

2020 Information Regarding Available Irrigation Water

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This document provides links and general information regarding the availability of irrigation water in California counties. Updated information, as provided by various sources, should also be considered by Approved Insurance Providers to make determinations regarding prevented planting claims.

California:

California is experiencing a severe drought which is anticipated to result in reduced irrigation supplies for most irrigation districts in the state due to drastically reduced snow packs and stream flows.

Specifically for the irrigated lands located south of the delta that receive part or all of their irrigation water from the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP), the following information has been gathered for lands located in the CVP and SWP that are located in portions of Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern counties

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has informed the public as follows:

- 1) On February 25, 2020, USBR provided a news release indicating CVP agricultural water service contractors south of the Delta are allocated 15 percent of their contract quantity:
<https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/newsrelease/detail.cfm?RecordID=69603>
- 2) On January 24, 2020, California DWR published a press release which indicated SWP agricultural water contractors south of the delta are allocated 15 percent of their contract quantity:
<https://water.ca.gov/News/News-Releases/2020/State-Water-Project-Allocation-Increases-to-15-Percent>
- 3) Additional increased water allotments may occur after the final planting date for some spring crops for either the CVP or SWP

USBR routinely provides updated informational releases on their website at <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/newsrelease/>. The California Department of Water Resources provides updated information releases on their website at: <https://www.water.ca.gov/News/News-Releases>. The 2020 CVP and SWP water allocations are based on the hydrological conditions that indicate that the October (2019) – March (2020) is significantly below average, and February 2020 being the driest on record. The California Data Exchange Center also reports the statewide snowpack is only 52% of normal for this date (March 26).

Additionally, the Central Valley Improvement Act of 1992 reallocated water on an annual basis for the Delta's environmental restoration purpose and mandated allocation for wildlife refuges on an annual basis. The listing of winter run salmon and delta smelt under the Endangered Species Act has also resulted in reduced allocations. The amount of available water supplies that policyholders would receive given the reservoir levels at the beginning of the 2020 water year, historically normal weather and environmental conditions, including rainfall, snowpack and stream flows, is relevant when assessing any submitted claims. Water authorities have considered the current weather conditions, precipitation total to date, irrigation water supplies, and demands by water users, and have concluded the precipitation, snowpack and stream flow data for 2020 indicates this will be a drier than normal year. These conditions would indicate that the amount of irrigation water that can be expected under normal conditions will be reduced, possibly down to approximately 45 percent or less for CVP water users and approximately 45 percent or less for SWP water users.

The above is for informational purposes only and may be helpful to AIPs when considering any claims that may be submitted. If you should have any questions regarding the information contained in this assessment, please contact the Davis Regional Office.