

2001 DROUGHT COMPARES TO 1977

The drought situation in eastern Washington continues to manifest itself in low river flows and decreased irrigation water availability. The status of current drought conditions has developed similarly to the 1977 drought, and has prompted widespread discussion of Washington's water policies and lack of water storage facilities.

Status of Drought Conditions - Most of the snow pack at low elevations in Washington's mountains has melted. Some snow at higher elevations remains, but there is typically a small amount of water in higher-elevation snow. Many major rivers in Washington exhibit drought conditions, which is defined as less than 75% of normal water levels.

As of June 1, the Columbia River forecast flow from April through September at The Dalles Dam is 52 million acre-feet, which is 53% of average. In 1977, only 51 million acre-feet of water flowed past The Dalles Dam. With the snow melt currently in the Columbia from the warm spring temperatures of the past two weeks, "irrigators will be able to withdraw water to irrigate crops for the next several weeks and there will be more water in the Columbia for fish," said Doug McChesney, drought coordinator for Ecology. "We will have that water now and for the next several weeks." McChesney said that people with interruptible water rights (those issued after 1980) must continue checking weekly to determine whether water will be available for irrigation.

The June 1 water-supply forecast for several major tributaries is:

- Chelan River - 59% of average
- Cowlitz River (at Mayfield Reservoir) - 72%
- Okanogan River - 47%
- Skagit River - 67%
- Snake River (at Lower Granite) - 50%
- Wenatchee River - 59%
- Yakima River - 57%

Droughts of 1977 and 2001 Show Similarities - The comparison of mid-June 1977 conditions are very similar to mid-June 2001:

In 1977, May storms resulted in slight increases in water flows. Cool temperatures slowed snow melt and water supplies in the Yakima basin were optimistically projected to be less severe than originally thought. *In 2001, the warm weather has resulted in snow pack melting into streams a month earlier than normal, thus increasing the amount of water in streams.*

In 1977, 73 public and private drinking water operations reported immediate or anticipated water-supply problems; six reported imminent problems. *In 2001, nine large utilities have told the state Dept. of Health that they are highly vulnerable to drought.*

In 1977, wheat and cattle were the most seriously affected agricultural products. Dryland and irrigated agriculture expected a \$468 million loss in crop production. *In 2001, 88,000 acres of irrigated agricultural land has been taken out of production through the BPA buyout, 25,000 acres of orchards may be pulled out, and the sugar beet industry is out of production.*

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WSHGA SUMMER PICNIC
AUGUST 5, 2001

The Washington State Hay Growers Association will hold its first Summer Picnic at Community Park (formerly State Park) in Moses Lake on Sunday afternoon, August 5, beginning at 1:00 p.m. The Picnic will be hosted by the Association and will feature a barbecued pig. All are invited to attend. Admission is free, but each family is encouraged to bring a side dish or dessert and plates and

utensils. Please RSVP to the Association office at 509/547-5538 by Wednesday, August 1.

Drought, continued from front page

In 1977, barges moved fish from the Columbia and Snake Rivers farther downstream. Trucks hauled fish downstream from the Yakima River. *In 2001, drought conditions have left more than 700,000 salmon smolts stranded in gravel in the mid-Columbia River.*

In 1977, more than 500 aluminum-industry workers lost their jobs due to lack of power to run plants. *In 2001, more than 600 people lost their jobs when the Vanalco smelter in Vancouver shut down.*

In 1977, 194 forest fires had been reported and the Dept. of Natural Resources was seeding clouds in an effort to reduce forest fires. *In 2001, 13 fires have burned just 18 acres out of a total of 12 million acres of private and state forest lands protected by DNR.*

In 1977, Ecology had issued 400 temporary ground-water permits to help farmers and communities drill more wells. *In 2001, Ecology reported issuing 121 emergency water-right permits and changes of existing water rights.*

CEREAL LEAF BEETLE SURVEY UPDATE

Cereal Leaf Beetle (CLB) survey and biological control in Washington started in 1999 and continues in an effort to stop the spread of this insect. The insect's feeding causes significant damage on leaves of small grains and grasses. The major economic impact for hay growers is California's requirement for certification of origin from a CLB-free county. CLB is found in the midwest and northeast U.S. and has recently been detected in most western states, including Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Oregon, and Washington.

1999-2000 surveys of 200 sites in 16 counties showed populations in Pend Oreille, Spokane, Lincoln, and Stevens Counties. Updated surveys by WSDA in 2001 have shown more positive sites in the following counties:

- Adams (2) - Odessa, Highway 21 & I-90
- Clark (3) - Battleground, Highway 503
- Franklin (1) - south of Othello on Highway 17
- Grant (2) - near Stratford
- Columbia (1) - near Dayton (spring wheat)

For more information about Cereal Leaf Beetle activity, contact Clinton Campbell at WSDA at 360/902-2071 or ccampbell@agr.wa.gov.

OKANOGAN COUNTY AND METHOW VALLEY RANCHERS SUE NMFS, USFWS, USFS

A coalition of county officials, farmers, and ranchers in the Methow Valley filed suit June 19 against the federal government for unlawfully using the Endangered Species Act to cut off water rights. The suit names the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and officials of the U.S. Forest Service as defendants.

Okanogan Co. Commissioner Craig Vejraska explained that the county and irrigators tried for two years to negotiate a cooperative, legal solution for salmon conservation, but talks fell apart when the USFS and other defendants unilaterally imposed target flow conditions that local farmers say is "an impossible standard." The standard prohibits farmers from irrigating if river flows fall below what they were more than 100 years ago. Farmers and ranchers say the standard would keep them from using their water at least five years out of every ten. "The Methow Valley is being singled out to test a flawed policy that clearly violates federal law," says Vejraska.

According to a 1997 Congressional Task Force report the U.S. Forest Service has no authority to limit water rights as a condition of renewing permits for irrigation ditches that cross federal land. But in 1999, the USFS suspended the federal permits of Methow Valley irrigators in order to meet the target flows imposed by NMFS and USFWS. "Last month, the USFS informed Congress that it would abandon the policy," said Vejraska, "but we're already stuck with it in the Methow. We have no choice but to take legal action to right this wrong."

DIRECTORY ADDITIONS

Please add the following information in the 2001-2002 WSHGA Hay Directory for the WSHGA members below:

Terry Burke

Finn Clausen

Burke Hay & Cattle Co. Stokrose Farm & Feedlot
 16236 Road 10 SW 21029 Road 6 SE
 Royal City, WA 99357 Warden, WA 98857
 509/346-9541 (also fax) 509/349-2324
 alfalfa, grass, straw alfalfa
 2-string bales, tarped/tested big bales, tarped/tested
 2,250 total tons delivery to 200 miles

WASHINGTON/OREGON (COLUMBIA BASIN)

7,000 total tons Tonnage: 42,130 Week Ago: 34,560 Year Ago: 20,620

Compared to last week, Premium alfalfa for export mostly firm for quality of hay. Trading moderate, demand good on mostly light offerings of remaining 1st cutting not sold. Good/Premium dairy and export slicer hay trading uneven, mostly steady. Trading active, demand very good on the last of 1st cutting hay. Fair alfalfa not fully established with a firm undertone noted on light trading, very good demand and very light offerings. Export timothy steady. Trading moderate in the basin area, demand good on current offerings. Feedstore and horse sales mostly steady to firm, few sales at lower levels to regular accounts on small pick up loads. The Lower Columbia Basin is getting a good start swathing and baling of 2nd cutting. Should see more hay being offered over the next week as more hay is baled and stacked. If current weather pattern holds, the quality of the hay should be good and most are waiting to see how the hay tests.

Quality/Bale Size	Tons	Price	Wtd Avg	Comments
Export Alfalfa sales to move in 60 days, tops off:				
Premium 2-tie	1130	115.-130.00	126.95	
Premium 2-tie	1020	130.-135.00	131.57	Ext. Del.
Premium 3-tie	2460	130.-135.00	130.93	
Premium 3-tie	2920	130.-135.00	130.55	Ext. Del.

Domestic Alfalfa sales, tops off:				
Premium 2-3 tie	1350	120.-135.00	129.07	
Prem. mid/ton	16150	115.-130.00	120.46	
Good mid/ton	4500	105.-120.00	110.11	
Fair mid/ton	570	95.-105.00	101.14	
Oat hay mid/ton	700	90.00	90.00	

11,270 tons of other hay reported. Alfalfa haylage, based on 12% moisture 120.00 per ton. Export Premium horse timothy 185.-190.00 FOB 3-tie. Export Premium dairy timothy 165.-185.00 FOB 3-tie. Export Premium #1 dairy

timothy 145.-155.00 FOB 3-tie. Export Premium #2 dairy timothy, some faults 140.-150.00 FOB 3-tie. Fair/Good/Premium alfalfa, package deal 100.00 FOB Southern Columbia Basin 3/4 bales, mixed terms. Premium export alfalfa, light rain 125.-130.00 FOB 3-tie. Good/Premium export alfalfa, light rain 110.00 FOB 3 tie. Good alfalfa, light rain damage 105.-110.00 FOB big bales. Good alfalfa, rain damage 100.-110.00 FOB 2-3 tie. Fair alfalfa, rain damage with weeds 97.-100.00 FOB 2-tie.

Feed store/horse accounts sales covered: Good/Premium orchard, 2 tie 75-100 lb. bale 140.-145.00 FOB, couple of sales 110.-125.00 to regular small accounts. Good/Premium orchard and alfalfa blend, 2 tie 75-100 lb. bale 135.00 FOB. Good/Premium timothy, slight rain 135.00 FOB. Good/Premium, mostly alfalfa 2 tie 90-110 lb. bale 125.-135.00 FOB.

USDA Market News

ECOLOGY ANNOUNCES
WATER MEASURING RULEMAKING

Washington Department of Ecology has announced its intention to draft and implement a water measuring rule that will involve metering of certain ground water withdrawals or surface water diversions. The rule will comply with state law that requires measuring for all new surface water permits and existing water rights that meet the following criteria:

- C Surface water diversions greater than one cubic foot of water per second.
- C Diversions and withdrawals from surface and ground water sources that support fish stocks classified as critical and depressed by the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

The initial draft rule is available for review by interested groups and the public at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/measuring/measuringhome. Ideas and suggestions may be submitted online. Interested parties can call Jeff Marti at 360/407-6636 for policy or rule questions or Lynn Coleman at 360/407-6738 for technical questions. The formal public comment period and hearings on the draft rule will commence in September.

The primary difference from the 1988 rule is the addition of reporting requirements for certain large water users. The proposed rule includes the following elements:

- C Specific data collection and reporting requirements.
- C Requirements for both open channel and pipe diversions.
- C Performance of the meter is the focus of metering requirements (required accuracy and installation concerns).

The compliance plan calls for those water users totaling 80 percent of water use in each of the 16 “fish critical” watersheds to measure their water use by December, 2002.

J^{une} 2001

WASHINGTON CONTINUES TO FEEL ENERGY CRISIS EFFECTS

The energy crisis remains a serious problem for farmers in Washington, despite some media reports that the crisis has abated. “Our energy situation, and in fact our drought situation as well, remains serious and has not abated,” Governor Gary Locke stated during a recent meeting with

utility executives. “We must remain vigilant in our conservation efforts.” The governor commended utilities and BPA for their electric load reduction efforts and urged them to continue developing curtailment plans in the event of power disruption.

Energy prices in Washington and other western states have risen sharply over the last two years. Wholesale electricity prices have risen in response to a variety of factors ranging from poor hydro conditions to supply problems stemming from California's electricity restructuring policies. Higher wholesale prices will find their way into retail prices. BPA has already announced that it will significantly raise the rates it charges utilities when new power sales contracts take effect on October 1, 2001, possibly by more than 100%.

The Pacific Northwest is facing increased risk of short-term electricity supply disturbances that could lead to forced curtailments such as rolling blackouts. The Northwest Power Planning Council is forecasting a 12-17% chance of blackouts occurring in Washington this fall and winter.

Due to the combination of the west coast power crisis and Pacific Northwest drought, the Northwest Power Planning Council is recommending that water spills at most Snake and Columbia River dams be eliminated in order to make more water available to generate electricity later this summer. At the same time, the Council suggested that a portion of the income from the sale of that additional power be set aside to pay for projects that mitigate the impact of this year's drought on fish. The Council also urged BPA to plan and budget for power purchases and for continued irrigated agriculture energy buy-back for the next few years.

If these recommendations are followed, Washington's hay growers may see another short supply year.