

A U.S. Drought Monitor Q&A

The U.S. Drought Monitor is a map released every Thursday, showing parts of the U.S. that are in drought. The map uses five classifications: abnormally dry (D0), showing areas that may be going into or are coming out of drought, and four levels of drought: moderate (D1), severe (D2), extreme (D3) and exceptional (D4).

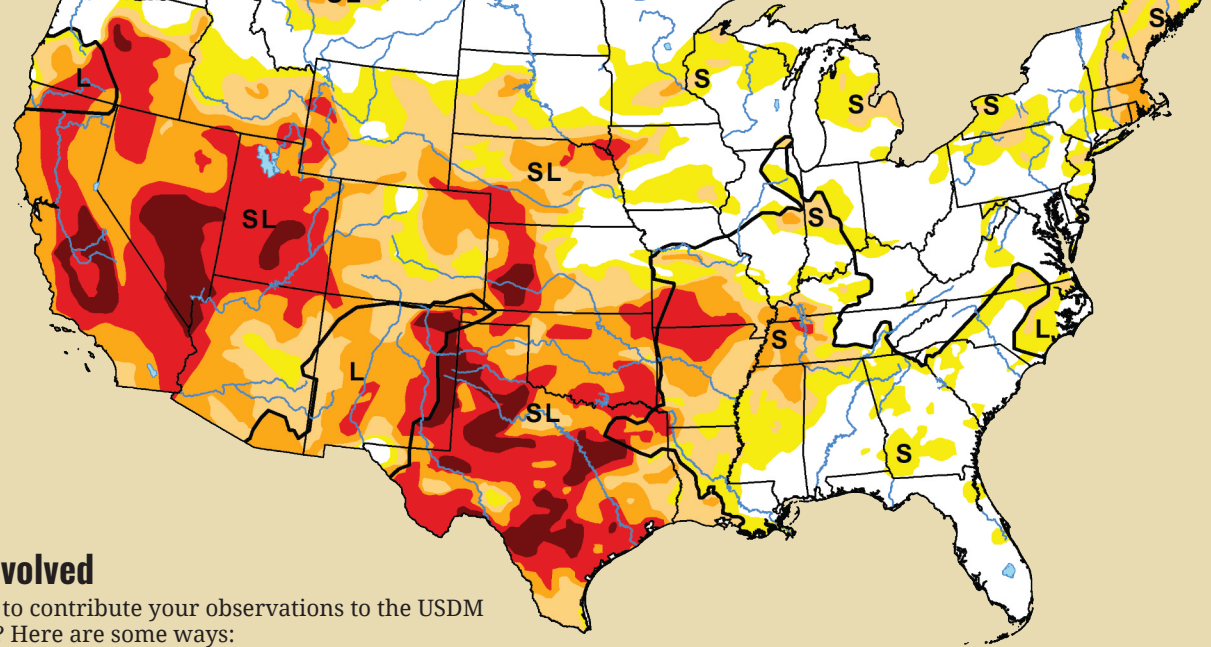
	D0: Abnormally dry		D2: Severe drought
	D1: Moderate drought		D3: Extreme drought
			D4: Exceptional drought

What agencies or organizations are responsible for the USDM?

The Drought Monitor has been a team effort since its inception in 1999, produced jointly by the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The NDMC hosts the web site of the drought monitor and the associated data, and provides the map and data to NOAA, USDA and other agencies. It is freely available at droughtmonitor.unl.edu.

Who uses it, and what do they do with it?

The USDA uses the drought monitor to trigger disaster declarations and eligibility for low-interest loans. The Farm Service Agency uses it to help determine eligibility for their Livestock Forage Program, and the Internal Revenue Service uses it for tax deferral on forced livestock sales due to drought. State, local, tribal and basin-level decision makers use it to trigger drought responses, ideally along with other more local indicators of drought.



Get involved

Want to contribute your observations to the USDM process? Here are some ways:

- 1. Talk to your state climatologist**
Find the current list at the American Association of State Climatologists website: www.stateclimate.org.
- 2. Email**
Emails sent to droughtmonitor@unl.edu inform the USDM authors.
- 3. Submit CMOR reports**
Use the Condition Monitoring Observer Report (CMOR) system (go.unl.edu/cmor_drought) to provide information about how drought is affecting your area. Your report will appear immediately on an interactive map. The CMOR page includes fact sheets in English and Spanish and a how-to video. Your report will help Drought Monitor authors and others interpret weather and climate data.
- 4. Become a CoCoRaHS observer**
Submit drought reports along with daily precipitation observations. Learn more at www.cocorahs.org.

What is the U.S. Drought Monitor?

Maybe you've seen it in the media: that map of the U.S. painted with blobs of yellow, orange and red. It shows drought — but how do we know which colors go where? Who decides? What does it mean for you? Get the answers inside.

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