



# MANAGEMENT NOTES FOR NOVEMBER THROUGH DECEMBER

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**W**ell, the weather continues to be dry! The October Drought Monitor data shows a general move toward a lower drought level. But the moisture pattern continues to be rainfall events that are a few tenths or several inches. This is the pattern usually associated with drought. I guess the old adage is true - we are in an extreme drought interrupted by floods!

Looking ahead, the Climate Prediction Center projects continued drought for much of Texas through the end of 2013 (Figure 1). Only the Trans-Pecos area has or will improve. Looking at the temperature and precipitation outlook for charts (Figure 2), the precipitation will be average but the temperature will be higher for the western 2/3 of Texas. This will probably maintain the current drought conditions.

The warm season vegetation is going from green to brown, either from lack of moisture or normal dormancy. In many areas, cool season vegetation will have the moisture to grow and provide nutrition for wildlife and domestic animals. But without continued moisture, they may not be around for spring. Wonder what the wildflowers will be like next spring?

As always, we need average or near average rainfall over several years to bring the vegetation back to pre-

drought levels. That takes time and rain.

Here are some points and thoughts over the next few months.  
**Water**

Consider the condition of your water supply. If you rely on surface water, is there enough available and the quality good enough for the winter? If you rely on wells, has production been normal or dropping and is the quality what you need? If you are on a rural water system, are you being limited on how much you can use? These are the common themes in some areas this year. Hope you don't have too many problems. Consider your water situation as

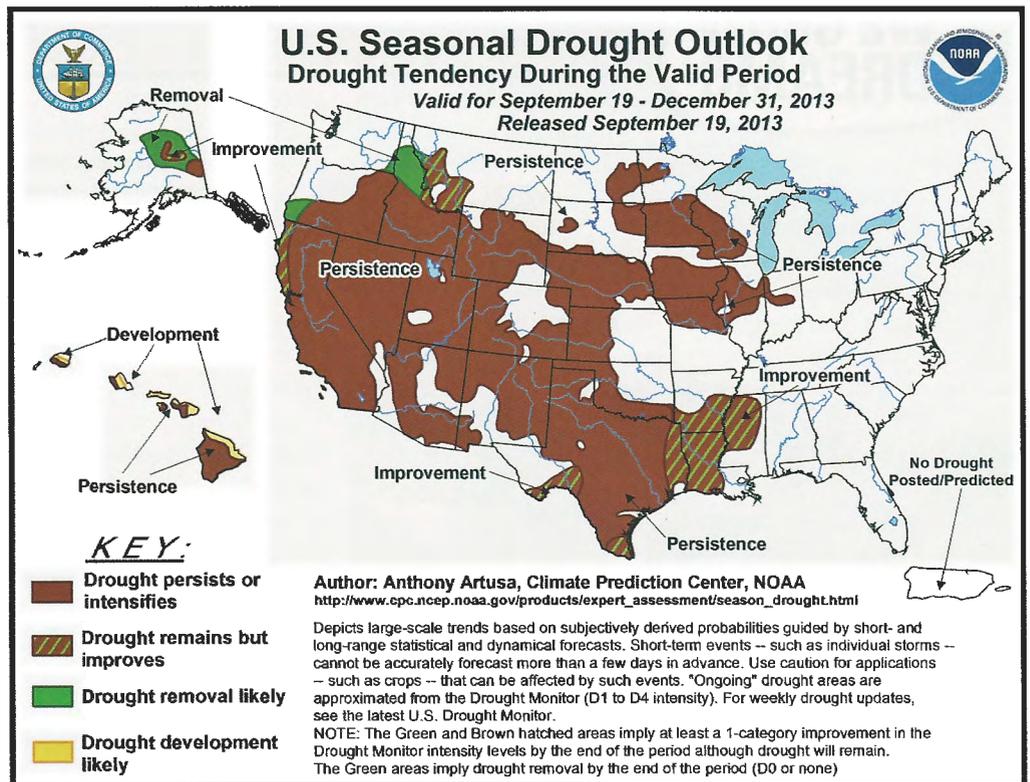
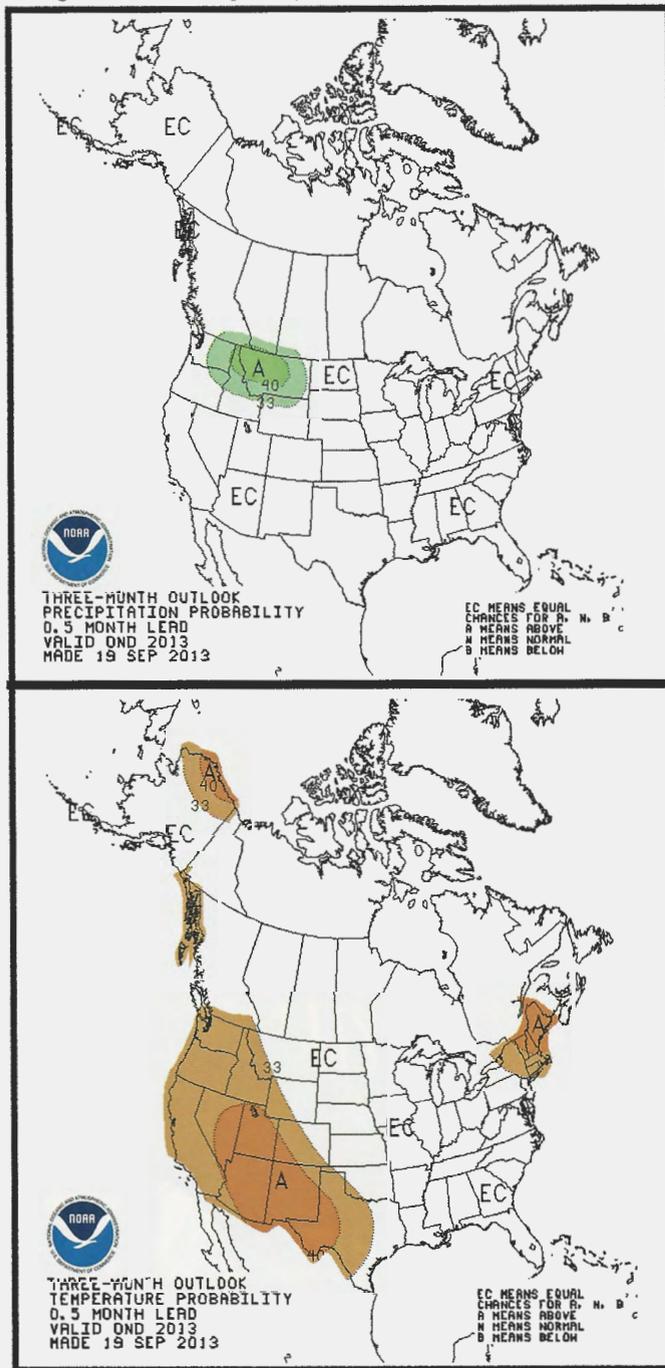


Figure 1. The Drought Outlook through December. For most of Texas, drought will probably persist.

Figure 2. Precipitation outlook (left) indicates average rainfall and average to below average temperatures.



cover the whole area with a hat! If the pattern of this year continues as predicted, management will get tougher.

- **Pasture Use and Status Records** What condition did your pastures end the year in? If you were able to maintain them in good condition, I commend you. If not, how do you plan to change your management for 2014 to, at least, maintain or maybe improve them in 2014? Your future depends on your land being able to meet the requirements of your animals. If the conditions are going down, your feed bills are probably going up or you are selling animals.
- **Financial Records** Its time to evaluate and update your financial records for ending the year. This allows you to adjust your 2014 and 5-year management and economic plans based on changing conditions. You may want to include how projected weather conditions, their effect on animals together with current and projected economic and market conditions will impact 2014.

### Land Management

Evaluate any prescribed burns or seedings done over the past several years. Has your management and the weather allowed the areas to grow and improve as you planned? This is the time to identify and plan potential 2014 prescribed burns and seedings. Planning these operations is better than just going out and dropping matches or throwing some seed on the ground!

Update your land resource records, including current pasture use and status, as well as, through new photos or other means. If you haven't started a land resource record, please consider starting now.

Photographs are a good method. Using established points, you can return to and photograph, at least, once each year. Photographs can be a great help in seeing how your resources have changed. Combining the use of the two sets of records is a valuable tool to determining how your land resources are responding to management. You are working in the vegetation regularly and it is changing a little every day and you may not notice it!

### Physical Assets

Conduct a careful review of all improvements such as fences, water sources, and equipment to determine what major repairs or even replacements may be needed in 2014. Timely repair and/or replacement can reduce management and operation problems. Neglected, broken, or missing items can lead to increased costs, labor, and stress. If herd size has been reduced, there may be opportunities for major repairs and improvements.

### A Thought

Manage your operation for profitability, efficiency, and sustainability today to insure you have a future. Management decisions based on the long term and short term management goals, together with your past efforts and what is currently happening, makes looking to the future a valuable tool. Combining your past and present experiences can help implement and modify your future plans as needed. Remember, the weather, economic conditions, and your personal life all interact. Please keep them in some balance.

Management is never easy! Planning can help in making management change! 🐾

the most critical need. Without water, you are up a dry creek!  
**Records**

It's coming to the end of the year and time to start evaluating 2013 and updating the management for 2014. Closing out the 2013 financial records, completing an evaluation of the land resources, and determining how all these have impacted 2013 and will impact 2014, is in order.

- **Weather Records** Review your rainfall records and how it impacted your management. The patterns have been highly variable even for neighbors. In many areas, the patterns remind me of "hat rain" patterns, that is, you can