

## **FEATURE – DRY IN CALIFORNIA, WET IN THE MIDWEST**

INTRO: The snowpack in California is below average this year and that could mean problems for producers in the Spring. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:21)

THE SNOWPACK IN CALIFORNIA'S SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS IS WAY DOWN THIS YEAR ACCORDING TO U-S-D-A METEOROLOGIST BRAD RIPPEY.

Brad Rippey, USDA Meteorologist: Right before the recent spate of storms began we were looking at about ten inches of liquid in the Sierra Nevada snowpack. It's only about fifty five percent of average for the date and on a normal year by April first we see that accumulate to almost thirty inches.

SNOWPACK RUNOFF IN THE SPRING IS A CRITICAL SOURCE OF WATER FOR CALIFORNIA'S PASTURES AND CROPS. WITHOUT ADEQUATE RUNOFF, FARMERS FACE WATER SHORTAGES

Brad Rippey, USDA Meteorologist: And now it looks likely that we'll go through the Two Thousand Eight, Nine season and up with below normal snowpack once again for the third consecutive year. Seventy-Nine percent of California's total water use goes into agriculture. Municipal use is about seventeen percent and industrial use is four percent.

RIPPEY SAYS RECENT AND EXPECTED SNOW COULD HELP ALLEVIATE SOME OF THE SHORTFALL. BUT IT'S TOO EARLY TO TELL HOW MUCH THE SNOWPACK WILL INCREASE. AS FOR OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY, THE MIDWEST HAS GOTTEN PLENTY OF SNOW, WHICH IS GOOD FOR SOIL MOISTURE.

Brad Rippey, USDA Meteorologist: We've got a pretty good moisture situation in the Midwest right now as we head into Spring, so farmers would probably trade off a little bit of mud for good moisture as we head deeper into the growing season.

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