

RESTORE GLASS-STEAGALL NOW!

# Anti-NAWAPA Water Policy Means Food Emergency

by Marcia Merry Baker

May 27—The huge food production concentrations west of the Mississippi River—e.g., 30%-plus of U.S. beef and dairy cattle from four High Plains states (Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska); 30% of U.S. produce from California's Central Valley; 35%-plus of Winter wheat from three states (Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas); 20% of U.S. milk from California—all came about as a result of a combination of scientific agriculture practices applied in favorable terrain, fertile soils, good sunlight, and the critical addition of water. But now, the entire region of the 17 High Plains and Far Western states is de-structuring, from the cumulative effects of *a national policy to cut water*, as well as from the effects of the continuation and breakdown of the monetarist "markets" system, which means that we have a U.S. and world food-supply emergency.

All the work of the Bureau of Reclamation, founded in 1902, to intervene (with dams, reservoirs, channels, etc.) to upgrade water and land management in these 17 states—west of the 20 inch/year rainfall longitude—has long been exceeded. The region is in crisis.

The report below gives snapshot details of the scope of the degradation of land and water in these Western agriculture zones, in terms of what it means for the loss of food production capacity.

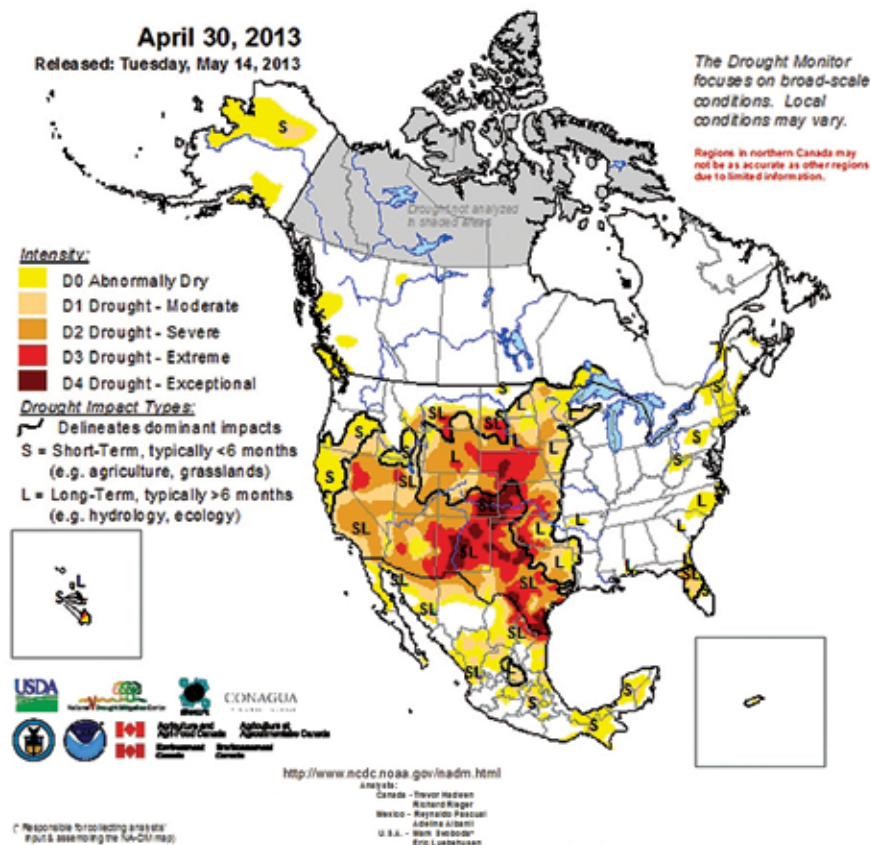
If the 1960s North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) had been initiated, as discussed in Congress at that time, it would have been built by 2000. The Western water and national food crisis would not now be unfolding. The NAWAPA concept is shown in

FIGURE 1



**Figure 1**, in which a portion of the ample rainfall in the northwestern part of the continent, would have been diverted southward, benefitting the dryland Canadian prairies, the western United States, and even into north-

FIGURE 2  
North American Drought Monitor



ern Mexico.

NAWAPA was envisioned as the continental-scale successor to the regional water-management programs done in the 1930s—the Columbia River Basin, the Colorado River Basin, and improvements in the Rio Grande (Rio Bravo) River Basin—all of which included cross-border collaboration; as well as the famed Tennessee Valley Authority, and the California Water Plan.

These programs, and the agro-industrial growth to carry them through, were done in the context of the sound banking and credit regime enabled by the 1933 Glass-Steagall Act, which separated and protected commercial banking and useful credit, from speculative, predatory financial dealings.

However, NAWAPA was thwarted following the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy. In the decades which followed, the anti-development drive was conducted by an interlocking nexus of dirty operations, including the greenie assertion that infrastructure violates “the environment,” claims that “there’s no money,”

and by deregulation, including of banking, culminating in the 1999 repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act.

So, today, we have the extensive and severe water shortages indicated in the latest North American Drought Monitor map (**Figure 2**). As of this month, 47% of the U.S. Lower 48 states are in drought, with many severe zones; in Mexico, 64% of the area is in drought, centered in the Northeast and Central regions.

The enemies of NAWAPA and Glass-Steagall, then and now, are the very same: the British Empire gaggle of privileged financial and commodity houses, forcing globalization against nation-states, in furtherance of the Crown objective of depopulation and destruction.

In mortal opposition to this genocidal outlook, NAWAPA XXI—the updated project-design (<http://larouchepac.com/infrastructure>)—has now been put back on the U.S. agenda, as an integral part of the mobilization to restore sovereign Federal power for credit for survival, and to build the future by

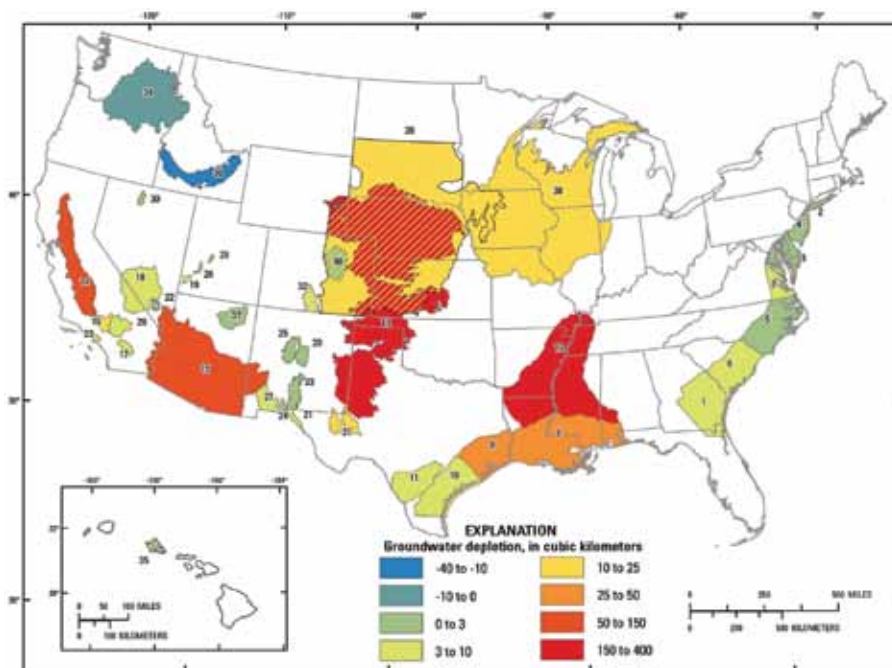
immediately re-instating the Glass-Steagall Act.

## The West: Water Scarcity, Food Crisis

Across all the major food types, the 17 Western states account for a huge share of U.S. production, resulting not only from intensive, high-yield operations on irrigated land, but also from dryland farm practices. All these farming systems are now in crisis because of the cumulative effects of decades of not having new, plentiful water supplies from NAWAPA, both for direct irrigation, and for the weather-improving impact from increased bio-mass throughout the region: trees, ground cover, direct evaporation, and plant-life transpiration.

Of all the area irrigated in the United States, over 70% of the acreage is in the 17 Western states, utilizing both surface run-off from the reservoir systems built as of the mid-20th Century, and groundwater. Now, these sources are both in crisis. The majority of the reservoirs are at low levels, insufficient not only for agriculture, but for residential and other uses. In the upper Rio

FIGURE 3

**Groundwater Depletion 1900-2008**

Grande/Pecos River region, for example, the reservoirs are at an all time low. People have begun moving out.

Likewise, aquifers have been drawn down dramatically, except in certain northerly regions of the upper High Plains and a few other locations. A report on this was issued this Spring by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Geological Survey, “Groundwater Depletion in the United States (1900-2008),” by L.F. Konikow.

The map (**Figure 3**), from this report, depicts the cumulative depletion (to 2008) of 40 aquifers across the United States, in which the Western states stand out as extreme—the Southern High Plains, California, and others. The report’s findings, however crude the measurements may be, note that the maximum rates of depletion have occurred “during the most recent period (2000-2008).”

The High Plains Aquifer/Ogallala Aquifer (**Figure 4**) is the extensive formation underlying parts of eight states, for which groundwater levels have been drawn down drastically, and water quality has deteriorated.

Overlay onto this Western groundwater map, the source-areas for key parts of the U.S. food supply, and the necessity is clear for re-instating Glass-Steagall, restoring a nation-serving credit-system, and launching NAWAPA XXI; plus taking emergency measures for

debt moratoria and aid to the agriculture regions.

**Produce:** California accounts for majority percentages of many of the fruits and vegetables grown in the U.S. As of 2011: broccoli—94%; leaf lettuce—90%; spinach—83%; canning tomatoes—95%; lemons—86%; fresh strawberries—88%; fresh plums—97%; carrots—66%, and so on.

The Central Valley in California alone provides a third of all produce grown in the U.S. Over 200 different crops are produced, from melons, grapes, berries, orchard fruits, and nuts, to salad vegetables. This one location is the largest supplier of canned tomatoes in the world.

The Central Valley, 450 miles long (from Redding to Bakersfield), and 60 miles at its widest, consists of the Sacramento River Valley in the north, and the San Joaquin Valley in the south. The entire region is now severely short of water, as indicated on the Aquifer Depletion map.

**Wheat:** The Southern High Plains region of three states—Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas—in recent years has accounted for 35% of the total of U.S. Winter wheat produced (bread wheat). This mostly dryland crop region has been parched for water, and also hit by temperature extremes. The U.S. wheat crop this year will be down significantly.

**Dairy:** California alone accounts for 20% of all the milk produced in the top 23 U.S. dairy states. California dairy-herd operations are now under severe threat, under impossible conditions from receiving prices below their costs of production, and from scarce and high-priced fodder. Over the last 18 months, 100 herds have been shut down, leaving only 1,500 total. California milk production is declining.

Of all the irrigated acreage in the 17 Western states—which is about 42 million acres (7.5% of the total crop base of the U.S.)—half of this area is irrigated for two kinds of crops for animal feed—hay, greenchop, and other fodder (26%); and corn for grain (24%), mostly for livestock rations (percentages are from 2008). Now,



water for irrigating these crops is short (with the exception of some northerly locations), at the same time as non-irrigated fodder crops have declined from drought, and pastures have dried up.

Adding to this livestock-feed crisis, is the insistence by the Obama Administration on continuing the corn-for-ethanol mandate.

**Beef:** The U.S. cattle inventory (beef, dairy cattle, and calves) has fallen to its lowest total since 1952. The decline over the last 25 years is shown in **Figure 5**.

Over recent years, the four High Plains states of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska accounted for over 30% of all the cattle and calves in the nation—mostly for beef. Texas alone accounted for more than 14%. These four states in 2008 had 32.5 million head of cattle, which was 34% of the national inventory of 96.7 million head.

Today, the number of cattle in these four states is down to 27.65 million head, a drop of 15% in just five years. The U.S. inventory is down to 92 million head. This decline comes directly from the conditions of depleting groundwater, severe heat and drought, lack of Federal aid, and diversion of food to biofuels.

Over the last five years, the Texas cattle herd fell by 18%; the Oklahoma herd declined by 22%. Over just the last year, from January 2012 to January 2013, Texas cattle numbers fell 5%, and 7% in Oklahoma. (See “Cattle Inventory” twice yearly survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service.)

The same decline in numbers is taking place in the nearby states of Iowa and Missouri, which are significant cattle-producing states. Only in the northerly cattle region of Montana and South Dakota have herd numbers remained steady, which, in some counties, reflects the fact that Texas and Oklahoma animals were relocated to the north, for reasons of water and pasture.

The state of California likewise ranks high nationally for beef, as well as dairy cows, but has been losing numbers year by year.

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FIGURE 4

## High Plains Aquifer/Ogallala Aquifer

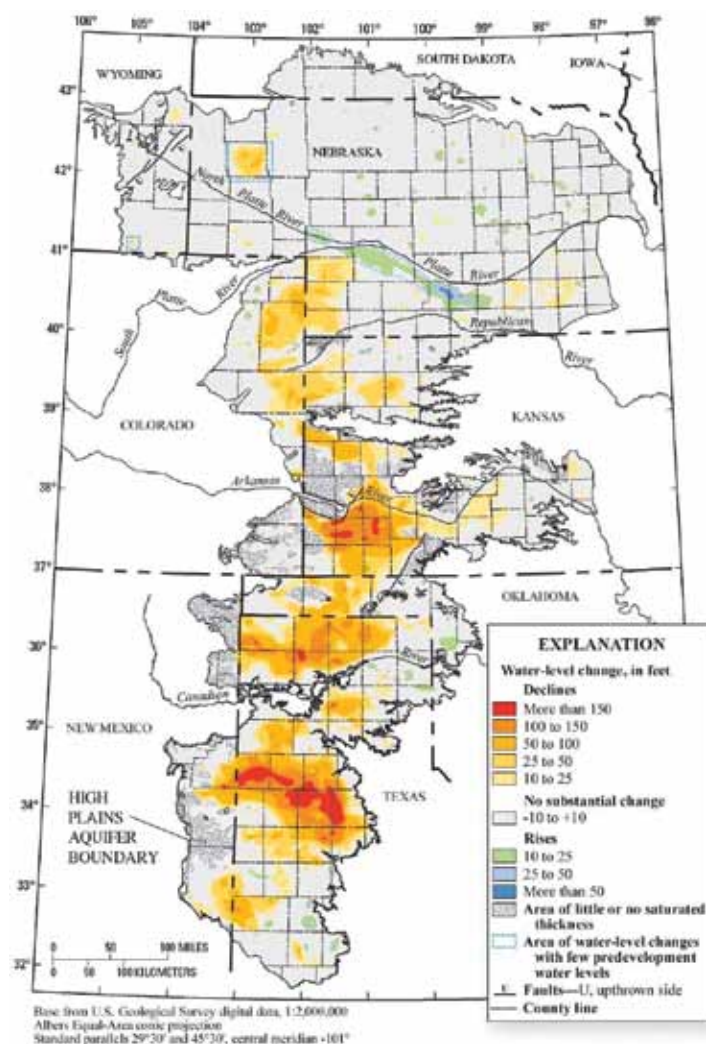


FIGURE 4

## Cattle Inventory—United States: January 1

