

Drought – National Drought Mitigation Center

Drought Network News (1994-2001)

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

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Talking Imperative for Grieving Farmers,
Others

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planning, the Workshop participants recommend the continued involvement of the US National Drought Mitigation Center in future European cooperation/collaboration, and the participation of US experts in the proposed regional drought mitigation projects.

4. Drought mitigation experts and institutions from any other countries are invited to participate.
5. Italy, on behalf of the Northern Mediterranean Annex of UNCCD, expressed the intention to foster collaboration between the Mediterranean and CEE

regions. Participants of the Workshop accept this proposal and express their gratitude for that, and welcome coming opportunities for collaboration under the provision of Annex 5 to the UNCCD.

6. The participants of the Workshop ask the Hungarian authorities responsible for drought management to create an international interim task force with the participation of the representatives of countries concerned, and coordinate the next steps to realize the above mentioned proposals, and to find out and identify relevant international bodies for the necessary participation and financial support.”

Talking Imperative for Grieving Farmers, Others

Editor’s Note: The following news release was provided by the IANR News Service, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln on June 8, 2000.

Farmers who are losing their livelihoods to the drought shouldn’t be surprised to feel depressed or angry, and neither should people around them. After all, these farmers are suffering a very real loss and they are grieving.

Farmers who lose a crop in many ways will react as have people who have lost loved ones, said John DeFrain, family and community development specialist at the University of Nebraska here. That is, they go into shock, denial and anger, and not necessarily in that order.

The loss of a crop means a loss of time, expenses, identity and, in some cases, a family tradition, DeFrain said. The worst nine-month drought in the state’s history meant spring crops were planted in soils six to eight inches short of moisture. While there was sufficient moisture to get most of those crops up, without additional moisture by mid-June, dryland crops likely will burn up. Eastern and central and

southwest Nebraska are affected the most, with the southeast being hardest hit. The drought is expected to continue for the rest of the year.

“These are troubling human issues,” DeFrain said. “What can you say that makes any sense?”

People who try to console others who have suffered a loss must be careful with their words, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources specialist said. While joking may make some people laugh, others may not be in the mood for humor. The key, DeFrain said, is to listen to people carefully, to see where they’re at. That means not only listening to what they say, but sensing what they’re reluctant to open up about.

“Find the courage to sit down and listen,” DeFrain said. Don’t make judgments and don’t try to fix the problem, because you can’t. Honor and respect the grieving by letting them know you want to hear their story, he advised.

At the same time, he said, the person grieving needs to find ways to open up to other people. That’s difficult, he said, because farmers tend to be strong

(continued on p. 14)

can Water Resources Association. Topics will include economic impacts and drought relief; short- and long-term planning; hydrologic impacts; wells and drought; well deepening, development, and rehabilitation; groundwater modeling; groundwater/surface interactions; weather forecasting; climate change; artificial recharge of groundwater; drought-resistant crops; fire protection; the National Drought Policy Act; and new technologies.

For more information, visit the National Ground Water Association's website at <http://www.ngwa.org/education/drought.html>, or contact Bob Masters of the National Ground Water Association at (800) 551-7379, ext. 527; e-mail: rmaste@ngwa.org.

16th Annual International Conference on Contaminated Soils, Sediments and Water

The 16th Annual International Conference on Contaminated Soils, Sediments and Water will be held October 16–19, 2000, at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Platform and poster sessions will cover the following topics: Analysis, Arsenic Background Definition, Bioremediation, Brownfields, Chemical Oxidation, Environmental Fate, Environmental Forensics, Federal, Heavy Metals, Indoor Air, Mercury, MTBE/Oxygenates, Natural Attenuation, Phytoremediation, Radionuclides, RBCA, Remediation, Regulatory, Risk, Sediments, Site Assessment, UXO. Exhibits will bring real world application of technical theory and case studies. Focused workshops will provide attendees applicable practical information. For information, contact Denise Leonard at (413) 545-1239 or dleonard@schoolph.umass.edu.

Talking Imperative . . . *(continued from p. 12)*

and silent. But they need to let it out, he said, or they can get in serious trouble, possibly hurting themselves and others.

Every person who is suffering needs to have three or four good listeners so no one listener gets worn out, DeFrain said. Reach out to family, friends, clergy, counselors or crisis hotlines. In Nebraska, the toll-free number for the Nebraska Farm/Rural Response Hotline is (800)464-025.

In addition to talking to people, those suffering a loss should find some emotional space that is socially acceptable and positive. Exercise, go for quiet walks or drives, appreciate others, and remember there's always someone worse off. Avoid destructive behavior, such as alcohol abuse.

Remember that everyone suffers and suffering can be a catalyst for growth, DeFrain said.

"People often don't share their problems with others, and so we're often unaware of how much pain other people really are going through as they suffer in silence," DeFrain said. Although it's hard

to look forward when there is uncertainty and you don't know where you're going, he said, there's really no choice but to move forward. Sometimes a crisis in life leads people down a new road that turns out to hold exciting new possibilities.

Human emotions are universal, DeFrain said. That is, everyone suffers and everyone experiences joy.

"The biggest fear is to be alone or disconnected because we're social beings," he said. Even though we have the need to be social, people in our culture often distance themselves from each other, particularly when they're in emotional trouble, he said.

And don't be afraid to cry.

"There's nothing wrong with crying. It's a good thing." He said crying cleanses the body because stress-related chemicals come out in the tears.

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