



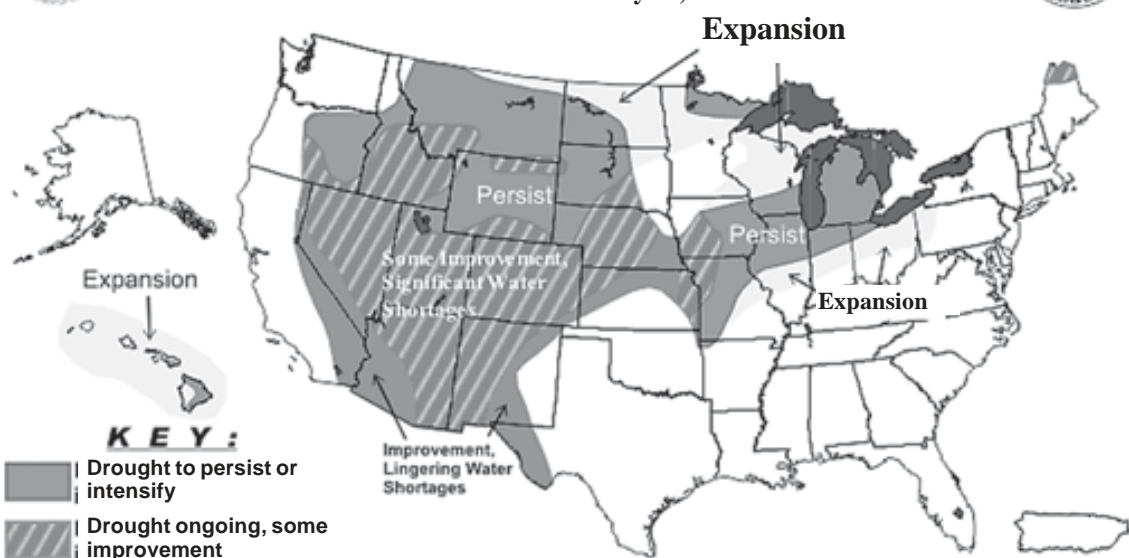
Copyright © 2003 National Drought Mitigation Center

- +2.0 and above (extremely wet)
- +1.50 to +1.99 (very wet)
- +1.0 to +1.49 (moderately wet)
- -0.99 to +0.99 (near normal)
- -1.00 to -1.49 (moderately dry)
- -1.50 to -1.99 (severely dry)
- -2.0 and less (extremely dry)



**U. S. Seasonal Drought Outlook
Through May 2003**

Released February 20, 2003



Depicts general, large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by numerous indicators, including short and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Short-term events - such as individual storms - cannot be accurately forecast more than a few days in advance, so use caution if using this outlook for applications - such as crops - that can be affected by such events. "Ongoing drought areas are schematically approximated from the Drought Monitor (D1 to D4). For weekly drought updates, see the latest Drought Monitor map and text.

Pick crops for their water needs

In addition to making decisions about their wheat, farmers are trying to decide what summer crops to plant.

According to the most recent 12-month Standardized Precipitation Index diagram, our area is extremely dry, actually the driest in Kansas.

The National Weather Service is predicting that Sheridan, Decatur, and Norton counties will still be pretty dry by the end of May as depicted in the Drought Outlook diagram. Choosing the right crop to handle the dry conditions is an important decision.

Grain sorghum does well under dry conditions. It needs little water from the vegetative stage to the reproductive stage. Water requirements in inches for crops in our area are sunflower - 5.4, grain sorghum - 7, soybean - 10, and corn - 11 inches.

Suppose at planting there are two inches of soil moisture, with an additional seven inches during the growing season, for nine inches to grow a crop. Sunflowers or grain sorghum could be harvested, while there would be no crop for soybeans or corn.

Other factors such as plant spacing, hybrid selection, and the amount of soil evaporation in the growing season also play a part in this scenario, but knowing these water requirements allows producers a very good way to evaluate which crops to plant in various conditions.

Although sunflower production is not as common as grain sorghum here, sunflowers can withstand drier conditions better. All in all, farmers need to gauge what risk they are willing to take while looking at the moisture conditions, drought outlook and crop water requirements. Producers with a conservative outlook will likely plant sunflowers or milo, while producers with a more aggressive outlook will plant some

corn and soybeans.

For information, visit the Web site at www.oznet.ksu.edu/agronomy-block2. Articles on topdressing wheat, weed control in wheat and spring forage options can be downloaded. The next article will be on hybrid recommendations for grain sorghum, sunflower and corn.

Brian Olson is multi-county extension agronomist for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties. E-mail bolson@oznet.ksu.edu if you have any questions or would like to see a newspaper article on a specific crop production topic. For more information, contact the county extension office, 475-8121.



Extension Lines

By Brian Olson
Extension Agronomist

House, Senate trade bills

Last week in the Capitol was what we call "turn around week."

The House finishes its bills and the Senate finishes its. The House begins hearings on bills that passed the Senate and the Senate does the same with House bills. The only exceptions are Appropriations, Tax, and Federal and State Affairs, which are exempt committees.

Monday, the House Agriculture Committee held hearings on a bill banning packer ownership of livestock. Proponents included the Kansas Cattlemen's Association. Opponents included the Kansas Livestock Association, Farm Bureau (had no policy as of yet) and Tyson Foods (which owns IBP).

This bill had a hearing so late in the session that it won't have time to be worked by the committee. Another bill that is dead in Agricul-



Letter from Topeka

By State Rep. John Faber

jfaber@ink.org

ture is one that would codify the federal Packers and Stockyards Act into state statutes. It, too, will be dead until next year.

The prairie dog bill passed out of the committee last week and is scheduled for debate on the House floor. I opposed this bill, as did most of the western Kansas legislators. The vote was a tie with Chairman Dan Johnson casting the deciding vote. We will now fight it on the House floor. By the time you read

this, we will know the outcome.

Federal and State Affairs passed a bill that would set standards for abortion clinics. Currently, there are no medical standards; in fact veterinary clinics have more standards.

The Education Committee has not been able to get a school consolidation bill out this year but, as of this writing, has one more day.

I can be contacted at jfaber@ink.org or by calling my office at 785-296-7500

Medicare bills still not paid

The Decatur County commissioners went behind closed doors last Tuesday to talk about files prepared by the ambulance director for Medicare hearings.

The commissioners have been talking with Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy about getting information together to hold a Medicare hearing so the county can get paid for services for months.

There was no action taken after the closed sessions, called for 10 minutes and two for five minute for attorney-client privilege.

Mr. Pomeroy said he had received a tip that when the ambulance takes a person out of town on a transport, the service should make one call to the destination and then show that the ride back as a separate call. Mr. Pomeroy said if the transport is put as two calls instead of one, the service will be able to make more.

Mr. Pomeroy said he had demonstrated the new cardiac monitor to the Modern Woodmen. The group gave around \$2,000 to help purchase the equipment. Mr. Pomeroy said he talked with the group for

County round-up

At a meeting last Tuesday morning, Decatur County commissioners:

- Looked at three more bids for a roadside spray truck, but didn't make any decisions before a test drive. Story to come.
- Approved a bid to buy five individual heaters for rooms at the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center. Story below.
- Held closed sessions to talk about a possible Medicare hearing. Story at left.

around two hours and showed them how the monitor works.

He said they seemed happy with the purchase.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman showed the commissioners his end-of-the-year maps for

2002. There were three maps, one to show how much dirt work the crew had done, one for gravel work and another for bridge work.

Mr. Stallman said the crew did about 142 miles of gravel. They did a joint bridge project with Rawlins County and then took out some old bridges that had filled in with silt on roads that aren't used much. For dirt work, Mr. Stallman said, most of it was fill work and maintaining roads. The crew also reconditioned one of the Jennings sewer pits.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Held a 10 minute closed session for non-elected personnel. There was no action taken.
- Heard Mr. Pomeroy will be done with his training class on Friday.
- Told County Clerk Marilyn Horn to send out information to people in Harlan Township for roads to be changed to minimum maintenance. There are no roads scheduled to close. A hearing will be set.
- Signed a resolution for Judge John Bremer to keep judges local.

County to replace heaters at home

Decatur County commissioners approved a bid from R & M Service Center for five heaters for rooms at the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center.

Custodian LaVern Burtis told commissioners at their meeting last Tuesday morning that some of the individual heaters in the rooms had gone bad. Mr. Burtis said he sent out for bids from three local dealers to replace the heaters.

The plan had been to replace two heaters a year, but the with five out, he said those needed to be replaced.

There are two larger heaters and three smaller ones, he said. The units are also the air conditioners for the rooms.

The three sealed bids were from Hansen Heating and Plumbing for the five units for \$3,808, from Fidele Electric and Woodcrafting for a total of \$4,030 and from R & M for \$3,400.

Commissioner Ralph Unger looked at the bids and said he thought the three companies were bidding on the same thing.

All of the units bid were General Electric machines, which Mr. Burtis said is what the center got last time.

Mr. Unger made a motion to approve the low bid of \$3,400.

Mr. Burtis said none of the bids included labor because he is going to install the units.

In other business, commission-

ers:

• Talked with Good Samaritan Director Joyce Ploussard, who said the center has a low census now so five beds have been uncertified with the state. She said the center can get the beds re-certified if the numbers go up. Instead of having 55 beds certified, there are only 50, she said.

She said the center only has 42 residents because several people are in the hospital and some have died.

• Heard the center won't be spending any money out of the operating budget on the neighborhood theme, designed to make the place more homey. The money is being raised through fund raisers, said Mrs. Ploussard.

We have new spring and summer merchandise arriving daily.

Congratulations to our State Wrestlers and The Best of Luck to DCHS Basketball Teams

We accept these cards for your convenience:

Family-owned / operated since 1906

DRUG STORE

Addleman

Phone 475-2661 — Oberlin — Toll Free 1-800-794-3784
Service and value are the cornerstones of our business.

Republican Valley Motors
4x8
OH/ADV
Ad sent to GDN