

ASSESSING HARVEST SEASON FIRE HAZARDS

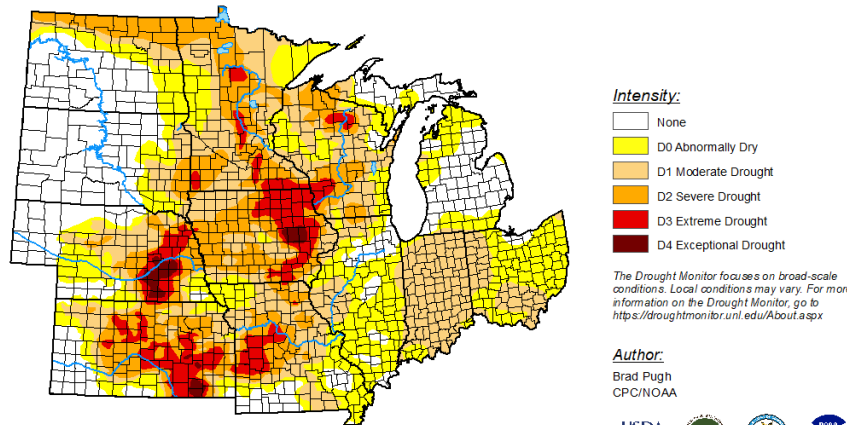
Fall 2023

Synopsis

Farm fires are a risk every harvest season in the Midwest, and farmers need to remain vigilant and prepared to avoid a fire emergency. However, this fall, the fire risks are higher than usual due to environmental conditions that favor fires.

To stay on top of risks in your area, here are some resources to check before heading to the field:

The US Drought Monitor: areas in elevated drought categories will have **very dry vegetation** on ag lands AND natural areas. Thus, **fires can spread quickly over large domains**).



Intensity:

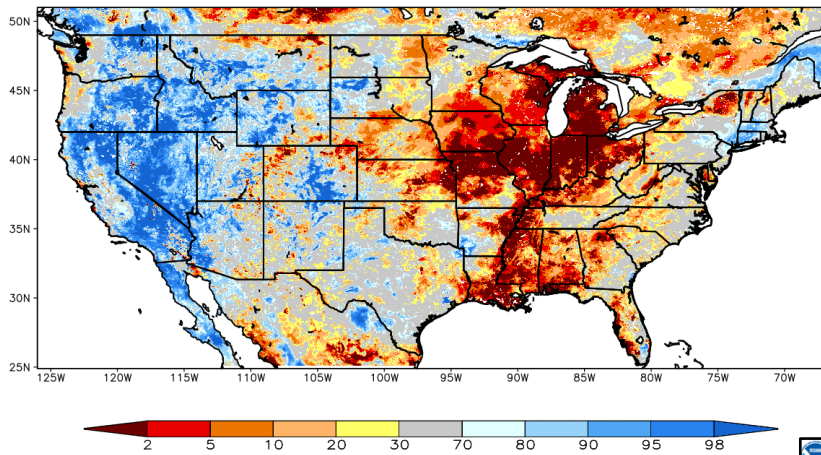
- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

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SPoRT-LIS 0-100 cm Soil Moisture percentile valid 05 Oct 2023

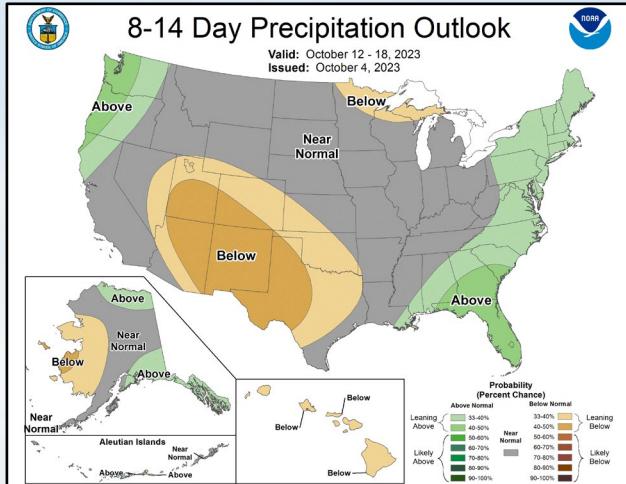


Soil moisture: along with dry vegetation, dry soils also favor fires that can spread rapidly (**more red = drier soil**). Check the local forecast for your area to see if rain will provide any relief.

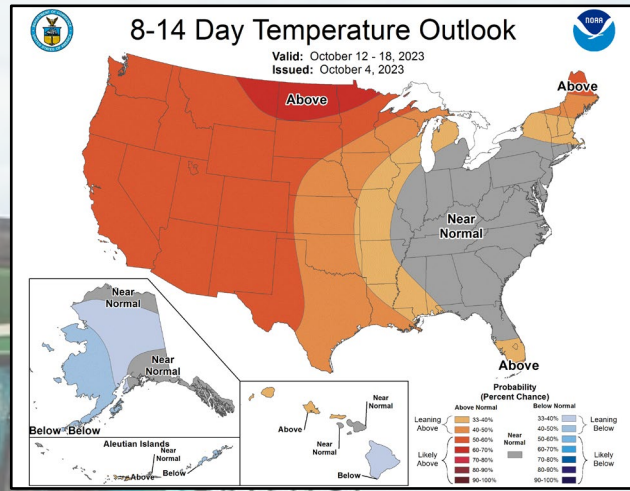
National Weather Service: check the 7-day forecast for your hometown and avoid field work on **dry, hot, and windy** days.

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🔥 **Extended outlooks:** as you think about fire risk past this current week, use the NWS's extended outlooks to get a sense for upcoming harvest and fall tillage conditions.



Important Weather Links

- US Drought Monitor → [National map](#) or [Midwest map](#)
- [Observed precipitation maps](#)
- [Soil moisture](#) - satellite-based estimates (SPoRT)
 - Scale interpretation → how this year ranks over the last 100 years in terms of dryness (e.g., areas in dark red rank in the top 2 driest years, red in the top 5, etc.)
- [Fire potential outlook maps](#)
- [NWS local forecast](#) for your hometown
 - Enter your address or zip code in the "Enter location..." box on the upper left-side panel.
 - Check the national map to see watches and warnings for your county!
- [National forecast maps](#)
 - QPF = Quantitative Precip. Forecast
- [Temperature and precipitation outlooks](#) (Climate Prediction Center)
 - Interpretation → The likelihood that an area will be below, at, or above average in temperature or precipitation for given period (weekly, monthly, seasonal)
- [Crop condition reports](#)
- [Article](#) from Iowa State Extension → "Fire Prevention and Safety Tips During Harvest"

For more information:



Midwest Climate Hub
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<https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/midwest>