

July 2007

Drought Returns to N.D.

North Dakota's break from drought was short-lived.

The state came out of a six-year drought two weeks ago.

"During this two-week period, no portion of the state experienced drought," says Adnan Akyuz, state climatologist and assistant professor of climatology in North Dakota State University's Soil Science Department. "It took only two weeks for the creeping disaster to settle in the west-central and southwestern parts of the state."

The statewide rainfall average was near normal in June. However, portions of the state received only a half as much rainfall as they normally would, compared with the 30-year average.

West-central and southwestern North Dakota received only 58 percent and 65 percent of normal rainfall, respectively, during the last 30-day period, according to the North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network. Dickinson reported 2.18 inches for all of June, the month when rainfall is expected to be the maximum for the year. Watford City received even less, 1.3 inches, which was the lowest on record for June since 1933.

"Drought is a normal feature of our climate" Akyuz says. "The state of North Dakota had wet and dry cycles in the past and will continue to have similar cycles in the future. There is no time for celebration of the rain. We have to plan for assessing our vulnerability to the drought to mitigate significant economic losses and environmental degradation resulting from its occurrence even when it is raining."

Last month also was the 27th warmest June since weather history began to be recorded in 1895.

"Warm and windy conditions depleted soil moisture very fast, contributing to flash drought," said Akyuz.

For the latest weekly U.S. drought monitor information or the drought monitor archives, visit the Web site at <http://drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>.

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