

hppr.org

Drier than the Dust Bowl

High Plains Public Radio

3–4 minutes

Published May 20, 2014 at 12:00 AM CDT



wodumedia.com

/

Millard Fowler is a centenarian from the panhandle of Oklahoma. He remembers the 1930s when he was a young, newly married farmer.

"It is just as dry now as it was then, maybe even drier," Fowler says. "There are going to be a lot of people out here going broke."

Climatologists who monitor the prairie states say he's right according to a [recent story in National Geographic](#).

The frontier where Kansas, Colorado, and the panhandle of Texas and Oklahoma converge is drier now than it was during the Dust Bowl days. In the last 42 months, the National Weather Service reports parts of all four states have had less rain than a similar period of the 1930s.

"When people ask me if we'll have a Dust Bowl again, I tell them we're having one now," said Fowler.

The signs of drought are everywhere.

- Drifts of sand pile up along fence lines packed with tumble weeds.
- Thousands of acres of dry-land wheat lie dead beneath blankets of silt.
- In the Oklahoma Panhandle, dust clouds have rolled through ten times this year forcing traffic off the highways and suffocating fields that were once green.
- Pastures once filled with cattle are vacant in Baca County, Colorado. That's because there's not enough grass in the southeastern pastures to feed them.

Nolan Doesken is Colorado's state climatologist. He calls the change "profound and dramatic."

More about the way life has changed during a time worse than the dust bowl can be found [here](#).