



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

MANAGEMENT NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER THROUGH NOVEMBER

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El Nino is misbehaving as usual! As of mid August, it had not shown evidence of developing but appears to be in "neutral," that is stuck between el Nino and la Nino. We will have to wait and see what happens.

The Drought Outlook (see map) continues to indicate drought conditions will exist for most of east Texas and some parts of Far West Texas. Overall, the U. S. Drought Monitor has shown 60-90 percent of Texas continuing to be in some level of drought conditions. Much of the change has been toward lower levels of drought intensity.

The main concern for vegetation in the future is the continuing pattern of low rainfall for 1-several months followed by 1 or 2 good rainfall events and then back to low rainfall events. Plants, particularly perennials and woodies, are stressed during the low rainfall periods and then start back toward recovery mode. Then it's back to stress. Think about how you respond to such conditions but plants can't find relief like you can!

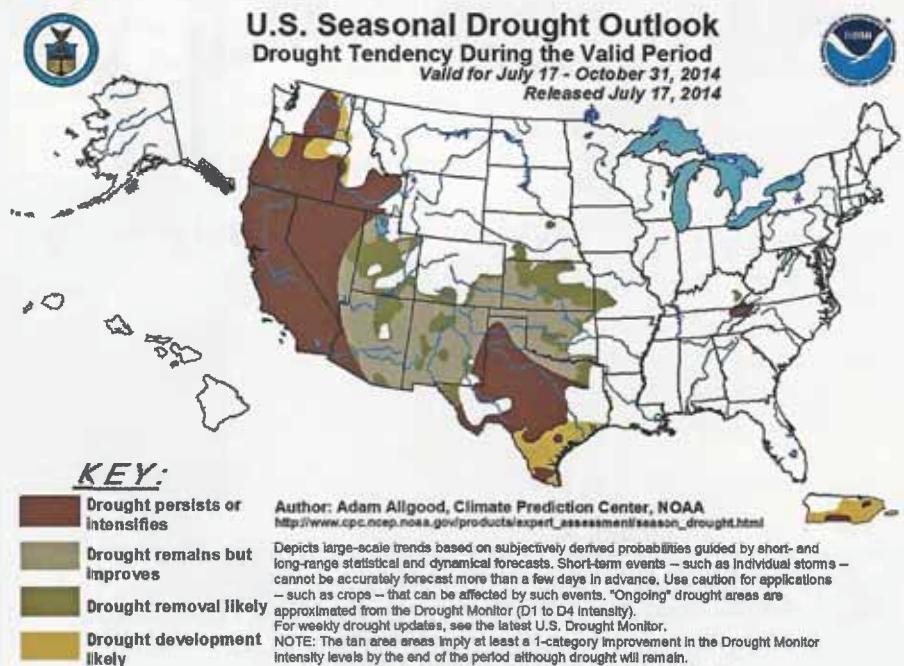
Looking at the temperature potential, through October, most of Texas will have an equal chance of being average. East and south of a line from Laredo to Austin to Texarkana, there is a 1 in three chance of warmer temperatures. Through November, the state has an equal chance of being average. Precipitation, through October is very mixed. The northwest third (Del Rio to Texarkana) will have a 1 in 3 chance of above average rainfall. The coastal area up to 100 miles inland has a 1 in 3 chance of below average rainfall. The rest of the state has a 50-50 chance of average. Through November, the entire state has a 50-50 chance of average rainfall. Will el Nino develop?

As of early August, many areas of Texas are green and growing. If we get an average to above average

monthly pattern, we could have good growth. Yearly average precipitation is not the measure of drought, but rather the monthly average. It will take 1-4 years (east to west) of average to above average monthly precipitation for the vegetation to really recover.

Management Thoughts

So, if the drought continues the same management pressures will continue and probably intensify. If we do get closer to average precipitation, the management pressures will be to need to hold back on trying to let browsing and foraging animals overuse the desirable vegetation (if it is still there). Recovery will require rebuilding stored food reserves in steps which really needs to be to expand root mass which is the slow part of the process. Both the upper and deep roots need to develop for the plant to recover and produce. It is



the need to promote the health of the plants over time. By the way, predictions are that we will continue to see trees and shrubs die for several more years regardless of the level of precipitation received.

Water Facilities

The broken record continues! The condition, quality, and availability of water continues to be the major concern. Monitor water for quality and quantity so you can make it to the end of the year. Water temperature is important for animals as well as humans. Moving into fall will change the requirements. Water temperature can help animals performance if it can be maintained in the 60-75 degree range. Cold weather is looming and the water temperature can influence how well animals will fair.

Open water sources (troughs, pond, etc.) lose water through evaporation even in fall and winter weather. The larger the exposed water surface area the higher the evaporation can be. Consider what you might be able to do to reduce evaporation.

Weather Factors

Going from summer into fall and moving toward winter hopefully the temperatures and precipitation will be closer to average. However, the need to manage water and vegetation continues to be the focus. Looking at the long term predictions (through March 2015), the temperature has a good chance of being cooler and the precipitation being above average. (Looks like the prognosticators are banking on el Nino!). It would be nice to see that.

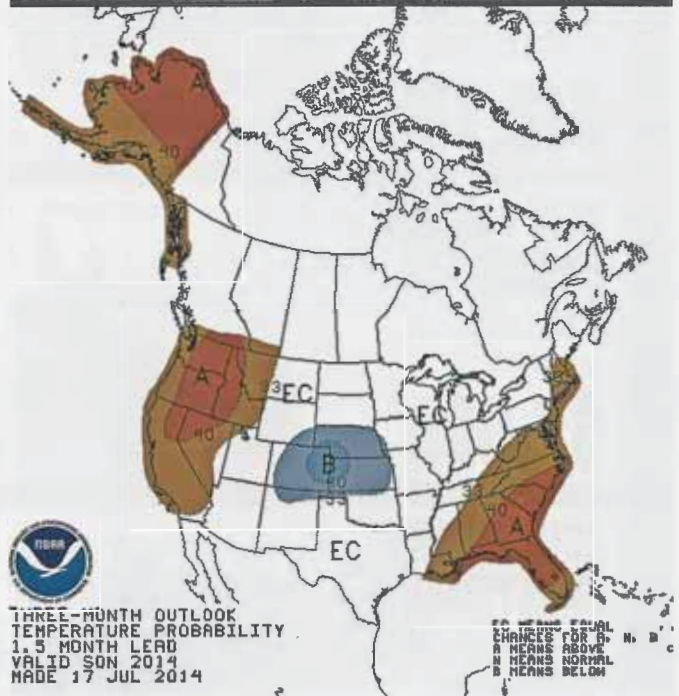
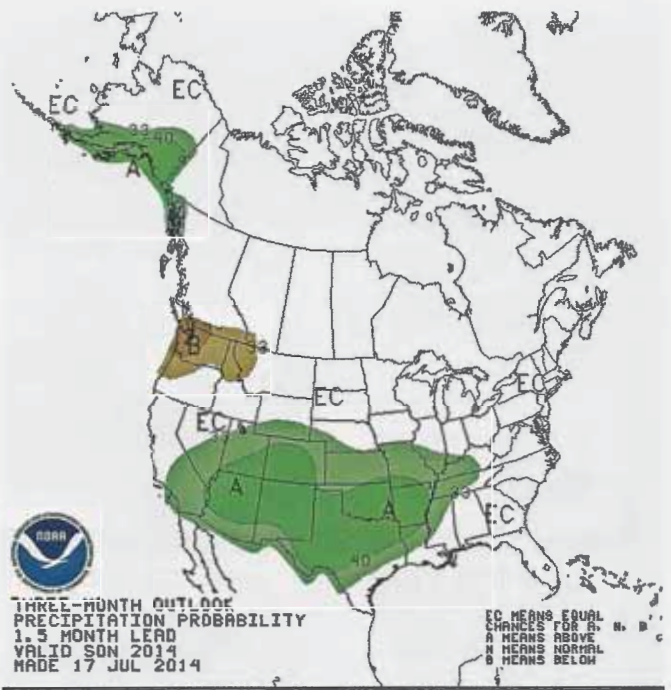
Your Records

The end of the year is approaching and time to update records and begin revising the 2015 and 5-year management plans. With the continual drought conditions possibly continuing, management for the future is very important for recovery. Records may also have show where changes in management could make the operation more efficient and productive. Planning for upgrading, repairing, or replacing practices and equipment should be part of the reviewing and changing management plans.

Land and Physical Resources

As always, updating and maintaining land records and the status of working equipment should be an ongoing requirement. Linking these databases with other records provides for decisions based on facts while looking into the future.

A potential new tool (free) is available from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Central Sandhills Extension Area has developed a program for Android and Apple smart phones and tablets called Grasssnap. It creates a pasture by pasture database. Its most useful tool for Texas is the use of photo points to monitor the vegetation over time. The other features are linked to a production database for Nebraska so that part would not be useful for Texas. For more information, go to <http://centralsandhills.unl.edu/grasssnap>.



A Thought

As we move toward the winter months, I am always reminded of the holidays that will be celebrated by many. The holidays of some of the religions include Yom Kippur, Al-Hijira, Halloween, Ashura, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas, and the New Year come to mind. There are other faiths with holidays and we need to realize they are important to those people. Accepting a person and their values for who they are can lead to some interesting and rewarding adventures. I know this from my own experiences. ☺☺