

Drought Relief Efforts: Better Data, More Aid and How You Can Help

The U.S. Drought Monitor, a weekly map that tracks drought conditions across the country, has become one of the most important tools for agriculture and water management.

The website is produced through a partnership among the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Each week, experts compile data from satellites, weather stations and soil models, then combine it with field reports to publish an updated map every Thursday.

The map categorizes drought into five levels, from abnormally dry to exceptional drought. It is used to determine eligibility for disaster assistance, adjust crop insurance payments and guide water policy at local, state and federal levels.

While many may argue if Arkansas' network monitoring stations are adequate, what cannot be denied is that those stations cannot cover every local condition. That's why producer input is so valuable. The U.S. Drought Monitor relies on a combination of scientific measurements and on-the-ground observations to create its weekly maps. When producers submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports, they fill in the gaps between monitoring stations and provide details satellites cannot always detect — such as stressed pastures, low ponds or crop losses.

Producers can provide those observations through the Condition Monitoring Observer Reports system, or CMOR, which has a mobile app available to the public. The app allows users to log rainfall shortages, crop or pasture stress, water issues and other drought-related impacts.

The Arkansas Farm Bureau is encouraging producers to download the app and participate. By reporting conditions early and often, producers ensure their communities are accurately represented while strengthening the reliability of the nation's drought monitoring system. For step-by-step instructions on how to download and use the CMOR app (Survey123), see the official fact sheet: [How to Submit Drought Conditions Reports](#).



Help us record drought conditions through CMOR

The National Drought Mitigation Center, the National Integrated Drought Information System and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Climate Hubs are working with states, tribes and others across the country to collect Condition Monitoring Observer Reports on Drought (CMOR-Drought), including photos. We want to know how drought is affecting you.

How does this benefit you?

Your reports help us understand how drought is affecting local conditions. They appear on a map. The U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM) author may consult the CMOR map to help identify areas that need more attention. The USDM triggers drought responses, including the Livestock Forage Disaster Program and Internal Revenue Service tax provisions. State agencies, including emergency management and public safety, may also make use of maps to know where to direct assistance.

Where do you find CMOR-drought reporting?

Landing page for CMOR-drought:
go.unl.edu/cmor_drought
Includes current and archived maps of reports, and QR code for current form

Direct link to current CMOR-drought form:
go.unl.edu/CMOR
Works on mobile*, tablet or computer
*To report from your mobile phone, see "Getting started with the field app"

How often should you report?

We recommend that you submit a photo each month or each season, to provide an ongoing comparison of wet, dry and normal conditions. Of course, we also welcome more frequent submissions.

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Questions?
Please email DIRinfo@unl.edu.

Getting started with the field app

Install the app

CMOR uses Esri's Survey123 field app. Install the app, either by searching for Survey123 at the app store or by entering go.unl.edu/CMOR into the address bar or scanning the QR code, which will prompt you to download the app.

Click on "continue without signing in."

When it asks about geolocation, choose "Allow While Using App" for best results.

Download the survey

You must go outside the app to download the survey for the first time.

From your phone or tablet, enter go.unl.edu/CMOR into the address bar or scan the QR code with the camera, and this time choose "Open in the Survey123 field app." That will download the survey and open it for you to use.

go.unl.edu/cmor_drought