



United States
Department of
Agriculture

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Risk Management
Agency

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TO: Ross J. Davidson Administrator Via: e mail

FROM: Dave P. Paul /S/ *Dave P. Paul* Director

SUBJECT: Regional Irrigation Assessment for Spokane Region

This Regional Irrigation Assessment is provided in accordance with instructions in the Loss Adjustment Manual, FCIC-25010. The Regional Office Director is required to share information about areas within the region suspected of having inadequate water for irrigation with insurance providers.

Parts of the west continue to experience drought conditions. The U.S. Drought Index lists abnormally dry conditions in Southern Idaho and extreme Southeast Oregon. Precipitation totals and snow water content in these areas are 7 – 56 percent of average as of April 9, 2004. The Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) SNOTEL measurements within the most severe drought areas reveal irrigation water shortages are expected; with the most severe shortages in 70 years for Bear Lake water users. Some producers in the Bear Lake area have already been notified that water delivery likely will be curtailed in mid-summer and shut off prior to the end of the irrigation season.

In the region over the past several weeks, there have been high temperatures causing record high snowmelt. The National Weather Service is predicting the possibility of continued above average temperatures, which would contribute to faster melt rates.

We have reviewed and continue to track summaries of the streamflow forecast probabilities, basin area reservoir supplies, and SNOTEL data from the Water and Climate Center of the USDA NRCS. Based on review of data available as of April 9, the following counties by state are identified where the availability of water for irrigation is most suspect:



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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Blaine, Bonneville, Butte, Camas, Caribou, Cassia, Clark, Franklin, Fremont, Gooding, Jefferson, Jerome, Lincoln, Madison, Minidoka, Oneida, Owyhee, Power, Teton and Twin Falls counties, Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon.

Insured crops under an irrigated practice may be affected by the suspected lack of irrigation water in the identified counties. Severity of irrigation shortages in many areas will depend on how the remaining snow melts and future precipitation. Irrigated crops for the applicable counties are identified on the actuarial documents and on our website at <http://www.rma.usda.gov>.

We will continue to track summaries of irrigation related information in the region and inform the Administrators Office of any deteriorating conditions. We encourage insurance providers to notify the Spokane Regional Office immediately of any other counties or areas of suspected irrigation water shortages. If you have questions, please call our office at 509-353-2147.

