



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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28<sup>th</sup> Senate District

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**A Weekly Column for the  
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# Drought Conditions Worsen

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JEFFERSON CITY – The hot and dry conditions that have blanketed Missouri this summer are punishing crops and pastures throughout the region. The Missouri Agricultural Statistics Service rates topsoil moisture supplies at 43-percent very short, 39-percent short, and 18-percent adequate. Earlier this week, Governor Blunt reactivated the state's Drought Assessment Committee. The committee of 14 representatives from state and federal agencies coordinates efforts to mitigate the effects of a drought.

Twenty-one western Missouri counties are considered to be in the drought conservation stage, which is the third stage in a four-stage rating system that goes from bad to worse. In the 28<sup>th</sup> Senate District, counties listed in the conservation phase are Benton, Cedar, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair.

The conservation phase exists when streams are dry, river and lake levels fall below what is expected to occur every ten years, soil moisture approaches the wilting point for plants and dry weather is expected to continue. Under these conditions, water conservation measures are implemented and alternate water supplies are put into service.

Fifty-eight Missouri counties are under a drought alert, the second phase on the four-stage advisory. At this point, plants are showing stress, stream levels have dropped, and rainfall has been below normal for many months.

Fifteen counties are classified in the drought advisory phase, when below normal rainfall has occurred for several months.

While droughts inconvenience everyone in the affected area, they threaten the livelihood of those in the agricultural community. A reduction of one bushel per acre in soybean yields reduces the state's net farm income by about \$25-million. A similar per-acre reduction in corn yields results in a \$5-million decrease.

Farmers and ranchers should contact their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or visit **[disaster.usda.gov/drought\\_jump.htm](http://disaster.usda.gov/drought_jump.htm)** for eligibility in drought-related programs. Information also is available on the state Department of Agriculture web site at **[www.mda.mo.gov](http://www.mda.mo.gov)**, which includes links to the weekly crop and weather report, the hay directory and the U.S. Drought Monitor. Farmers who do not have access to the Internet can receive drought information by calling the agriculture department's public affairs office at (573) 751-8596.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: [delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us](mailto:delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us)

*Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.*