



United States Department of Agriculture
 Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
Risk Management Agency

March 13, 2002

TO: Ross J. Davidson, Jr. , Administrator

FROM: Doug Hagel, Regional Director /s/ *Doug Hagel*

SUBJECT: Regional Irrigation Assessment for the Billings Region

The Billings Regional Office has completed our Regional Irrigation Assessment of surface irrigation supplies for Montana and Wyoming (as specified in the Loss Adjustment Manual, FCIC-25010). In summary, both Montana and Wyoming have significant snowpack and reservoir shortfalls resulting from the ongoing drought. Consequently, many watershed basins will most likely see reduced streamflows this irrigation season, possibly reducing the available irrigation water for many producers in these states. The table below references the current snowpack totals and reservoir levels (as a percentage of average) for Montana and Wyoming's major watershed basins:

	Percentage of Average Snowpack	Percentage of Average Reservoir Useable Contents
MONTANA		
KOOTENAI RIVER BASIN	120%	136%
FLATHEAD RIVER BASIN	104%	117%
UPPER CLARK FORK RIVER BASIN	92%	92%
BITTERROOT RIVER BASIN	95%	87%
LOWER CLARK FORK RIVER BASIN	116%	108%
JEFFERSON RIVER BASIN	79%	54%
MADISON RIVER BASIN	90%	105%
GALLATIN RIVER BASIN	88%	140%
MISSOURI MAINSTEM RIVER BASIN	91%	83%
SMITH, JUDITH AND MUSSELSHELL RIVER BASINS	86%	26%
SUN, TETON AND MARIAS RIVER BASINS	101%	91%
ST. MARY AND MILK RIVER BASINS	116%	33%
UPPER YELLOWSTONE RIVER BASIN	81%	100%
LOWER YELLOWSTONE RIVER BASIN	75%	81%
WYOMING		
SNAKE RIVER BASIN	80%	45%
UPPER YELLOWSTONE AND MADISON RIVER BASINS	86%	105%
WIND RIVER BASIN	71%	21%
BIGHORN RIVER BASIN	76%	54%
SHOSHONE AND CLARKS FORK RIVER BASINS	76%	60%
POWDER AND TONGUE RIVER BASINS	77%	94%
BELLE FOURCHE AND CHEYENNE RIVER BASINS	62%	120%
UPPER N. PLATTE RIVER BASIN	67%	79%
LOWER N. PLATTE, SWEETWATER RIVER BASINS	55%	78%
UPPER GREEN RIVER BASIN	76%	96%
LOWER GREEN RIVER BASIN	73%	97%
UPPER BEAR RIVER BASIN	74%	20%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resource Conservation Service. NOTE: Percentage of Average

Snowpack Figures as of March 12, 2002; and Percentage of Average Reservoir Useable Contents as of the end of February 2002.

Regional Office • 2110 Overland Ave., Suite 106 • Billings, Montana 59102
 Phone (406) 657-6447 • Fax (406) 657-6573



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Given this information, there is a suspected lack of irrigation water throughout **all counties in Montana and Wyoming** that rely on surface water runoff for their irrigation sources. Insured crops grown in Montana and Wyoming that may be affected by the suspected lack of irrigation water include: canola, corn, safflower, dry peas, dry beans, barley, oats, forage, sugar beets, and spring wheat.

Unless conditions change, based on the current snowpack totals and reservoir levels, Montana and Wyoming will be facing one of the worst droughts in recent history. Therefore, it is reasonable to anticipate reduced streamflows will result in reduced irrigation allotments across both states. This assessment is a snap shot in time and does not reflect continuously changing conditions. For more information on current conditions we recommend accessing NRCS websites at (http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/water/w_data.html) and (http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/water/w_qnty.html).