Throughout much of 2020, the state of Wyoming experienced widespread and on-going drought. The need emerged for an organized and inclusive process to gather impacts and conditions from affected stakeholders across the state. In response, the Northern Plains Climate Hub formed the Wyoming Conditions Monitoring Team (WCMT) to coordinate drought discussions among state and Federal partners. The Hub also created a portal for Extension and outreach field-staff to submit on-the-ground condition reports in an objective and consistent way. Over 40 reports came in from the field through this new communication channel. This input is helping to inform the WCMT’s draft recommendations to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Read this Extension news story, which highlights the on-going effort.

Pickings were slim for livestock in drought-affected areas this year. [Photo credit: Melissa Johnston, USDA-ARS]

Climate Hub Coordinator, Windy Kelley, convenes and organizes the WCMT. [Photo credit: UW Extension]
The Northern Plains Climate Hub contributed tools, resources, and references to the USDA Office of the Secretary to inform a presentation at the G20 MACS International Virtual Experts Meeting on Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Development in Drylands. The presentation, "Collaborative US Research Highlights," showcased Grass-Cast as one of five U.S. research and outreach efforts "providing farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners access to tools and resources that enable sustainable agriculture and science-based, data-driven decision-making."

The NPCH team hosted a 2-day virtual retreat for 24 partners from NOAA RISA Western Water Assessment (WWA) and DOI North Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (NC-CASC). These 3 climate centers meet regularly to enhance efficiency through knowledge exchange, collaboration and coordination. Each center contributes unique expertise in agriculture (NPCH), water (WWA), and ecosystems (NC-CASC). NPCH and NC-CASC are collaborating on a climate vulnerability assessment for the northern mixed-grass prairies, with funding from the USDA Forest Service and NC-CASC. NPCH and WWA are working together to estimate the value provided by Grass-Cast.