

Valley should avoid man-made drought

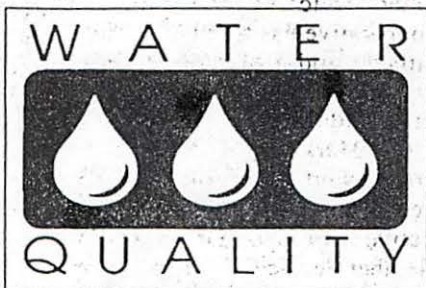
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Ron Riggenschach and I just returned from a meeting in San Antonio, Texas. We will elaborate on that meeting some other time, but for this column, let's talk about drought!

Even more so, I want to stress what those folks are facing due to the drought in the South.

Crop loss is already inevitable for lack of rain. Groundwater sources are becoming low which impacts everyone immediately.

San Luis Valley



Demonstration Project

Big cities are pleading through the media for their citizens to conserve water. Acquifer reports are given in degrees of levels that imply the severity of the immediate situation.

Actually, the story is an old one. I have experienced drought conditions in various areas of Colorado. Our Valley ranchers were hit fairly hard in recent years.

As for big cities, the folks downstream in Albuquerque seem to do a pretty good job of emphasizing water conservation on a regular basis, drought or not.

When a drought hits, life is very tough. When a drought is a natural occurrence, we often must let nature take its course.

I am afraid a new kind of drought is upon us. I feel that a water diversion out of a watershed is setting us up for a new type of drought. But this one we can fight.

I have never minced any words about where water belongs. It belongs in the watershed that it originally flows in.

I am probably being selfish about this issue because of the hard work our agricultural industry has done in documenting and implementing best management practices for water conservation. Quantity and quality go hand in hand.

Allowing for natural flow variation is difficult enough. Agriculture and the communities of any watershed should not be faced with watching their water resources change due to water sales over the hill.

Once a little water goes, more is probable to follow. For an area to deal with that type of water loss, no matter how gradual, is very difficult due to the impact on management approaches.

Crowley County on the eastern plains is a significant example of an irrigated region that is now dryland due to water sales, which has impacted all the citizens. We do not want to come close to having that happen in our Valley.

In catching up on Valley news and issues, I realized how heated the new water battle has become. You need to seek to be informed and armed with the facts. Then take a stand for your Valley and let your voice be heard. Thanks for hearing mine.