



May 6, 2014

TO: PATRICK GRIFFIN, SISKIYOU COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER

RE: DROUGHT SURVEY RESULTS

Attached is the summary and results of the Agricultural Loss Survey for 2013-14.

This survey covers the period 2013 and 2-3 months of 2014. This survey was developed by the Siskiyou County Agricultural Department in cooperation with the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), the Office of Emergency Services and the Siskiyou County Natural Resources Advisor. The resulting information collected and tabulated by the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District is general in nature and should be used for planning purposes only. Any raw data collected should remain confidential.

The Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District is honored to be involved in this worthwhile effort. We would be interested in assisting the County in any future survey work as needed, as well as other drought efforts.

Signed:

Jocelyn Ayn Perry,
Shasta Valley RCD

cc. Ron Quigley, Siskiyou County, Office of Emergency Services
Ric Costales, Siskiyou County, Natural Resource Advisor
Jodi Aceves, Siskiyou County, Agricultural Department
Adriane Garayalde, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District

AGRICULTURAL DROUGHT SURVEY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Loss Survey for 2013-14 was conceived and distributed by the Siskiyou County Agricultural Department, the Natural Resources Department and the Office of Emergency Services as well as the UCCE, the Siskiyou County Farm Bureau and the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District. The estimated number of survey distributed was 800. The estimated number of agricultural producers in Siskiyou County is 365.

Using existing data, reporting of the quantity and dollar value for crop, livestock and timber losses can be given for this sample. Extending or extrapolating this data should only be done for limited purpose and with acknowledged imprecision.

DISCLAIMERS

This survey is not to be taken as a scientific study or assessment. Its purpose is to gather general data for trend analysis for drought planning. Further steps are suggested in the summary section of this report that may allow drought impacts to be quantified for reimbursement or compensation. Because creative interpretation of responses was necessary, the totals should be seen in a "SWAG" type of scenario, with a 10% plus or minus value, at a minimum. Numbers and answers could be more accurate but possibly less informative if standardization was imposed on this tool.

SURVEY PROFILE

Impacts for 2013 in general are likely more accurate. With 104 producers responding, 6 (6%) had no impacts for 2013. Five producers responded that they are not expecting to have any droughts impacts for 2014.

Grower's responses were well distributed throughout the county:

SCOTT	34	33%
SHASTA	33	32%
BUTTE VALLEY	16	15%
TULELAKE	14	13%
SOUTH COUNTY	4	4%
KLAMATH RIVER	3	3%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	104	100%

See complete chart Appendix 1

IRRIGATION

Twenty six out of one hundred and four respondents stated that they are in an irrigation district (or I knew it). There may be more that I was not aware of. Many of these producers were up in the air as to irrigation availability in March due to uncertainty within their district about deliveries. Those producers outside irrigation district also expressed similar thoughts, although there were several comments where there were known impacts. Some producers obviously have been

through droughts before and made mention of strategies they have put in place regarding stockwater and irrigation, including changes to cropping patterns. Others seemed completely in the dark regarding summer irrigation scheduling. Many comments revolved around the complex decision making processes now underway weighing moving targets, water availability and cost, conservation projects, livestock feed, selling hay vs. feeding hay to keep the herd and all its permutations and nuances.

CROPS

Producers reported impacts to crop acres for 2013 = 112,015 acres. This includes both irrigated and dryland crop acres. Losses reported for alfalfa, pasture and other hay were greatest, with smaller acreages of other crops listed. (See chart). Producers reported impacts to crop acres for 2014 = 118,776 acres.

For 2013, the top crops reporting losses were alfalfa, other hay, pasture, dryland pasture and timberlands. However, the most acres impacted were rangeland pasture acres at 54% of the totals. Alfalfa impacted acres were 2.7%, other hay acres were 4.1%, pasture was 6.1%, dryland pasture was 14.7%, and timberlands were 17.2%. Losses for 2014 are less concrete, but show similar numbers.

RANGELAND

Using a combination of entries from 2 sections of the survey, the 2013 dryland pasture and rangeland was reported unavailable or reduced in productivity. Dryland pasture for 2013 was 82%, while rangeland was 68%. For 2014, dryland pasture was 76%, while rangeland was 67%. Combining these 2 sets of responses, the 14 respondents for 2013 had an average loss of 74%. Using the same metric for 2014, the average loss is 71%.

LIVESTOCK

Producers who reported livestock impacts of some kind numbered 56. Livestock losses were counted at 707 head ;(mostly cattle and sheep); dryland acres impacted for 2013 were 32,823 acres. (This included some public grazing lands.). Eleven producers were hauling water or planning to; a cost of \$21,400 was reported for 2013. Producers who purchased supplemental feed in 2013 totaled 27 reporting 2204 tons. Some producers answered "Yes" but didn't give an answer that could be counted in tons.

For 2014, all livestock reductions were counted at 1172 head. This higher number may be reflected in some of the reduced costs for other inputs tallied here. Rangeland unavailable for 2014 is projected at 103,587 acres, or 3 times the 2013 number. (Some of these acres are public lands.) Producers planned to purchase 1008 additional tons of feed for 2014. Producers planned to invest in stockwatering improvements with a projected cost of \$54,500 for 2014.

OTHER IMPACTS

Three timber owners responded, as well as two strawberry growers and one mint grower. Several small businesses related to agricultural also reported, and one irrigation district; but their impacts are not included. Notably lacking is information about Siskiyou County's high value crops, such as potatoes, mint, strawberry plants and other seed crops. The assumption is that the market is so volatile that information was not available during the survey period. Fallow acres were counted but lumped together from all crops. This made it impossible to assign a value to them. For comparison 942 acres were reported fallow in 2013, while +17,000 acres were reported fallow in 2012. This number was higher for the first quarter of 2014, however many growers were still in the throes of decision making at that time.

COMMENTS

A cross section of producers responded to the survey. Some of the comments may shed more light on the subject than the numbers. Here are a few of the many comments received:

“Loss of pasture rent, mortgage debt, years of recovery???. Not able to increase cattle and sheep numbers, will have to decrease numbers instead. ...Anticipate 100% reductions in irrigation this year.”

“All my land is within TID. We don't know our allotments yet. If we are completely cut-off I could be forced to lay off up to 3 employees. Also I would not buy any inputs”.

“If the weather patterns change as early as next year, we would probably have to at least spot plant areas... Long term damage would be catastrophic”.

“Yes, drought takes several good years to recover from the many trickle-down effects on the ranching business as a whole”.

“FSA and NRCS programs are helpful. I am under stocked, so should not have to sell cows, but will produce less hay. We got through '76-77, we'll get through this.”

“For a small family ranch like ours the drought has very nearly put us out of business. ...There are some many hidden consequences of the drought - ...extra trips to the cow range to make sure the water is flowing, working on spring developments, water lines, fuel and time for all those extra trips, cattle...going on others' land in search of water, the list is never ending it seems. The outlook for livestock feed and drinking water looks grim”.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? ANALYSIS

The survey gives a snapshot into the breadth and depth of the agricultural drought impacts in Siskiyou County. However the total scale of the impacts would have to be extrapolated from this data using some statistical tools and benchmark information. For example: How many total acres are affected? is a key question. The answer would be difficult to excavate out of this data, with more accuracy for 2013 than the current crop year.

It has been decided by the advisory group not to take the survey numbers and extend or extrapolate them to report impacts to 100% of survey area producers in this report. This is due to the process of survey dissemination and also responses received likely to be higher for those who were impacted. This reporting is only for the sampled group, and so the financial impacts should be used with care.

Value of surveyed crops for 2013	\$ 3,903,263
Value of surveyed livestock numbers (cattle and sheep) for 2013:	\$ 641,693
Value of surveyed crops for 2014	\$ 18,215,308
Value of surveyed livestock numbers (cattle and sheep) for 2014:	\$ 1,173,302

SUMMARY

Siskiyou County is certainly in a severe drought, perhaps the 3rd driest year on record as of this date (5/1/2013). Impacts are generalized throughout the county, and will undoubtedly grow as the 2014 year progresses. Limited information on secondary impacts to economic interests that count on agriculture are not included in the data, nor is employment information characterized; although some comments pointed to these impacts. Other long term impacts are harder to quantify, but everything from missing land and mortgage payments to general family stress were mentioned by producers. Several producers commented that the chances of their operations surviving this economic challenge are low.

Additional information should be gathered for any request for funding. Several strategies could be simultaneously pursued. First might be to include some of the survey questions in the general Agricultural Report process so that drought data is gathered at the same time and using the same methods. This would allow for more uniform reporting as well as possible more reliability. Secondly, any future surveys should be modified to better align with the Agricultural Report. This has some obvious data management advantages, as well as education for producers in record keeping and reporting. Actual individual producer record keeping and reporting is most likely to require a partnership with the USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA). This should be explored and fostered to allow better average year (benchmark) values between the various agencies involved.

The average age of the American Farmer is above 50 these days. Drought challenges may well bring the chapter of Siskiyou County's small independent farming to a close. Land consolidation and subdivision are chronic in other parts of California due to land pressures, regulatory challenges and the aging farmer population. We hope these factors are not in the offing in Siskiyou County but the facts of this drought do not bode well for the short term.

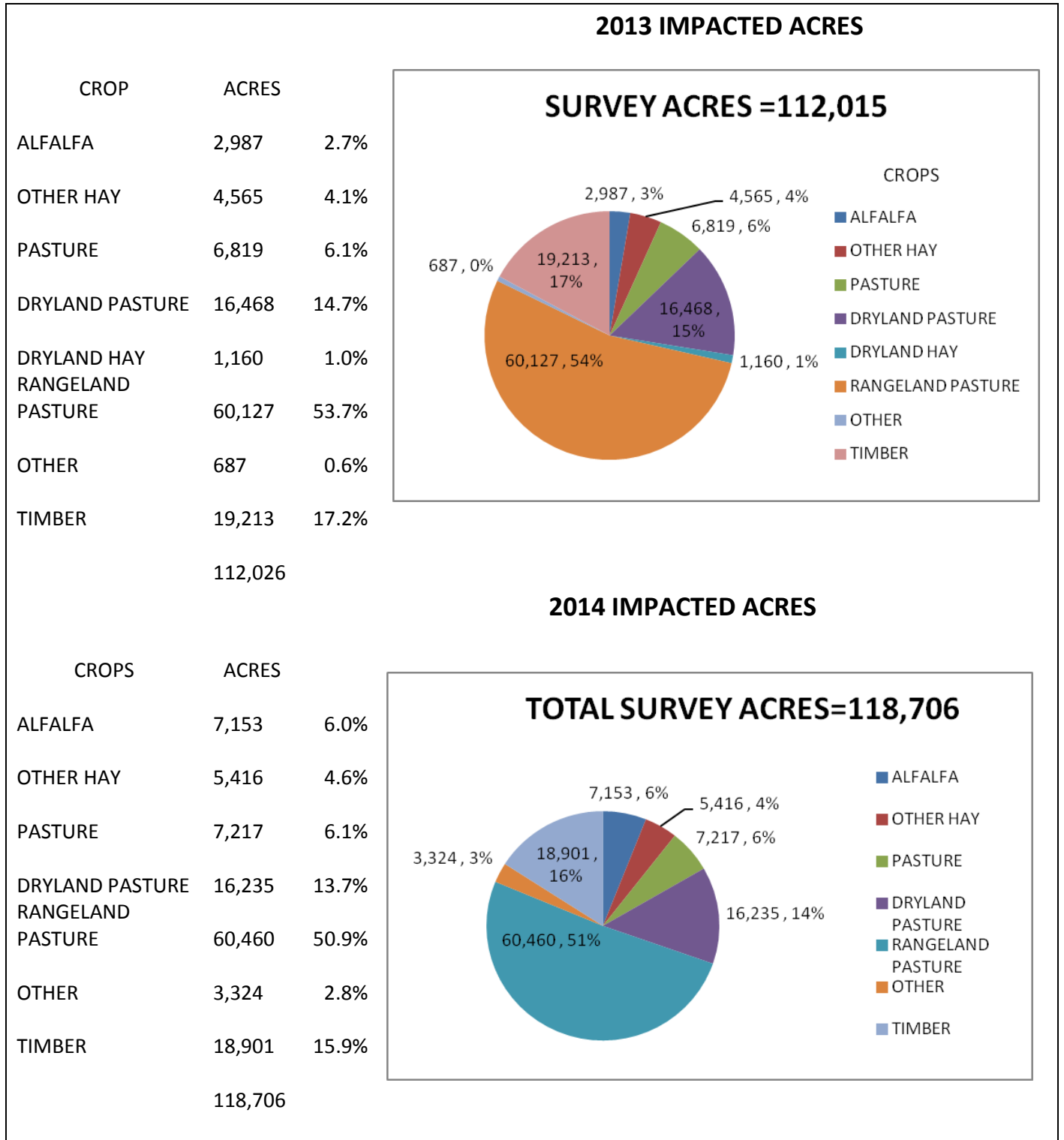
We hope that the County can bring together processes to foster cooperation among producers to share scarce water resources and strengthen our ties to each other. Rather than waiting for a handout or trying to outmaneuver our neighbors, we may want to think about pulling together here in the state of Jefferson. Droughts and other natural disasters are part of farm life; it's what we do about them that can make the difference. (See attached report from the 1924 Drought in Shasta Valley).

APPENDICES

1. SURVEY CHART

SURVEY INFORMATION		
	#	%
TOTAL # SURVEYS SENT OUT	~800	
TOTAL PRODUCERS IN SISKIYOU COUNTY	365	
TOTAL # SURVEYS RECEIVED	111	30%
TOTAL # NOT PRODUCERS	6	5%
TOTAL # IRRIGATION DISTRICTS	1	
TOTAL PRODUCERS	104	94%
TOTAL # PRODUCERS IN AN IRRIGATION DISTRICT	26	25%
TOTAL # NO LOSSES REPORTED	7	6%
TOTAL LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS	56	
TOTAL FARMERS	76	
TOTAL TIMBER INTERESTS	3	
TOTAL # PRODUCERS WITH COMMENTS	66	
GEOGRAPHIC BREAKOUT		
SCOTT	34	33%
SHASTA	33	32%
BUTTE VALLEY	16	15%
TULELAKE	14	13%
SOUTH COUNTY	4	4%
KLAMATH RIVER	3	3%
	104	100%

2. SELECTED IMPACTS CHART



3. ALL IMPACTS TABLE

2013

CROPS	ac	#	tons	value*	\$
ALFALFA	2987	21	6507	240	\$ 1,561,584
OTHER HAY	4565	29	6197	200	\$ 1,239,400
OATS	0	0		225	\$ -
WHEAT	208	3		260	\$ -
BARLEY	50	3	285	230	\$ 65,550
RYE/TRITICALE	197	4		200	\$ -
PASTURE	6819	31	4869	125	\$ 608,684
IRR. SMALL GRAIN**	100	3	207	250	\$ 51,750
MINT	0			27.5	\$ -
DRYLAND GRAIN**	24	1		225	\$ -
DRYLAND ALFALFA	0			237	\$ -
DRYLAND PASTURE	16468	8	6841	29	\$ 198,382
DRYLAND HAY	1160	6	790	195	\$ 154,050
RANGELAND PASTURE	60127	9	7954	3	\$ 23,863
OTHER	45	1			
VEGETABLE CROPS	52	2			
NURSERY CROPS	0	1			
TIMBER	19213	3			
NONE					
TOTAL	112015	125			\$ 3,903,263

values from 2012 Ag Dept.

values are approx.

2013	
ACRES OF CROPS AFFECTED	112,015
TOTAL DOLLARS OF LOSS	\$4,544,956
CROP LOSSES	\$3,903,263
ACRES FALLOW	\$ 942
LIVESTOCK LOSSES	\$ 707
ACRES RANGELAND NOT USABLE	\$ 32,823
LIVESTOCK WATER COSTS	\$ 21,400

Livestock losses

\$ 641,693

Crop losses

\$ 3,903,263

TOTAL \$

\$ 4,544,956

2104

CROPS	acres	#	tons	value	\$
ALFALFA	7153	33	18849	240	\$ 4,523,688
OTHER HAY	5416	32	10401	200	\$ 2,080,140
OATS	0	0		225	\$ -
WHEAT	856	9	1844	260	\$ 479,401
BARLEY	811	5	1596	230	\$ 367,080
RYE/TRITICALE	30	2		200	\$ -
PASTURE	7217	38	82934	125	\$ 10,366,728
IRR. SMALL GRAIN	220	3	335	250	\$ 83,750
MINT		1		27.5	\$ -
DRYLAND GRAIN	165	4	305	225	\$ 68,625
DRYLAND ALFALFA	340	1		237	\$ -
DRYLAND PASTURE	16235	8	3828	29	\$ 111,025
DRYLAND HAY	640	4	555	195	\$ 108,225
RANGELAND PASTURE	60460	9	8882	3	\$ 26,646
OTHER	45	1			
VEGETABLE CROPS	217	2			
NURSERY CROPS		2			
TIMBER	18901	1			
NONE					
	118706	155			\$ 18,215,308

values from 2012 Ag Dept.

values are approx.

2014	
ACRES OF CROPS AFFECTED	\$ 118,776
TOTAL DOLLARS OF LOSS	\$ 19,388,610.18
CROP	
LOSSES	\$ 18,215,308
ACRES FALLOW	\$ 2,032
LIVESTOCK LOSSES	\$ 1,172
ACRES RANGELAND NOT USABLE	\$ 103,587
LIVESTOCK WATER COSTS	\$ 54,500

Livestock losses	\$ 1,173,302
Crop losses	\$ 18,215,308
TOTAL \$	\$ 19,388,610

4. 1924 DROUGHT REPORT (under separate attachment)

“State of California, Department of Public Works, Division of Water Rights;
Edward Hyatt, Jr., Chief of Division;
Report on Water Supervisor Service in Shasta Valley, Siskiyou County, California’
During the Period from June 12 to September 1, 1924.
By Harrison Smitherum, Water Supervisor, Sacramento, California; July 1925.”