

**Subject:** Drought of 2002 takes a huge toll

**Story Summary:** The drought of 2002 is exceptionally large and widespread as measured by the National Drought Mitigation Center in Lincoln, Nebraska. Farmers in the exceptional drought areas like the center of Nebraska are totaling losses and glad summer is over.

**TRT:** 2:02

**Suggested Lead:** It's up to the House and the President if farmers are going to receive disaster assistance for one of the most severe and widespread droughts on record. The Senate already approved the aid. Stewart Truelsen reports from one of the hardest hit areas of Nebraska.

**Suggested Supers:** Lexington, Neb.  
@ :10

Mark Svoboda  
National Drought Mitigation Center  
@ :14

Don Batie  
Nebraska farmer  
@ :48

Barb Batie  
Nebraska farmer  
@ 1:39

Stewart Truelsen  
Reporting  
@ 1:59

**Anchor Tag:** For the latest map of the drought check out the National Drought Mitigation Center web site. The center is located on the campus of the University of Nebraska. The URL is [www.drought.unl.edu](http://www.drought.unl.edu).

**The Drought of 2002**  
**Stewart Truelsen Reporting**  
**September 19, 2002**

<p>Stunted corn plants, shriveled ears of corn and grasshopper on stalk; field</p> <p>Locator—<b>Lexington, Neb.</b></p>	<p>VO/</p> <p>THESE CORN PLANTS STRUGGLED MIGHTILY TO PRODUCE EARS, AFTER BEING STUNTED BY DROUGHT AND CHEWED BY GRASSHOPPERS. THIS YEAR'S DROUGHT IS ONE OF THE WORST AND COSTLIEST.</p>
<p><b>Mark Svoboda</b>  <b>National Drought Mitigation Center</b></p> <p>Sound bite</p>	<p>SOT/</p> <p>NEBRASKA, KANSAS, AND SOUTH DAKOTA, IMPACTS RIGHT NOW ARE ESTIMATED AT \$1.5 TO \$2 BILLION FOR EACH STATE.</p>
<p>Mark at computer in office/</p>	<p>VO/</p> <p>THE DROUGHT'S ADVANCE IS MONITORED AT THE NATIONAL DROUGHT MITIGATION CENTER IN LINCOLN, NEBRASKA.</p>
<p>Sound bite</p> <p>maps change in sequence as he talks</p>	<p>SOT/</p> <p>WE HAVE OVERALL IN THE COUNTRY AT THIS TIME ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE COUNTRY IN SOME FORM OF A DROUGHT OR ANOTHER, ACCORDING TO THE DROUGHT MONITOR. AND WE SEE 45 PERCENT ALMOST IN SEVERE DROUGHT WHEREAS TYPICALLY YOU MIGHT ONLY SEE 10 TO 12 PERCENT IN A GIVEN YEAR IN SEVERE DROUGHT.</p>
<p>Don and Barb Batie lifting irrigation pipe/</p>	<p>VO/</p> <p>EVEN FOR IRRIGATED FARMS, THE GROWING SEASON WAS HARD AND COSTLY.</p>

<p><b>Don Batie</b> <b>Nebraska farmer</b></p> <p>Sound bite</p> <p>The Baties working on pump</p>	<p>SOT/</p> <p>A VERY TYPICAL DAY WAS YOU'D GO OUT IN THE MORNING CHANGE YOUR IRRIGATION SETS AND THEN YOU'D FIND OUT WHAT BROKE AND THEN YOU'D SPEND THE REST OF THE DAY FIXING THAT WELL TO GET IT GOING AGAIN. AND THEN YOU'D DO YOUR IRRIGATION THAT NIGHT AND GO TO BED AND NEXT MORNING GET UP TO DO YOUR IRRIGATION AND FIND OUT WHAT BROKE THAT NIGHT.</p>
<p>Don Batie sound bite</p>	<p>SOT/</p> <p>WE HAVE AT LEAST 4 YOUNG FARMERS IN THIS IMMEDIATE AREA WHO ARE QUITTING FARMING. NOT THAT THE BANK TOLD THEM THEY HAD TO GET OUT OF FARMING, THEY'RE JUST QUITTING.</p>
<p>(PRONOUNCED like Warren Beatty)</p> <p>Couple raising American flag/ Cattle/ follow truck in pasture/ Don kneeling in pasture/</p>	<p>VO/</p> <p>THE BATIES AREN'T QUITTING, BUT MAY GET OUT THE CATTLE BUSINESS. THE PASTURES THEY RENT RECEIVED NO RAIN IN JUNE OR JULY. WHAT FELL LATER WAS TOO LATE.</p>
<p>Sound bite in pasture</p>	<p>SOT/</p> <p>EVEN WITH THAT SOME OF THE WEEDS HAVE STARTED TO GROW BUT YOU CAN TELL THE GRASS IS STILL DRY. THERE IS NOTHING THERE.</p>
<p>Kids line up for school after recess/ Family pulling husks back on Indian corn/</p>	<p>VO/</p> <p>AUTUMN RELIEF FROM THE DROUGHT WOULD BE WELCOMED. DAYS OF SUMMER WON'T BE MISSED AROUND HERE.</p>
<p><b>Barb Batie</b> <b>Nebraska farmer</b></p>	<p>SOT/</p> <p>THERE WAS ONE IN JULY WHEN IT</p>

Sound bite	GOT CLOSE TO 107 ONE DAY AND WE HAD 20 MILE AN HOUR WINDS OUT OF THE SOUTHWEST AND BASICALLY THAT DAY WE WENT OUT, WE IRRIGATED, WE GOT OUR CHORES DONE AND WE HOLED UP IN THE HOUSE.
Don in cornfield pulling back ears/ family with chickens/	VO/ ECONOMIC RELIEF FOR FARMERS WILL DEPEND ON A DISASTER PACKAGE BEING DECIDED IN WASHINGTON. IN LEXINGTON, NEBRASKA, I'M STEWART TRUELSEN.