

Drought likely to lessen this year

December precipitation across Kansas averaged 1.69 inches, which was almost double the normal amount. That helped ease drought conditions in parts of the state and early forecasts point to a further reduction in 2012, according to Kansas climatologist Mary Knapp.

“The preliminary statewide average precipitation total for December was 192 percent of normal,” said Knapp, who is director of the state’s Weather Data Library. “That makes it the 16th wettest December since 1895.”

The Weather Data Library is based at Kansas State University. Knapp said southeast Kansas was the wettest overall, with an average of 2.85 inches or 179 percent of normal, but southwest had the greatest departure from normal, with an average of 1.58 inches or 345 percent of normal. Despite having the fifth wettest December since 1895, southwest Kansas ended the year as the fourth driest on record. Northwest Kansas was the driest in December, with an average of 0.39 inches, or 81 percent of normal.

The U.S. Drought Monitor (droughtmonitor.unl.edu/) posted Jan. 3 showed another decrease in the area of all drought categories in Kansas, Knapp said, although more than 57 percent of the state was still reported as abnormally dry to exceptional drought.

Recent forecasts indicate that

drought conditions are expected to continue in southern portions of the state, she said, but some improvement is expected in extreme eastern and southeastern Kansas.

“The La Niña (www.elnino.noaa.gov/lanina.html) has continued and is expected to influence precipitation patterns through the winter, with drier-than-normal conditions expected across the Southern Plains,” said Knapp, referring to cooler-than-normal sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean and their impact on global weather patterns. “The influence of the Atlantic Oscillation and the Madden-Julian Oscillation which had fueled the storms in December is expected to weaken, resulting in less moderation of the La Niña impacts.”

Nevertheless, the outlook calls for the La Niña to continue to weaken, Knapp added. By early summer, the consensus forecast calls for the El Niño/Southern Oscillation to return to neutral conditions. Some models even call for El Niño conditions by early summer, which would mean warmer-than-normal waters in the Pacific Ocean along the equator. El Niño conditions favor wetter-than-normal conditions in the Central Plains during the summer.

More information about Kansas weather is available at www.ksre.ksu.edu/wdl/.

Survey asks about swine feed

Kansas State University swine nutritionists are teaming up with their Iowa State University counterparts in asking swine producers to participate in an online survey about swine feed efficiency. The survey answers will help guide research direction and educational programs to improve feed efficiency and lower feed costs.

The survey, which can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/swinesurvey>, aims to identify gaps in current knowledge to help researchers better prepare educational materials and plan on-farm commercial research over the next four years, as part of an Agricultural and Food Research Initiative grant, said Joel DeRouchey, livestock specialist

with K-State Research and Extension.

The survey should take less than 15 minutes to complete. No responses will be individually identified – all responses will be summarized together, DeRouchey said. Survey participants are not required to give contact information, although if they choose to do so, the research team will provide feed efficiency project updates, including research results and publications as they become available.

The deadline to take the survey is Monday, Feb. 20. Questions can be directed to DeRouchey at jderouch@ksu.edu or (785) 532-2280.

On the Beat

COLBY POLICE
Thursday
12:50 a.m. – Security check at the B-Hive.
1:25 a.m. – Security check at Twister’s.
8:19 a.m. – Caller reported shoplifters. Report filed.
10:30 a.m. – Caller reported two dogs at large in the 600 block of W. Summit. Unable to catch, will try later.
10:45 a.m. – Dog bite: report filed on incident at 640 1/2 W. Summit.
10:45 a.m. – Funeral block.
12:09 p.m. – Dog bite: report filed on incident at 640 1/2 W. Summit.
1:22 p.m. – Accident at Dollar General.
2 p.m. – Provided information on the phone.
2:17 p.m. – Assisted Highway Patrol at Colby Community College.
2:45 p.m. – Open door closed, message left.
4:32 p.m. – Caller wanted officer to speak with two juveniles who ran across street on green light without checking traffic first at Fourth and Franklin. Not found.
6:34 p.m. – Assisted deputy on

traffic stop.

THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF
Thursday
12:01 a.m. – Released Jacob J. Townsend.
8:28 a.m. – Assisted Highway Patrol at eastbound I-70 mile 58.
10:39 a.m. – Provided funeral lead from Baalmann Mortuary to Beulah Cemetery
9:46 a.m. – Booked Eric John Dykeman
10:24 a.m. – Booked Charles James Alderton II.
2:01 p.m. – Arrest warrant served.
2:37 p.m. – Booked Ernest Eugene Baker Jr.
3:29 p.m. – Released Caleb Andrew Fox.
3:34 p.m. – Took two inmates from law Enforcement Center to Rawlins County Sheriff’s Office.
4:58 p.m. – Released David Garcia-Perez.
6:15 p.m. – Narcotics violation report filed for traffic stop at eastbound I-70 Exit 54 off ramp.
8:12 p.m. – Booked Oscar Alcazar Montes.
8:51 p.m. – Booked Noe Vargas Castanon.

Destroy diseased pines before ‘time bomb’ goes off

The central U.S. pines turning color now could be victims of either drought or pine wilt. In either case, they also could be a kind of time bomb for healthy pine trees.

The reason is a long-horned, cylindrical insect called the pine sawyer beetle. It prefers laying its eggs on stressed or dead pines – including recently cut pine logs. Its newly hatched larvae will overwinter there.

Unfortunately, these sites are also prime spots to find a microscopic worm called the pinewood nematode. Its claim to fame is that it can reproduce so fast during a typical summer that its numbers can literally shut down a pine’s circulation system within weeks. The result: deadly pine wilt.

The only way to stop the disease’s spread is to break the unique tie between beetle and nematode.

The two don’t truly get together until spring. Then a new generation of pine sawyer beetles gears up to fly to find another pine on which to feed. At the last minute,

though, up to 100,000 tree-clogging nematodes quickly hitch a ride in each beetles’ windpipe.

The nematodes will enter their new host through the feeding holes the beetles create. The symptoms of that death sentence will usually appear by August through December.

Typically, the needles of an infested tree will wilt. The symptoms can appear across all of a tree or in progressive parts. The tree itself will die within a matter of weeks or a few months. The dead needles will hold on for up to a year.

The way to break this cycle is to get rid of the beetles’ and nematodes’ overwintering sites. Dead pines must be down and gone by May 1 – at the latest. Even a stump can foster pine wilt’s spread. The resulting wood must be chipped, buried or burned, to eliminate any possible haven for the deadly pests.

– Source: K-State Research and Extension

Pianist to perform at Gateway Jan. 28

Ronnie Kole, a world-renowned pianist and entertainer, will once again perform at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, at The Gateway civic center in Oberlin.

Kole, part of the New Orleans music scene for decades, has performed in over 600 cities worldwide for audiences including Pope John Paul II and six U.S. presidents. He has appeared at Carnegie Hall and entertains regularly at New Orleans’ two most prestigious festivals, the Jazz and Heritage Festival and the French Quarter Festival.

A typical Kole concert includes tunes from Broadway, “Phantom of the Opera” and “Amazing Grace,” plus audience requests.

He has published a number of CDs including “Music of the

Vines,” arranged around his music tours of the wine country of France, where he is popular. As a result, he received the Chevalier to the Arts and Letters, the highest award the French government gives to an artist or performer.

Kole gives much of his time and talent to civic and charitable activities. He has been honored with one of five bronze statues in New Orleans Music Legends Park along side Al Hirt, Pete Fountain, Fats Domino and Chris Owens.

This is an Oberlin Arts and Humanities season ticket event on \$12 for adults and \$7 for students at the door.

For information, call Ella Betts (785) 475-3557 or Mary Henzel (785) 470-0218.

Cattlemen warned of new drug restrictions

Earlier this month, the Food and Drug Administration announced that as of April 5, it will prohibit the excessive use of cephalosporin in food animals. In the cattle industry, cephalosporin is better known as Excenel or Naxcel.

Some food animal industries have overused the drug for preventative measures, and this announcement attempts to curtail the excessive use. However, cephalosporin will not be completely prohibited. The antibiotic may still be used as directed on the label. Some of the most common uses for the antibiotic in cattle are the treatment for bovine respiratory disease, foot rot, and mastitis.

This is not a food safety issue but to consider public health as well as animal health needs, additional exemptions have been put in place. The order does not limit the use of cephalosporin, an older cephalosporin drug that is not believed to contribute significantly to antimicrobial resistance.

Veterinarians will still be able

to use or prescribe cephalosporins for limited extra-label use in cattle, swine, chickens or turkeys as long as they follow the dose, frequency, duration, and route of administration that is on the label. Veterinarians may also use or prescribe cephalosporins for extra-label uses in minor species of food-producing animals such as ducks or rabbits.

Kansas Cattlemen’s Association staff member Kelsey Gibson said, “The primary concern of the agency is to prohibit the improper usage of cephalosporins, and by following labeled protocols such as dosing, duration, and frequency, this concern will not become an issue.”

“This is a drug widely used in our industry. Producers are responsible folks who take care of their animals and medically treat them as needed to keep them healthy and productive. The vast majority already adhere to the intended use of this antibiotic,” states KCA Executive Director Brandy Carter.

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