

Drought hits Nevada agriculture hard

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

With practiced labor, Tom Moura spills life across the land.

Moura opens wooden gates to flood irrigation water across his still-healthy alfalfa crops. He knows he's fortunate. During this fourth year of drought, many of Moura's neighbors in the Lovelock area – arguably the bulls-eye for drought in Nevada – have no water for crops at all.

“They haven't cut at all. They haven't even got their machinery out of the shed,” said Moura, 69 and a third-generation farmer and cattle rancher.

“I've never seen it like this before. This is extreme,” Moura said. “This drought is probably more far-reaching than any other drought I have ever seen or I have ever been told of.”

Across Nevada, agriculture struggles. Weeds take hold on fallowed fields. Ranchers sell off cattle their land can no longer support. Crop insurance that has carried growers through the drought thus far is drying up, no longer available for many should the drought continue even longer.

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