



Debbie Hughes, Farmer, Rancher and Co-Owner, Hughes Ranch;
New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director

Impacts of Drought and Extreme weather on Agriculture in New Mexico

Farmers and Ranchers depend on the weather more than any other occupation!

(You can quickly tell by the number of weather apps on their phones)

Ranchers and farmers in a desert state like NM are usually only a year or two from having to leave the farm or ranch to get a job in town because of drought.

The weather stations are critical to ranchers being able to be sustainable. The USDA drought insurance is a life saver especially in dry years! These weather stations give us the data we need for this program.

The new "water conservation" program is desperately needed in NM too!

Installing water conservation tools like "shade balls" or solar panels added to wells and water tanks for water conservation are expensive and not affordable to most ag producers. This program at WRRl enables programs and practices that help both farmers and ranchers be sustainable and maybe even profitable!

NM has a lot of rivers chocked with non-native species and our forests are just waiting for the next "catastrophic fire and then floods!

<p>NM Agriculture is accused of using most of the water, but ranchers are grass farmers and crops use what they need and the rest of the water is returned to the stream or aquifer!</p>

This water conservation program enables agriculture producers to help the state with water supply issues!

We would love to see this program funded at 10 million next year and we need to make sure the weather stations can continue to be operated in NM if we want our food grown locally and for our farmers and ranchers to participate in regenerative agriculture!

These appropriations are really very small for NM considering we are the ones that are having our properties affected so dramatically especially in oil and gas and or wind development areas!

Thank you for your time and attention.