Post Drought Management

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Drought situation 2014

Who is most affected?
Impacts of drought

• Reduced forage production
  • destock early
  • Buy hay
  • Increase potential for poisoning
• Lower water table – wells dying
  • Haul in water
• Increased Fire risk
• Reduced profitability
Palmers drought severity index trend

California, Climate Division 5, PDSI, January-December

- 1895-2013 Trend: -0.10/Decade
- 1901-2000 Avg: -0.02

PDSI
Adaptation to drought

• Drought is nothing new to ranchers
• Developed adaptive methods
  ▪ Proactive
  ▪ Reactive
• Consecutive drought increase burden and reduces ability to adapt
Focus

• Short-term
• Medium-term
• Long-term
Short-term

• Restocking
  • genetics
  • Health
• Forage availability

• FSA programs:
  • Emergency programs
  • Livestock feed programs
  • Water hauling programs
  • Emergency or operating loans
Medium term

- Rangeland condition –
  - stocking rates,
  - carrying capacity,
  - RDM

- Weed management

- Building herd
Long-term

• Flexibility
• Different animal types –
  • stocker and cow-calf mix
• Lease more land or irrigated pasture
• Conservative stocking rates
• Alternative on-ranch enterprises –
  • value adding, wildlife, agro-tourism
• Off-farm income
• Water availability
• Drought and taxes have a lot in common, they’re both facts of life that must be dealt with periodically; they’re both pains in the neck, and they both carry serious consequences if we choose to ignore them (J. Mosley)

• Sustainable systems take planning