

## Planning for Droughts

Written by Julie Elliott, NRCS rangeland management specialist

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Where are we today in 2014? Has the drought broken or are we facing another year of some level of drought? How do we make management decisions when we do not know where we are or where we are going? Perhaps we should start by looking where we have been and figure out where we are today.

According to long-term records, we receive 75 percent or less of long-term cumulative average precipitation about half of the time in this area. So really, we should expect drought as much as we expect a good or average year. No one will argue that 2012 was dry—and hot! In contrast, 2013 had mild temperatures overall. However, growing season precipitation still ran from slightly behind the long-term average at Akron to about one-third behind in Yuma and half of the average in Burlington.

However, precipitation is only part of the story. If we want to know how good our range might be this year, we have to go out and look at it. This doesn't mean drive by at 55 mph or even drive through the pastures on the trail. If we really want to know what is out there, we need to stop the pickup, get out and walk around.

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Holyoke Enterprise March 13, 2014