



A persistent drought held its grip on America's bread basket on Thursday, with no sign of relief for the four main wheat-growing states.

The poor outlook for winter wheat, which accounts for about 70% of the US crop, has raised fears about further food prices shocks, after widespread failure of last year's corn and soybean crops.

Conditions in Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas, which produce about a third of the country's wheat crop, remained unchanged – virtually the worst on record, according to the US Drought Monitor.

The Obama administration declared large areas of all four states a natural disaster area on Wednesday, because of the persistent drought.

In Kansas, the biggest wheat producer, the entire state is in severe drought. Oklahoma, over the last 60 days, has seen only a small fraction of its typical rainfall.

"Oklahoma has really been just bone dry," said David Simeral, a scientist at the Western Regional Climate Center who wrote this week's drought report.

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