

# Limited Improvement in the Climate Outlooks

**BROOKINGS, S.D.** – Dry conditions are likely to stay with us in the near term. Some hope exists in the long-term outlook released by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center April 16, 2015 which shows potential improvement this summer.

“The new U.S. Drought Monitor map released April 16 reflected the continuing issues across the state with moderate drought (D1) areas expanding across northern, western and far eastern South Dakota. Nearly 66 percent of the state is now covered by moderate drought conditions,” said Dennis Todey, South Dakota State Climatologist and SDSU Extension Climate Specialist.

Todey explained that in addition to looking at moisture levels, the drought monitor also looks to see if there are impacts from drought showing up in crops and streamflows. The current monitor shows that the continued lack of statewide precipitation has impacted both our state's winter wheat crop and streamflows. Statewide, Todey said January 2015 through March 2015 has been the driest on record. The month of March was the second driest on record.

“Drought impacts in South Dakota are still not huge, but starting to mount,” Todey said. “Streamflows in many places in the state are falling below average for this time of year. Although there are multiple factors which cause fires, certainly the current very dry conditions statewide have exacerbated the situation with a few large and numerous smaller fires across the state.”

Winter wheat impacted by dry conditions

Todey said winter wheat has been the largest crop impacted by the dry conditions. “Some crop losses in winter wheat are already being reported due to combinations of the dryness and winterkill caused by extreme cold with lack of snow cover this winter,” Todey said.

He added that other crops and rangeland have not been seriously impacted, but will need

precipitation soon.

Laura Edwards, SDSU Extension Climate Field Specialist said the dry conditions have allowed soils to warm and allowed for earlier than usual access to fields, giving farmers a head start on spring field work. With the current fire issues, Edwards added that some producers are waiting until the evening to plant corn because of higher relative humidity and lighter winds, two factors which reduce fire risks in the field.

“Soil temperatures (at 4 inches) in the state continue to hover in the upper 40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit - a level where corn planting is appropriate. The dry conditions and overall warm temperatures have helped push soil temperatures warmer statewide,” Edwards said.

Current soil temperature data can be found at the South Dakota Soil Temperature Maps website.

Todey said the longer range outlooks from NOAA for May and the summer are somewhat more optimistic, with May showing equal chances for below or above average over most of the state. “The 90-day outlook and outlooks into the summer even bring above average chances for precipitation in the western part of the state,” said Todey.

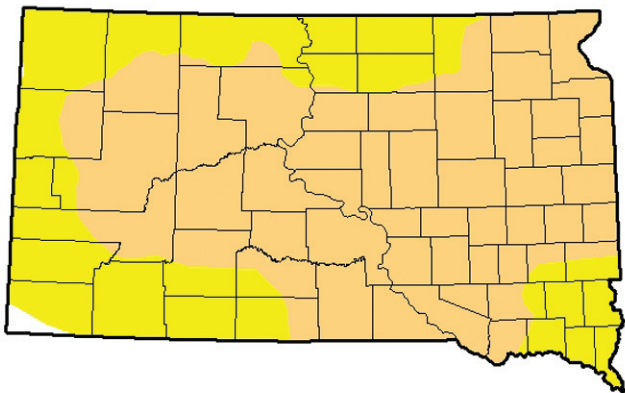
Current forecast Planting could be slowed by cooler conditions statewide next week. Cooler temperatures could reduce some of the potential fire issues and reduce evaporative demand from the atmosphere, but Todey said there will be little precipitation.

The cold period coming the week of April 20 could slow planting progress. “Next week conditions will cool statewide for the better part of the week, reducing some of the potential fire issues, but also bringing little for precipitation,” Todey said.

He added that the reduced evaporative demand from the atmosphere will also help. “Even with the reduced evaporative demand, more widespread rain is needed everywhere in the state to help initiate growth and to remove soil moisture deficits in the shorter term,” he said.

■iGrow

## U.S. Drought Monitor South Dakota



**April 14, 2015**  
(Released Thursday, Apr. 16, 2015)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.53	99.47	65.84	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week 4/7/2015	0.57	99.43	42.78	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 1/13/2015	48.53	51.47	4.46	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2015	48.53	51.47	4.46	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 9/1/2014	97.46	2.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 4/15/2014	79.09	20.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

D0 Abnormally Dry D1 Moderate Drought D2 Severe Drought D3 Extreme Drought D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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