

USDA releases diverse family farms report

by Justin Walker
Communications Specialist
The America's Diverse Family Farms 2018 Edition, released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is now available.

The report is an overview of U.S. farms from an economic and commodity perspective, USDA agricultural economist Chris Burns said.

"Ninety-eight percent of U.S. farms are family farms," Burns said. "They account for 87 percent of farm production."

Small farms make up 89 percent of all farms in America, according to the report. Those farms operate on half of all agricultural land in the U.S.

On the economic side, the report shows most farm households do not qualify for low income or low wealth status.

"Fifty-nine percent of farm households receive an income that is at or above the median for all U.S. households in 2017," Burns said.

The report also analyzed farm production under contract, he said. These agreements typically exist between a farmer and an intermediary, such as a processor, and regulates the quantity, price and outlet for any particular commodity.

"This is a tool farmers can use to lower their risks for price and revenue," Burns said.

"We found that about one third of all agricultural production occurred under contract in 2017," he said.

That is roughly the same percentage as it was 20 years ago, Burns said. But there are slight changes when it comes to certain commodities.

"Tobacco has gone from almost no production under contract to 90 percent," he said. "That had to do with changes in the tobacco industry."

There was also a significant change in swine production.

"Hog processors wanted to have more control of the quality of the hog meat and have increased their uses of contracts, as well," Burns said.

There is a relation between size of farm and which commodities they deal with, he said. Roughly two thirds of dairy products come from large scale farms, as well as fruits and nuts. Cotton is typically grown on mid- to large-sized farms.

Small farms account for roughly half of hay and poultry production.

The report can be found at www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/90985/eib-203.pdf?v=9520.4.

Ranchers Leasing Workshops scheduled for 2019

"We focus on legal issues related to grazing, hunting and livestock leases, including why leases should be in writing, how to determine the payment structure and rate, and key terms to include," said Tiffany Dowell Lashmet, AgriLife Extension agricultural law

specialist in Amarillo.

The workshops will discuss real-world situations and give farmers and ranchers practical information to use on their operations, Lashmet noted.

Dr. Greg Kaase, AgriLife Extension agricultural economist in College Station, will join Lashmet as a presenter for the programs.

The workshops will also focus on landowner liability.

"Understanding the law regarding when a landowner or tenant may be liable if someone is injured on the property is so important for landowners,"

Lashmet said. "There are a number of steps landowners can and should be doing proactively to be prepared if an injury does occur."

At each half-day program, attendees will receive a copy of the Ranchers Agricultural Leasing Handbook, as well as a follow-up email with any other resources mentioned during the day.

The cost is \$50 per person or \$80 per couple. Lunch is provided at each event by AgWorkers Insurance.

The workshop will be hosted on the following dates and

locations:

April 9 - Nacogdoches, 9 am-1 pm, Nacogdoches Expo Center, 3805 N.W. Stallings Drive, Nacogdoches;

April 24 - Burnet, noon-4:30 pm, AgriLife Extension Burnet County Office, 607 N. Vandever St., No. 100, Burnet;

May 22 - Perryton, 9 am-1 pm, Ochiltree County Expo Center, 402 Expo Drive, Perryton;

August 28 - Victoria, 9 am-1 pm, Victoria County 4-H Activity Center, 259 Bachelor Drive, Victoria;

September 13 - Fort Worth,

noon-4:30 pm, AgriLife Extension Tarrant County Office, 200 Taylor St., No. 500, Fort Worth;

October 11 - College Station, noon-4:30 pm, Thomas G. Hildebrand Equine Complex, 3240 F&B Road, College Station.

In the last three years, more than 850 Texans have attended the workshops, according to AgriLife Today.

For more information, contact Lashmet at 806-677-5681, tdowell@tamu.edu, or Kaase at 979-458-3348, g-kaase@tamu.edu.

Water Weekly

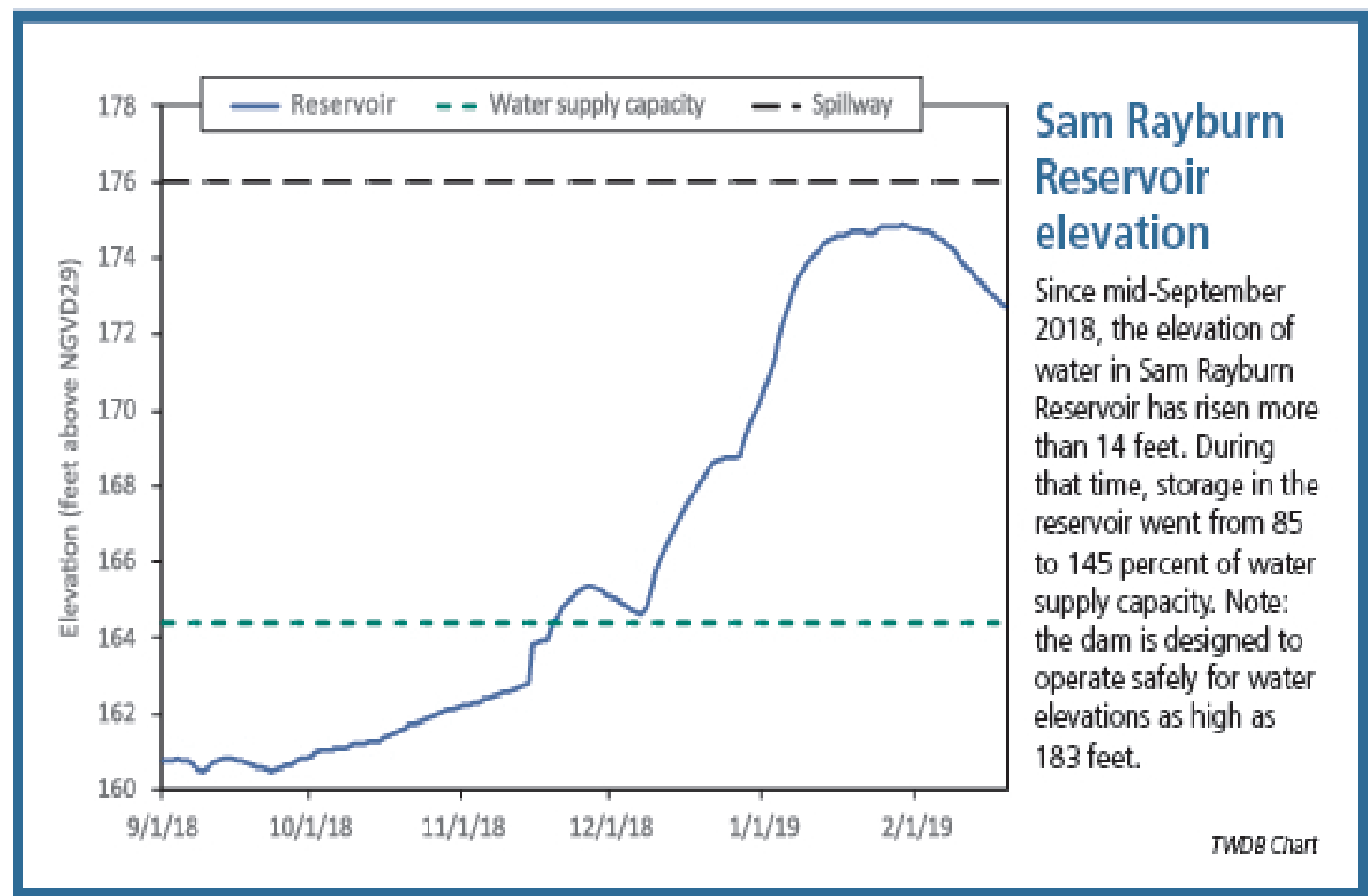
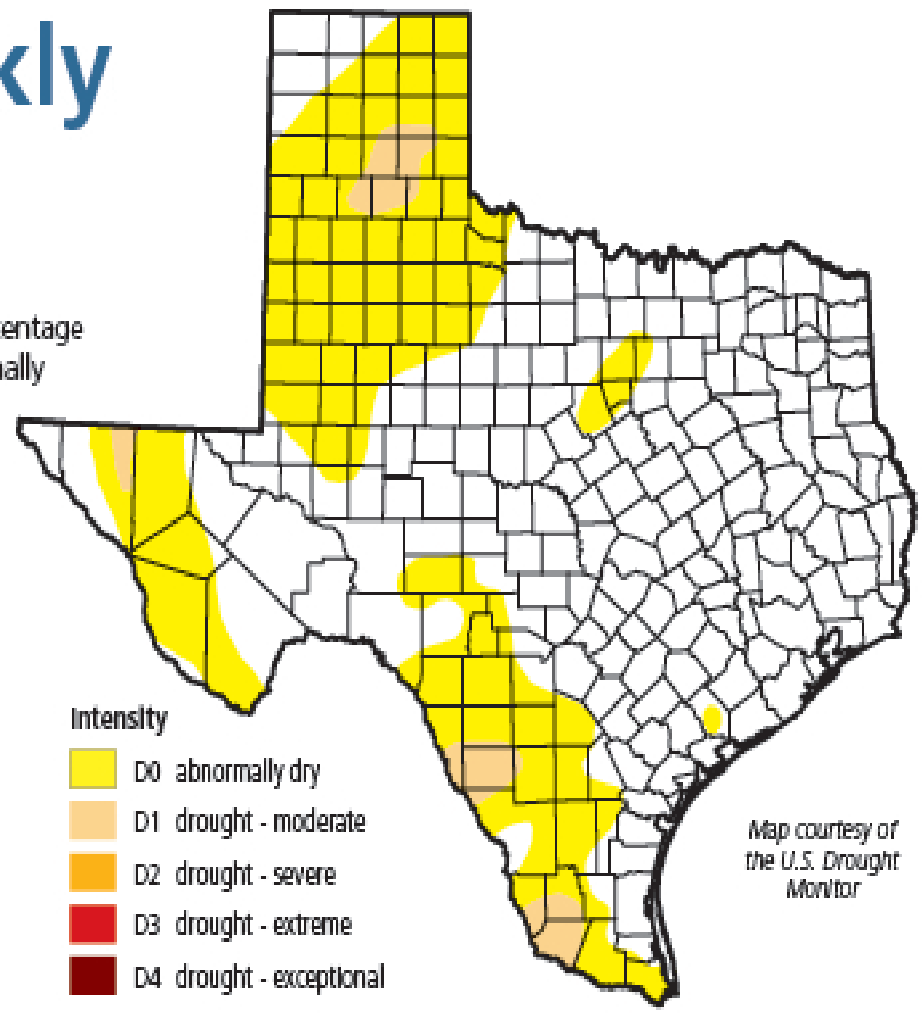
For the week of 02/18/19

Water conditions

The latest drought map shows only a 1 percentage point increase in drought. However, abnormally dry conditions have expanded to cover about one-third of the state. In the next few weeks, those areas could be impacted by drought.

Drought conditions

- ◆ 3% now
- ◆ 2% a week ago
- ◆ 1% three months ago
- ◆ 71% a year ago



Written by Dr. Mark Wentzel — Dr. Mark Wentzel is a hydrologist in the TWDB's Office of Water Science and Conservation.

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