

Drought conditions improve in SC

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
THE JOURNAL

Drought Status: 10-31-2019

SENECA — Climate officials have lowered the drought status of Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties after an increase in rainfall.

The South Carolina Drought Response Committee met Thursday to discuss the ongoing conditions in 41 of the state's counties.

Scott Willett, a private water supplier in Anderson County, said that Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties should be bumped down from moderate drought status to the incipient category.

Members unanimously approved the motion.

Willett said Oconee and Pickens had already received more than an inch and a half of rain before noon on Thursday.

Darryl Jones, the forest protection chief at the South Carolina Forestry Commission, said recent rainfall has helped cut back the wildfire danger for most of the state, but a few dry days could heighten the danger.

"The early part of October was very busy for wildfire activity, and we had more than double the number of wildfires in the state based on our 10-year average," Jones said. "We do want to encourage everyone to be extremely careful when conducting outdoor burning. More than half of the wildfires in South Carolina every year start when a

backyard burn escapes."

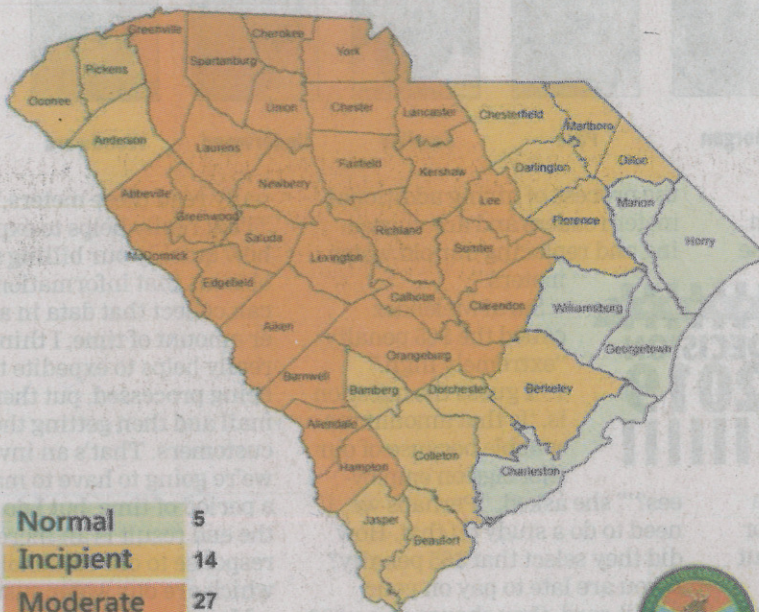
John Irwin, a retired Clemson University Extension animal scientist, said the drought has taken a toll on forage production and has forced farmers to plant fall and winter grazing.

"The success of the fall grazing is weather dependent and we need a continued pattern of normal rain-

fall and moderate temperatures," he said.

The committee voted to downgrade a total of 11 counties from moderate to incipient drought status.

Mizzell said the committee will meet again before the holidays.



Number of counties in each category



SC Department of Natural Resources
State Climate Office