

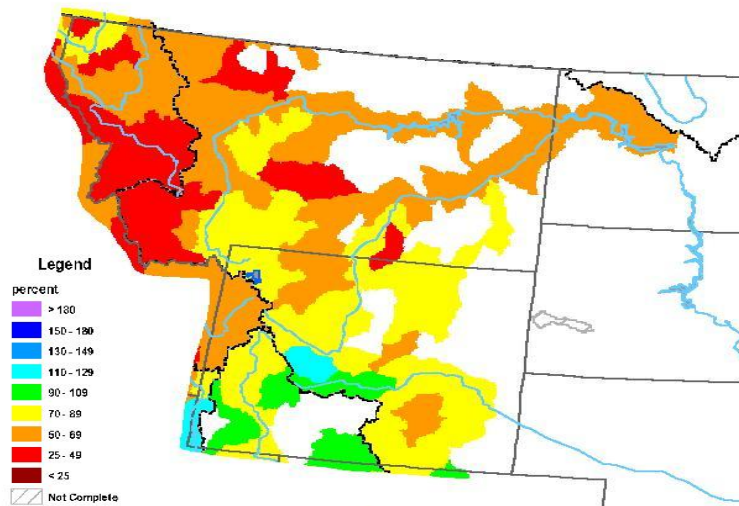
Attachment 1: Billings Region Irrigation Assessment for the 2005 Crop Year

The Billings Regional Office has completed our Regional Irrigation Assessment of surface irrigation supplies (as specified on pages 62-63 of the 2005 Loss Adjustment Manual, FCIC-25010, Section 6, Paragraph 40, D, E, and F).

Recent Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) information shows Montana has snow water equivalent (SWE) of about 62 percent of average, and Wyoming has a SWE of about 90 percent of average. Similarly, NRCS projects that in Montana stream flow will range from 40 to 58 percent of average, and in Wyoming that stream flow will range from 19 to 75 percent of average.

The ongoing drought, low reservoir levels, and low snow pack levels, especially in Montana, have left most of the drainages north and west of the Missouri River with a high probability of inadequate irrigation water supply. Given this information, it is suspected that there could again be a lack of irrigation water in Montana and Wyoming counties that rely on surface water runoff for their irrigation sources.

Based on the current snow pack totals and stream flow forecasts, parts of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming are in an extended drought. The reservoirs on the Missouri River are near all time low levels. Therefore, it is reasonable to anticipate that reduced stream flows could result in reduced irrigation allotments and receding water levels will leave some irrigation systems “high and dry.” In some cases water may be unavailable. The following are the forecasted USDA NRCS the spring and summer stream flows as of March 1 (also see: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/>):



Insured crops grown in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming that may be affected by lack of irrigation water and inability to pump water include: alfalfa hay, barley, oats, wheat, canola, corn, safflower, dry peas, dry beans, and sugar beets.

Summaries of irrigation related information will continue to be monitored and our office will advise the Administrator's office of significant changes in the situation. Insurance providers are encouraged to notify the RO of changes to irrigation supply impacting this assessment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding this situation. If there are further questions or comments feel free to contact our office.