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**News release website:** [drought.unl.edu](http://drought.unl.edu)

## Drought center launches fresh look for USDM site

Lincoln, Nebraska — The National Drought Mitigation Center released on Monday the latest generation U.S. Drought Monitor website that improves usability and readability for its nearly 7 million-a-year viewers. The mobile-friendly site contains a new, larger drought monitor map, revised navigation and more data and information download options.

“The new site allows us to better serve our clients by offering more options and using the latest website technology available,” said Brian Fuchs, monitoring coordinator for the drought center. “Gathering information to help prepare for and mitigate drought should be easier than ever.”

Some key upgrades include a new look and layout that emphasize the drought monitor map itself on the home page, making Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico more visible. Hovering over the map highlights six standardized regional maps, which when clicked take users to regional-level maps and descriptions.

Reorganized navigation makes it easier to find and download archival and comparison maps, as well as a variety of data sets, including time series graphs and geographic information system data. Downloads are available for all state-, regional- and country-level data, as well as by all statistics type: comprehensive, threshold and number of weeks in drought.

Users wishing to download the U.S. Drought Monitor map also can now do so in five file formats, and the summary is now available in three.

Also included in the website upgrade are:

- A new custom map request tool for maps not produced on a weekly basis. Automation of this service means users can expect to receive an email within 15 minutes of a request.
- The Drought Severity and Coverage Index, a new, experimental method for converting categorical data on drought monitor levels for an area to continuous data for an area. The weighted sum formula was developed by Adnan Akyuz, North Dakota state climatologist
- Refreshed designs for the Farm Service Agency Livestock Forage Disaster Program Eligibility Tool and the North American Drought Monitor supplemental websites.

“We are excited to launch the new U.S. Drought Monitor website at this time,” Fuchs said. “While many of our frequent users are climatologists across the country, this upgrade should make the information more easily accessible to a broader audience and should resolve many of our most commonly asked user questions.”

The website redesign was completed in-house with financial support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The U.S. Drought Monitor, established in 1999, was first available online in November 2001. The weekly map of drought conditions is produced jointly by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the USDA, and the drought center based at the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, with support from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

For more information, visit [droughtmonitor.unl.edu](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu).

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