

Farmers now see drought as rule, not exception

By Robert Rodriguez, Fresno Bee

Farmers are no strangers to struggle or drought. But this four-year drought is different than others, they say. It's more widespread, touching nearly everyone who turns on the tap or starts an irrigation pump.

This past summer, wells dried up and farmland sat idle. The drought also came to mean that life on the farm has likely changed forever.

"In the early years when we went through a drought, we tended to say that this too shall pass," said Richard Waycott, president of the Almond Board of California in Modesto. "But there is a different consciousness now. People are looking at the future very differently."

Farmers talk of a new reality – one in which droughts are more of the rule than the exception, and water availability, both above and below ground, becomes less certain.

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