The Drought and Food Access in California

Katy Mamen
Water Initiative Coordinator
kmamen@phasocal.org
(707) 239-8879
Public Health Alliance
Vision

All Southern California communities are healthy, vibrant and sustainable places to live, work and play.

9 Local Health Departments:
• Orange
• Long Beach (City)
• Los Angeles
• Pasadena (City)
• Riverside
• Santa Barbara
• San Bernardino
• San Diego
• Ventura

Nearly 60% of CA Population
The Drought: How Bad is it?

• Extreme drought in most of state
U.S. Drought Monitor
California

May 26, 2015
(Released Thursday, May 28, 2015)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>D0-D4</th>
<th>D1-D4</th>
<th>D2-D4</th>
<th>D3-D4</th>
<th>D4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>99.86</td>
<td>98.71</td>
<td>93.91</td>
<td>66.60</td>
<td>46.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Week</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>99.86</td>
<td>98.28</td>
<td>93.91</td>
<td>66.60</td>
<td>46.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Months Ago</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>99.84</td>
<td>98.10</td>
<td>93.44</td>
<td>67.46</td>
<td>39.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of Year</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>98.12</td>
<td>94.34</td>
<td>77.94</td>
<td>32.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of Water Year</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>95.04</td>
<td>81.92</td>
<td>58.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Year Ago</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>76.68</td>
<td>24.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intensity:
- Yellow: D0 Abnormally Dry
- Orange: D1 Moderate Drought
- Dark Red: D3 Extreme Drought
- Red: D4 Exceptional Drought
- Dark Brown: D2 Severe Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Author:
Brad Rippey
U.S. Department of Agriculture

http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/
The Drought: How Bad is it?

• Extreme drought in most of state
• 2014 driest year on record
• Precipitously low storage (our insurance)
  – Reservoir storage 65% of average
  – Sierra snowpack “virtually gone”
• Likely moving into El Niño but lack of storage and long-term projections suggest DRY=NEW NORMAL
Drought and Health

- Water quantity
- Water quality
- Food insecurity
- Wildfire
- Dust
- Vector-borne disease
- Infectious disease
- Sanitation
- Recreational risk
- Mental Health
Drought and Food Access

- Regional food availability
- Food prices affected by drought
- Increased water rates
- Unemployment in agriculture and trucking
- Water as food access issue
Regional Food Availability

• Direct costs to agriculture: $1.5 billion
• Loss of 17,100 seasonal and part-time ag jobs
• Loss of 428,000 acres (5%) of irrigated land in the Central Valley, Central Coast and Southern California due to drought
  – 41,000 acres tree fruits and nuts fallowed
  – 10,000 acres vegetables and non-tree fruit fallowed

(Howitt et al. 2014)
Food Prices

- Drought affects food prices
- There is a lag
- Many other factors contribute; hard to discern direct links

“The ongoing drought in California could have large and lasting effects on fruit, vegetable, dairy, and egg prices.”

(USDA ERS Food Prices Outlook 2015)
Rising Water Cost

• Affordability of water: protecting most vulnerable populations
• Affordability of filtration
• Water for urban food production affected
Urban Water Bills Rising

Credit: Ellen Hanak, PPIC
Unemployment

• 2014: loss of 17,100 seasonal and part-time jobs related to agriculture due to the drought (UC Davis)
• 73 percent of California ag workers earn less than 200 percent of poverty; vulnerable to food insecurity
• Impacts eased by Drought Food Assistance Program ($25 million for drought boxes to affected counties via CDSS/Food Banks) and other efforts
• Unemployment 25-40% in some ag communities
Water as Food Access Issue

- Water important nutritional element
- Drought impacts healthy water intake; increased substitution with sugar-sweetened beverages
- About 250,000 Californians sometimes go without water due to insufficient supply or are exposed to contaminated water (PacInst)
- Water footprint of our diets—education
Local Responses

• Regional food availability: Ag resilience (CAFF, NRCS, RCDs), Recovery (Food Recovery Network, NRDC, Imperfect Produce), local gardens (Daily Acts)

• Food prices affected by drought: Opp for FANOut?

• Increased water rates: CWC, EJ Coalition for Water, CRLAF, Clean Water Action

• Unemployment: CDSS, Food Banks, Fresno Metro Ministry

• Water as food access issue: CalEndow, CWC, EJCW, CRLAF, CWA
How to Engage?

• Ongoing education on the issues
• Needs identification and data collection
• Target and expand emergency funding to fit needs
• Provide emergency technical assistance
• Partner on longer-term solutions
• Align internal policy with drought mitigation
Upcoming webinars

• **Nutrition Series:** Rethink your Drink: Getting Safe Tap and Drinking Water into Schools and Community Places (June 16, 2 pm) with Dr. Anisha Patel, UCSF; Laurel Firestone, Community Water Center

• **Environmental Health Series:** California's Water Crisis: Leadership Opportunities for Environmental Health (June 19, 9 am) with Angelo Bellomo, Environmental Health Director, LA County; Carlos Borias, LACDPH

• **Leadership Series:** Drought Impacts on Disadvantaged Communities: Mitigation Strategies (June 24, noon) with Jennifer Clary, Clean Water Action; J.R. DeShazo, UCLA
Drought, Climate and the Food We Eat: Safeguarding Nutrition and Food Security in Dry Times

Ready to learn more? Please join the Public Health Alliance of Southern California for a webinar series:

- May 27 (12-1 pm): The Water Crisis and Health 101: An Introductory Webinar
- June 16 (2-3 pm): Rethink YourDrink: Getting Safe Tap and Drinking Water into Schools and Community Places
- July 22 (12-1 pm): Agriculture and Drought: Implications for Food Security
- August 18 (2-3 pm): Our Diets and the Water Footprint of Regional Agriculture
- September 15 (2-3 pm): Water Security for Community and Household Gardens: The Promise of Greywater
- October 20 (2-3 pm): Emerging Water-Friendly Production Methods and Foods
- November 18 (12-1 pm): High Opportunity Levers for Water and Health: Resources, Policy and Next Steps
Thank you!

For more information on the Water Initiative:

Katy Mamen: kmamen@phasocal.org

www.phasocal.org/water-initiative