Mapping Drought with Satellite Remote Sensing and Land Surface Modeling

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Example of the Evolution of Agricultural Drought

High Atmospheric Demand for ET

Below-normal Precipitation

Remote Sensing Time Scales for Drought Early Warning

Microwave Soil Moisture

Thermal-Based ESI

VIS/NIR Vegetation (NDVI)

Sufficient Soil Moisture Conditions

Degrading Surface Soil Moisture Conditions

Onset of Vegetation Stress / Low Root-Zone Soil Moisture

Degrading Vegetation Health

Agricultural Drought

Timeline
Given known radiative energy inputs, how much water loss is required to keep the soil and vegetation at the observed temperatures?

WATER BALANCE APPROACH  
(prognostic modeling)

ENERGY BALANCE APPROACH  
(diagnostic modeling)
ESI Methodology

ALEXI ESI represents temporal anomalies in the ratio of actual ET to potential ET.

- **ESI does not require precipitation data**, the current surface moisture state is deduced directly from the remotely sensed LST, therefore it may be more robust in regions with minimal in-situ precipitation monitoring.

- ESI represents the “onset” of actual vegetation stress, not just the potential for vegetation stress and provides an opportunity to supplement products such as EDDI which highlight the atmospheric demand for ET, but lack a physical relationship with the actual vegetation response.

- Signatures of vegetation stress are manifested in the LST signal before any deterioration of vegetation cover occurs, for example as indicated in NDVI, so TIR-based indices such as ESI can provide an effective early warning signal of impending agricultural drought.

- ALEXI ESI inherently includes non-precipitation related moisture signals (such as irrigation; vegetation rooted to groundwater; lateral flows) that need to be modeled a priori in prognostic LSM schemes.
Current 4-wk ESI Composite

GET-D ESI 04 Week Composite
25 Mar 2017

Results from OSPO server

-2.5 -2 -1.5 -1 -0.5 0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5

NOAA/NESSDIS/OSPO
Flash drought are rapid onset events typically driven by precipitation deficits, high temperature anomalies and often strong winds. ESI has the potential to provide an early warning component during such events as water stress is able to be detected in the LST signal before degradation in the vegetation health occurs.

- Large negative RCI values in the top row indicate that moisture stress was rapidly increasing at the beginning of summer.

- Impressive scope of the unusually rapid decrease in the ESI anomalies is clearly depicted by the large area of negative RCI values.

- Initial appearance of negative RCI values led the introduction of severe drought in the USD by more than 4 weeks.
Early Warning Metrics for Onset of Vegetation Stress

- Examine drought conditions during critical crop stages
- Strong relationship between wheat yield and the ESI and VegDRI during critical crop stages
- NLDAS has strong (weak) relationship to corn/soybeans (wheat) yield
- ESI had strongest correlation to the wheat, corn, and soybean yield departures
An Empirical Method to Generate Probabilistic Drought Intensification Forecasts Over Sub-Seasonal Time Scales

Jason Otkin (UW/CIMSS), D. Lorenz, M. Svoboda, C. Hain, and M. Anderson

• Empirical method developed to generate probabilistic drought intensification forecasts over sub-seasonal time scales
• Uses precipitation anomalies and time tendencies in soil moisture and evapotranspiration
• Forecasts depicted a high risk for drought development before each flash drought event
• Results show that the method provides useful drought early warning information
Composite Drought Index based on Remote Sensing Drought Indicators

Future ESI Products over CONUS

a) USD
b) Noah
c) ALEXI
d) ECV
e) Merged

LSM+TIR+MW
Composite Drought Index
Short-term Prediction Research and Transition (SPoRT)

- Transitions unique NASA and NOAA observations and research capabilities to the operational weather community to improve short-term weather forecasts on regional and local scales
  - **Proven paradigm for transition of research and experimental data to operations**
- Close collaboration with numerous NWS WFOs across the U.S.
- Began in 2002; co-funded by NOAA since 2009 through “proving ground” activities
High-performance land surface modeling & data assimilation system

Uncoupled/analysis mode

Forecast mode coupled to WRF model

Currently run Noah LSM v3.3 in analysis mode

Full Continental U.S. (CONUS) domain with 0.03° (lat/lon) grid resolution

Unique characteristics of SPoRT-LIS:
- Real-time S-NPP/VIIRS Green Vegetation Fraction
- Albedo scaled to input vegetation
- Restart simulation strategy to produce real-time output (timeline below)
- SPoRT-LIS ingested and displayed in AWIPS II at select NOAA/NWS weather forecast offices
- Land surface variables available to initialize modeling applications (WRF and STRC/EMS/UEMS)
**SPoRT Real-time LIS Running Noah LSM**

Full Continental U.S. (CONUS) domain with 0.03° (lat/lon) grid resolution

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**Timeline:**
- **Jan 1979**
- **t − 4 days**
- **t = current**
Notice the expansion of D1 into southern DeKalb County and adjacent areas.
SPoRT-LIS 2014 Evaluation Example:
Minor adjustments to USDM categories

(a) 0-10 cm RSM
(b) 0-2m RSM
(c) 1-wk change 0-2m RSM

August 19, 2014
(Released Thursday, Aug. 21, 2014)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

August 26, 2014
(Released Thursday, Aug. 28, 2014)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT
How do I get these datasets:

**Evaporative Stress Index (ESI):**

Contact: Christopher Hain (christopher.hain@nasa.gov)  
Martha Anderson (martha.anderson@ars.usda.gov)

Data access:

http://hrsl.ba.ars.usda.gov/drought/ (warm season only)

NOAA Operational FTP (ftp://satepsanone.nesdis.noaa.gov/GETD/PROD/)

**NASA SPoRT LIS:**

Contact: Christopher Hain (christopher.hain@nasa.gov)  
Bradley Zavodsky (brad.zavodsky@nasa.gov)  
Jonathon Case (jonathan.case-1@nasa.gov)

Data access:

https://weather.msfc.nasa.gov/sport/case_studies/lis_CONUS.html