



Executive Summary

2022 Joint Stockmen's Convention

Surface and Ground Water Outlook in New Mexico,
Kate Zeigler, Ph.D.

Albuquerque, NM—2022 Joint Stockmen's Convention:
Transforming Challenges into Opportunities

Summary:

Kate Zeigler, Ph. D., explained the weather in New Mexico is changing. Droughts often are lasting longer than usual, snowpacks are declining and summers are getting warmer. Overall, there is less water available for ranchers; nevertheless, water is still being demanded in production agriculture.

However, production agriculture is still possible with these changing conditions, farmers and ranchers simply need to adjust to the declining water quantities in the state. Zeigler recommended agriculturalists to look at the data surrounding their property to make the best water plans for their areas.

With more than 60% of water being lost to evaporation, producers need to shift their practices to keep the water in the ground. By conserving water today, more water will be available for the future.

Key Points:

1. Understanding the geology of your property will be an asset in determining future water plans.
2. Surface water has a higher rate of evaporation, so it is encouraged to keep water in the ground until ready for use.
3. "Take care of the water, and the water will take care of you," Zeigler said.
4. Educating farmers and ranchers on changing aquifer levels and climate change.
5. Study data from previous years to consider leading practices for land management.

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