

## **FEATURE – MILD WINTER FOR MOST OF U-S**

INTRO: A U-S-D-A meteorologist says this should be a mild winter across the U-S with fewer parts of the country experiencing drought conditions compared to previous years. . The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:14)

IT COULD BE COLDER THAN NORMAL IN THE NORTHWESTERN U-S THIS WINTER, BUT OVERALL IT WILL BE MILDER ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH MAJOR STORMS CONFINED TO THE NORTH AND WEST. THAT'S ACCORDING TO U-S-D-A METEOROLOGIST BRAD RIPPEY WHO SAYS MOST OF THE COUNTRY WILL NOT GET LONG, COLD SNAPS.

Brad Rippey, USDA Agricultural Meteorologist: Obviously it will be cold from time to time but no sustained month or two month long periods of cold.

That general pattern is expected to continue with a pretty active storm track cutting through the west and up through the north central U-S.

RIPPEY SAYS TWENTY PERCENT OF THE U-S IS EXPERIENCING DROUGHT, WHICH IS THE LOWEST LEVEL IN THREE YEARS. BUT RELIEF IS STILL NEEDED IN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

Brad Rippey, USDA Agricultural Meteorologist: Most of the drought coverage at this time is in the southeast. That's a drought that has persisted now into a third year. And even though we've seen some rain already in California we need a lot more to help revive the pastures. Livestock typically come down out of the hills to the valleys in the winter time.

BUT HE SAYS WINTER STORM PATTERNS LOOK GOOD IN TERMS OF DROUGHT RELIEF FOR CENTRAL CALIFORNIA.

Brad Rippey, USDA Agricultural Meteorologist: That would be plenty of snow in the Sierra Nevada and that would melt off in the Spring and then help to provide water for agriculture and municipal purposes.

IN WASHINGTON FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.