

Worsening Drought Conditions Stressing Crops

**DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) - Drought conditions are getting worse in several states, and extreme heat and weeks with little rain have begun to stress corn, soybeans, wheat and livestock in some areas.**

**The weekly U.S. Drought Monitor released Thursday by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln says nearly 11 percent of the continental United States is in moderate drought or worse.**

**The most severe drought area is centered on portions of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota.**

**The United States Department of Agriculture has designated several counties in those states as areas of natural disaster, paving the way for emergency loans for producers.**

**Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas also are seeing stressed crops and farm animals.**

**About half of U.S. spring wheat, 15 percent of corn and 14 percent of soybeans are in drought.**

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