

# Spring In Arkansas: Drought Out West, Flooding In The East

HELENA-WEST HELENA, ARK.

**D**rought on the west side, flooding on the east. It must be spring in Arkansas. The rain-swollen upper Mississippi is expected to send its bulk past Arkansas this week, with the river at Memphis, Tenn., projected to rise to 32 feet by Wednesday. Helena is expected to reach 40.5 feet on Thursday, below the 44-foot flood stage.

“So far for this event, the State of Missouri has requested and the Memphis District has loaned 10,000 sandbags to Cape Girardeau County officials, and 30,000 sandbags and two Crisafulli pumps to Dutchtown, Missouri,” Jim Pogue, a spokesman for the Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said Friday.

So far, there have been no similar requests from Arkansas, he said.

Rain has been abundant in Arkansas too, making for a lot of hurry-up-and-wait weeks for farmers trying to get corn, rice and cotton in the fields.

Near Helena, water has accumulated on crop fields inside the Mississippi River levee, but “most of it has been too wet to plant, no matter which side of the levee you’re on,” said Phillips County Extension Agent Robert Goodson. “There will be a few acres of wheat lost – less than 300.”

The good news is that the muddy fields probably aren’t leaching nutrients or sliding downstream.

“I do not expect that the rainy period we are

now experiencing is having that great of an effect on our soil nutrients right now,” said Nathan Slaton, professor and director soil testing for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “The phosphorus and potassium fertilizer that may have been applied weeks ago in some fields is still there as these nutrients are relatively immobile in soils.”

Marion County, near the Missouri border, is part of the 35.5 percent of the state considered abnormally dry in the most recent U.S. Drought Monitor

Map (See: [http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM\\_state.htm?AR,S](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM_state.htm?AR,S)). That’s an improvement from last June and July when extreme and exceptional drought, the two most intense categories, covered the county.

Brian See, county extension agent for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, said, “We’re really enjoying this rain. Hopefully, it will keep up through May.”

See did note that where drought had killed off stands of grass, “weeds, such as chickweed, and other ground cover types, came in and have held soil in well. Yes, we would much rather have grass, but the soil retention the weeds provided was helpful.”

Moderate drought covers slightly more than 8 percent of the state. The state has seen much improvement since September 2012, when 99.89 percent of the state was considered in drought and 8.74 percent of the state was in the most intense category. Δ



Link Directly To: **BASF**



Link Directly To: **SYNGENTA**