

...Right to farm laws

(Continued from previous page)

That takes significant acreage out of production.

Dineen has encountered similar experiences with his farming operation in Ellis County. For many years, Dineen had a verbal agreement with a local municipality to continue to farm a piece of property that was scheduled for future development.

“I had planted a field of sudan for harvest in the summer and before the crop could fully mature, which would be a height of about four or five feet, adjacent homeowners complained so much to the city that city employees destroyed the whole crop by mowing it,” Dineen said. “When I complained to the city manager and asked for restitution, I was denied because our agreement had only been ‘verbal.’”

That wasn’t Dineen’s only experience, though.

“Another instance on the same property, as I was preparing to plant corn, an adjacent landowner stopped and inquired what I was up to,” he said. “I informed him that I was planting corn for harvest. He quickly let me know that he treasured his view from his home and would not appreciate corn growth, which would eventually be a seven-foot-high corn field at maturity. He felt entitled to his view and informed me that he would be broadcasting wildflower seeds on this property - property he had no surface rights to.”

Dineen has also received complaints about storing hay bales because adjacent landowners did not like how they looked.

“With more and more of Texas’ agricultural lands being developed, it is imperative that we work together to make sure that today’s farmers are given every opportunity to keep agricultural lands that are now inside the boundaries of cities due to urban sprawl in production of commodities we use to feed and clothe the world,” Dineen told the committee.

Common-sense changes to the state’s agriculture code are needed to preserve current right to farm statutory protections, he added.

TFB is advocating for all agricultural operations to be protected, not just those annexed after August 31, 1981.

The farm and ranch organization also believes a city should have to prove an agricultural practice is truly a threat to public health and that cities should be required to consult expert agricultural information on generally-accepted agricultural practices that are not a threat to public health. This would be similar to Central Appraisal Districts being required to consult the comptroller’s agricultural use manual in assessing whether or not property should qualify for

agricultural valuation.

State lawmakers could take action on the issue next year during the legislative session.

On This Day in Texas History July 8, 1860

On this day in 1860, a series of mysterious fires broke out in North Texas, devastating several communities and leading to the Texas slave panic of 1860. The most serious fire destroyed most of the downtown section of the small town of Dallas. In addition, about half of the town square in Denton burned, and fire razed a store in Pilot Point. At first, the leaders of the affected communities attributed the fires to a combination of the exceedingly hot summer (it was reportedly as hot as 110 degrees in Dallas on the afternoon of the fire) and the introduction into the stores of the new and volatile phosphorous matches. Indeed, subsequent experience with “prairie matches” in Denton satisfied the citizens of

that town that spontaneous combustion was the probable cause of the fire there. In Dallas, however, certain white leaders detected a more sinister origin to the area’s fires. Charles R. Pryor of the Dallas Herald blamed the assault on an abolitionist plot “to devastate, with fire and assassination, the whole of Northern Texas....” By the end of July, communities and counties throughout North and East Texas had established vigilance committees to root out and punish the alleged conspirators. By the time the panic subsided in September, between thirty and 100 blacks and whites had been killed by the vigilance committees. Often called “the Texas Troubles” by the press, the Texas panic of 1860 helped prepare Texans and other Southerners to leave the Union.

July 8, 1868

On this day in 1868, Titus H. Mundine shocked the Constitutional Convention of

1868-69 by proposing to enfranchise women and African Americans. Mundine, a strong Unionist, was born in Alabama in 1826 and came to Texas in 1845; he represented Burleson County at the convention. His resolution read: “Every person, without distinction of sex, who shall have arrived at the age of twenty-one years . . . shall be deemed a qualified elector.” After a good deal of what one reporter called “squabbling and fun,” a motion to reject was defeated, and the resolution was sent to the Committee on State Affairs. It was never reported out of the committee, although according to newspapers Mundine continued to champion his “favorite measure.” Mundine may have been the first man in a position of power to propose woman suffrage in Texas. He died in 1872.

July 8, 1911

On this day in 1911, San Jacinto veteran Alfonso Steele died. In November 1835 the

Kentucky native had joined Captain Daggett’s company of volunteers bound for Texas to aid in the revolution. The company disbanded shortly after arriving at Washington-on-the-Brazos. Steele worked in a hotel and gristmill until the Declaration of Independence, then joined a company intending to go to the aid of Travis at the Alamo. Learning that the Alamo had fallen, they joined Houston’s army. Steele was a private in Sydney Sherman’s regiment at the battle of San Jacinto (April 21, 1836). He was severely wounded in one of the first volleys of the battle, but continued to fight until it ended. After recuperation he went to Montgomery County, where he farmed and raised cattle. He married Mary Ann Powell in 1838 and moved to Robertson County. In 1909 the Thirty-first Texas Legislature honored Steele as one of the last two living survivors of the battle of San Jacinto. He is buried at Mexia.

Water Weekly

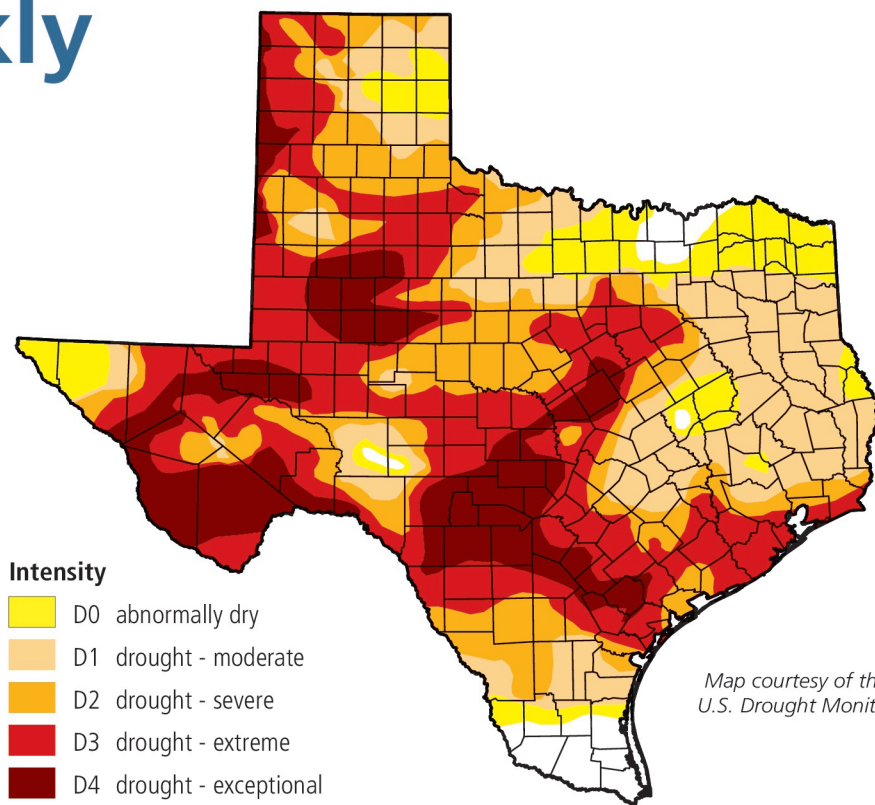
For the week of 07/05/22

Water conditions

The latest drought map for conditions as of June 28 shows expansion and intensification of drought for the fourth consecutive week. Drought conditions eased in small areas of the Panhandle and West Texas. But drought developed and intensified in large areas of East Texas.

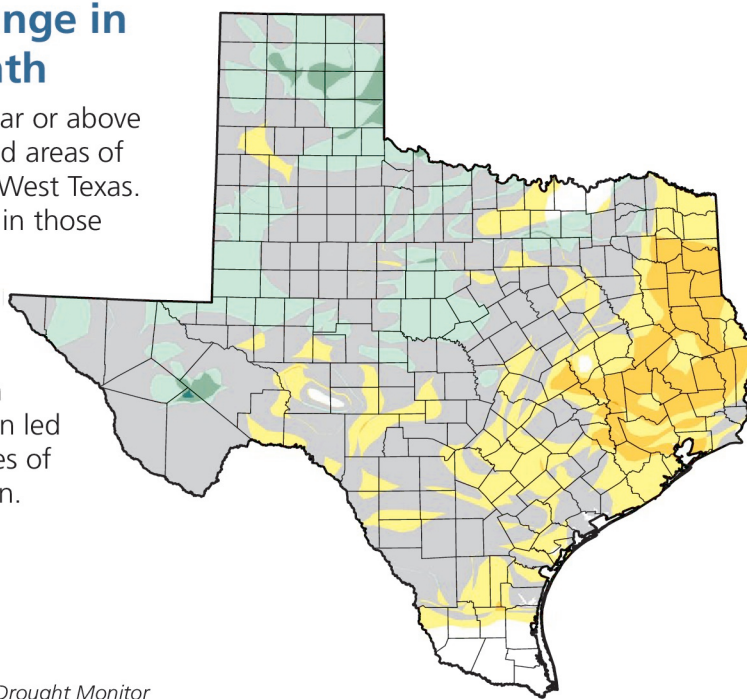
Drought conditions

- ◆ 86% now
- ◆ 81% a week ago
- ◆ 88% three months ago
- ◆ 9% a year ago



Drought change in the last month

June rainfall was near or above average for scattered areas of the Panhandle and West Texas. Drought conditions in those areas improved as much as two or more drought classes. In East Texas, less than average precipitation led to one to two classes of drought degradation.



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