major repairs and improvements.

- Maintain an up to date analysis of your financial situation. Evaluate and adjust the 2013 and five-year management and economic plans based on the current and projected weather conditions plus current and projected economic conditions.

- Using the evaluation of your 2012 broadleaf and woody plant control sites to develop your management for 2013.

- Hope you were able to do at least some prescribed burning! If you did, plan the management of your 2013 prescribed burn areas. Start identifying and planning potential 2014 burns areas. When it comes to prescribed burning, planning ahead is better than just "going out and dropping matches!"

- Continue the management of areas seeded over the last two to four years to

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insure long term management is accomplished. Finalize the management plans for 2012 areas.

- Update your land resource records through new photos or other means.

- As always, if you haven't started a land resource record, start now. Using photographs, establish points that you can return to and photograph at least once each year will greatly help in seeing how your resources have changed.

- You manage for today and the future based on what you have done and what is currently happening. Combine the past and present to develop your plans or to predict the future. Don't forget to include how you expect weather, economic conditions and your personal life to interact. Management is not easy but planning can help in making management changes!

- If you haven't developed a business management plan, please get started! *!!*

Figure 2. The temperature outlook through June 30. Texas has a 50% chance of being warmer than average.

