



## Texas Drought Conditions Becoming Historic

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Heard the one about the Texas farmer whose land was so dry, his cow was giving powdered milk? The lack of rain in the state is quickly becoming no laughing matter as a drought has a firm grip on most of Texas and there appears to be little or no relief in sight, contends a Texas A&M University professor who says conditions could even get worse.

Steve Quiring, a professor in the Department of Geography who specializes in Texas weather patterns, says 88 percent of Texas is experiencing abnormally dry conditions and 18 percent of the state is in either extreme or exceptional drought conditions.

“Drought conditions for most of the state have gone from bad to worse over the past few months,” Quiring says.

“Many counties that were experiencing moderate drought are now in either extreme or exceptional drought conditions. We’re seeing more and more of the state becoming drier and drier.”

He notes that “exceptional” drought conditions are those that usually occur only once every 50 years.

The hardest hit areas are those counties in and around Austin and San Antonio, “and from there, just about every direction you go, there will be either extreme or exceptional drought.

“It (drought areas) just keeps expanding almost every month,” he adds.

The current drought is reaching historic proportion. Dry conditions near Austin and San Antonio have been exceeded only once before in Texas – the drought of 1917-18, Quiring explains.

At present, 168 Texas counties have issued outdoor burn bans, he notes.

“The bad news is that both short and long-term forecasts don’t call for much rain at all,” he adds.

“We usually get nice rains from February through April, but the forecast models do not look promising at all. If the current trend continues, many Texas farmers and ranchers are looking at some very grim conditions over the next few months.”

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