NC STATE EXTENSION

North Carolina Weekly Crop Survey — October 18, 2026

Drought Impact Analysis From Extension Agents Across the State

40 RESPONSES | **41** COUNTIES MAPPED

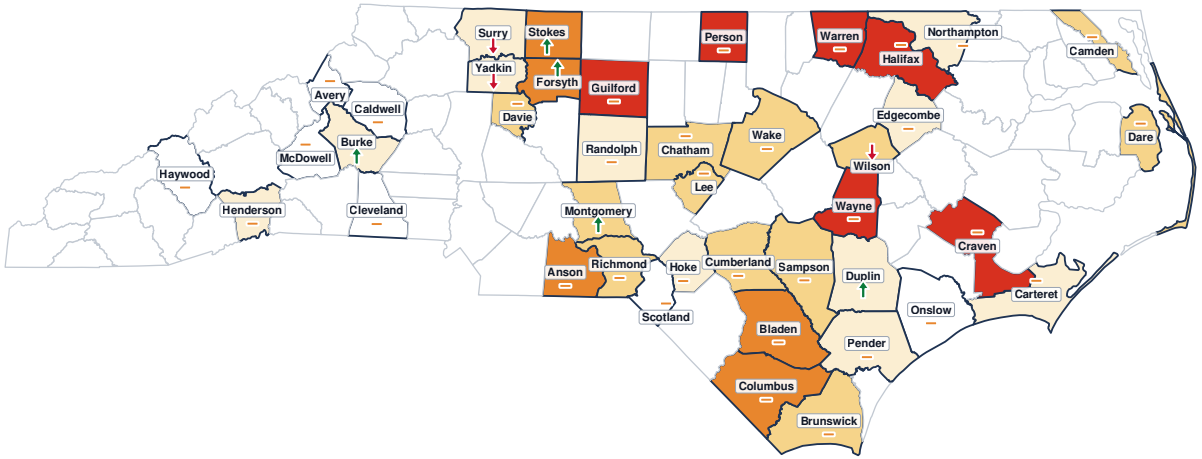
DROUGHT IMPACT (COUNTY REPORTED)

- Exceptional Drought
- Extreme Drought
- Severe Drought
- Moderate Drought
- Abnormally Dry
- No mapped response

COMMENT SIGNAL

- ↓ Worsening / crop stress intensifying
- ↑ Some relief / conditions improving
- ● Uneven rainfall / mixed conditions
- – Persistent drought / little change

COUNTY-REPORTED DROUGHT IMPACT



STATEWIDE TRENDS

- Pasture and forage growth is limited across many counties, increasing producers' reliance on stored hay and supplemental feed.
- Recent localized rainfall provided short-term relief for some fields but left subsoil moisture and water bodies still well below normal in many areas.
- Water supplies remain low in several counties and some areas are under or approaching water restrictions.
- Persistent soil moisture deficits are constraining late-season crop development and fall planting in parts of the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

TOP STATEWIDE CONCERNS

- Limited pasture and forage
- Low surface and groundwater levels
- Soil moisture deficits for fall planting
- Uneven, localized rainfall
- Potential winter hay shortages

REGIONAL SUMMARIES

WEST / MOUNTAINS & FOOTHILLS

Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Cleveland, Haywood, Henderson, McDowell

- Most mountain/foothill counties report little to no mapped drought impacts after recent hurricane rainfall.
- Avery and others are wetter from recent rains while Burke is listed as abnormally dry but reports no major drought impacts, though water restrictions remain in place.

PIEDMONT / SANDHILLS

Anson, Chatham, Cumberland, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Person, Randolph, Richmond, Scotland, Stokes, Surry, Wake, Yadkin

- Central Piedmont shows concentrated drought stress with several counties in severe or extreme categories (including Guilford, Person, Forsyth, Anson, Stokes).
- Pasture and forage growth is limited in many counties, increasing reliance on stored hay and supplemental feed.
- Rainfall has been uneven—some counties received beneficial showers while others remain dry, leaving soil moisture insufficient for recovery in places.

NORTH & CENTRAL COASTAL PLAIN

Camden, Carteret, Craven, Dare, Edgecombe, Halifax, Northampton, Warren, Wayne, Wilson

- The North and Central Coastal Plain includes multiple counties in extreme drought (Craven, Halifax, Warren, Wayne) with degraded pastures and low regional water supplies.
- Small recent rain amounts helped surface crops in some areas but subsoil moisture, streams, ponds, and reservoirs remain well below normal.
- Fall planting and late-season crop development are constrained by persistent soil moisture deficits across parts of the region.

SOUTHEAST COASTAL PLAIN

Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, Onslow, Pender, Sampson

- Southeast coastal counties range from abnormally dry to severe drought (Bladen, Columbus) though effects on some crops are easing as the growing season ends.
- Recent rains provided some relief for fields, but water bodies and inventories are still reported as very low in several areas.
- Conditions remain variable by county, with some areas able to plant cover crops while others still face notable moisture deficits.

COUNTY COMMENT HIGHLIGHTS (selected notes from impact and additional comments)

Avery

We are still quite wet from the hurricane rain from the previous weekend. Most plants are starting to go into dormancy, so I would not consider christmas trees and apples to be actvely growing. Unless you have a specific definition of actively growing

Bladen

Crops are not showing drought impacts at this time. Soybeans harvest is approaching the halfway point with most of the remaining fields proceeding through defoliation and the same can be said about cotton. The rainfall received over the weekend helped keep the crops progressing, but we are still well under what are moisture levels and water inventories should be as water bodies are still desparately low.

Carteret

Many vegetable producers have irrigation. Pastures and row crops don't have irrigation and reduced growth and production results from the lack of water in the soil. Recent rains have helped moisten the soil and improved crop health.

Chatham

Rainfall reported by weather stations across Chatham County ranged from 0.67 to 1.89 inches over the past seven days, with significant variation across the county. While some areas received beneficial rainfall, others continue to miss out, and consistent, steady rainfall is still needed to support soil moisture, pastures, and crop recovery.

Craven

Recent rainfall of about 1 inch supplies crops and pastures with much needed rain. However, subsoil water, streams, ponds and rivers are still extremely low

Guilford

Ongoing drought conditions in Guilford County have limited pasture and forage growth, increasing producers' reliance on stored hay and supplemental feed. Reduced forage availability and concerns about winter hay supplies continue to create challenges for livestock operations.

Northampton

Most of county received rain this weekend (approx. 0.5 inches). This is helping to keep Moisture available to germinate or sustain recently planted crops.

Randolph

Creeks and above ground water sources are still low

Richmond

We had rain 5 days ago - an inch or so in some areas - however in some parts of the county it is still dry due to the high temperatures this week. Although some areas received an inch or so of rain, in the sandy portions of county, coupled with the heat this week, plants are still suffering. Although we have been in drought conditions through most of the summer, in our area we don't typically go to water restrictions due to proximity to the Pee Dee River. We can be in severe drought but still not have water restrictions.

Warren

Warren County is experiencing widespread Severe (D2) and Extreme (D3) drought conditions, driving significant soil moisture deficits and dropping regional water supplies well below normal levels. These persistent conditions continue to degrade pasture quality and forage availability for livestock while limiting critical soil moisture for fall planting and late-season crop development.

Wayne

Very dry, hurting crops

Yadkin

Drought conditions continue to linger on at this time. The region only received a small amount of rainfall last Thursday evening into early Friday morning (10/15-10/16) amounting to only a couple tenths of an inch. Looking ahead at this weeks forecast for right now (10/19-10/25) there is next to zero percent chance of receiving any rainfall. At least now the high temperatures during the day have gone away after the cold front moved into the area for the weekend (10/17-10/19).

Map reflects county-reported drought classifications from the October 18, 2026 survey. Comment signal summarizes the tone of county narrative responses. Counties without a clearly mapped report remain unshaded. Full map: https://ncdisaster.ces.ncsu.edu/drought-map/