

For More Information

Check with your local USDA Service Center providers:

- *Natural Resources Conservation Service*
- *Conservation District*
- *Farmers Home Administration*

Consult your local irrigation district or irrigation equipment suppliers

Contact your Cooperative Extension Service office

Check these Web sites:

- www.usda.gov/drought
- <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>
- <http://www.extension.org/pages/64730/drought-resources-content>

Other Tip Sheets

- *Water Conservation Tips for Stretching Water on Crops & Soils*
- *Water Conservation Ideas for Dryland Farmers*
- *Water Conservation Tips for Stretching Irrigation Water*
- *Crop & Irrigation Management During Drought*

To download these tip sheets go to:
<http://www.ut.nrcs.usda.gov/farmers.html>



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Range & Pasture Tips During Drought

Extra Care Needed

Utah's severe drought continues to impact range and pasture production. The following tips from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help you prepare for and better deal with water shortage.

Irrigated Pasture

Management practices on irrigated pasture which encourage root and leaf growth are the same practices which allow plants to make the best use of soil moisture. They include:

- ▶ Rotation grazing with adequate rest and regrowth periods
- ▶ Leaving 4-6 inches of top growth at the end of each grazing period
- ▶ Fertilizing properly
- ▶ Applying irrigation water in the right amount at the right time

Range and Dry Pasture

Forage production on dry pasture or range depends entirely on natural moisture.

Overgrazing during a drought does more damage to perennial plants than during a season of normal moisture. It reduces plant vigor, stops root and leaf growth, reduces ground cover, and invites accelerated erosion. Once erosion begins, it tends to get worse each year, further reducing plant vigor and forage production. This process is difficult to reverse.

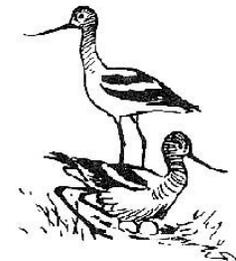
Rather than Risk Permanent Damage to Grazing Resources, Consider these Options:

- ▶ Reduce livestock numbers to balance with forage supply
- ▶ Cull herds more than normal
- ▶ Sell calves and lambs early
- ▶ Determine forage needs and buy additional forage supplies early
- ▶ Grow small grains or sorghums for hay or pasture (these need less water than conventional forage crops)
- ▶ Defer planting perennial pasture, hay, or range seeding until a year with more favorable water outlook
- ▶ Keep spring developments, stock tanks, float valves and pipelines in good working order so water is not wasted
- ▶ Prepare for hauling stock water
- ▶ Give spring development high priority (even mediocre springs will be helpful)
- ▶ Check with local NRCS and FSA offices to learn if regular or emergency cost-share programs are available to help with spring development, water harvesting, storage tanks, or other water conservation practices.
- ▶ Don't overgraze or otherwise disturb stream bank vegetation (it will be needed to prevent erosion, reduce sediment, and provide food and cover for wildlife)
- ▶ Remember, if a pasture unit must be abused, a well established seeding can tolerate overgrazing better than native range.

Wildlife

During times of drought, wildlife suffer as much or more than domestic livestock. The wildlife that share your land are a valuable natural resource. To help wildlife:

- ▶ Include additional features at stock water developments which will allow small animals and birds safe access to water (these are usually not expensive and are easily installed)
- ▶ Fence ponds and springs and install collector pipes to deliver water to a tank or trough. This will save the water source from damage by livestock trampling, as well as allow access by small animals and birds to lush vegetation that grows close to wet areas.



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This publication provided as a service to Utah farmers and ranchers by the Utah state office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service
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For further assistance contact your county NRCS field office listed in the phone book under USDA.