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New Mexico Water Dialogue

30th Annual Statewide Meeting

ENGAGING NEW MEXICANS IN THE WATER PLANNING PROCESS

STRATEGIZING FOR ACTION

May 15, 2025

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

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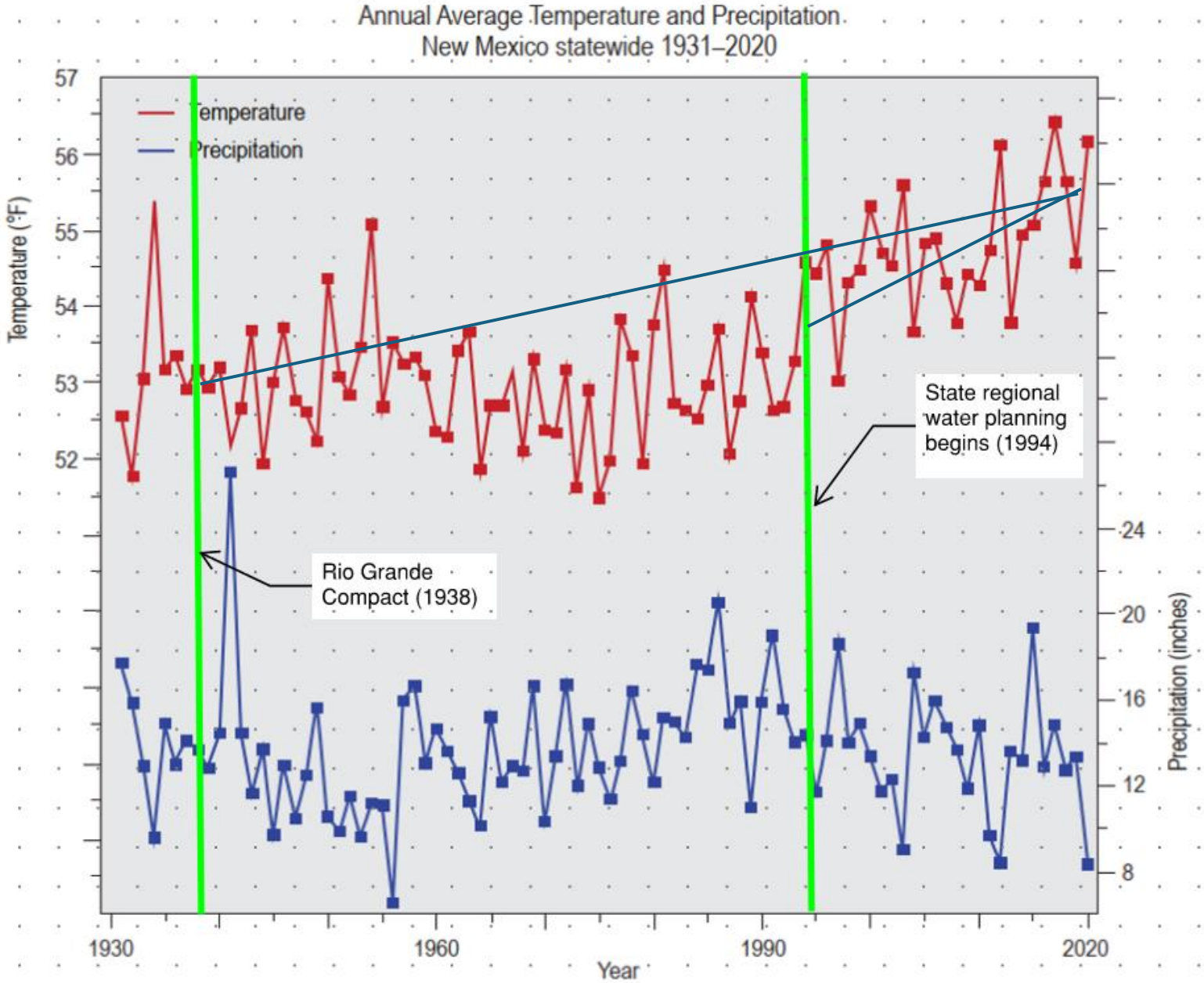
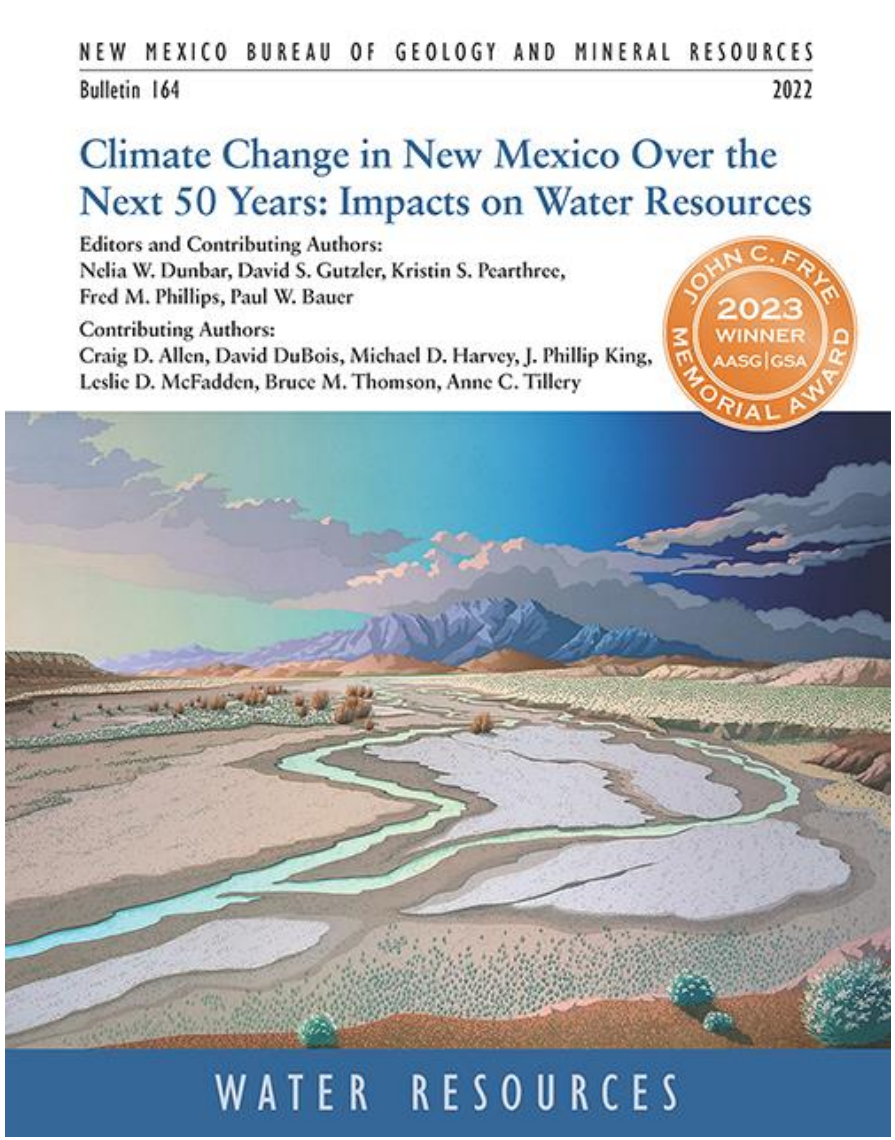
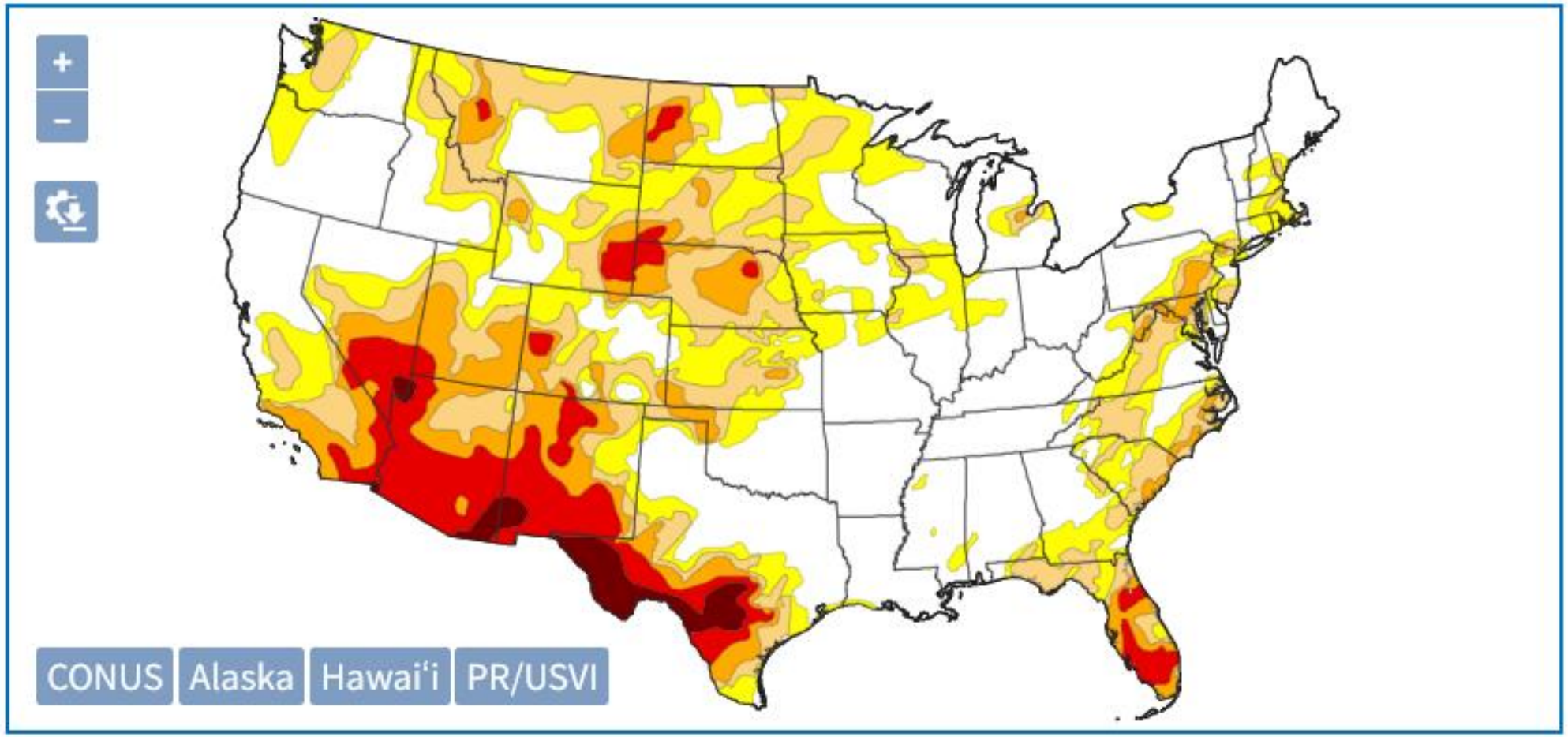


Figure 1.2. Observed annual temperature (red) and precipitation (blue) averaged over the state of New Mexico, 1931–2020. Source: updated from New Mexico Universities Working Group (2015) and Gutzler (2020).

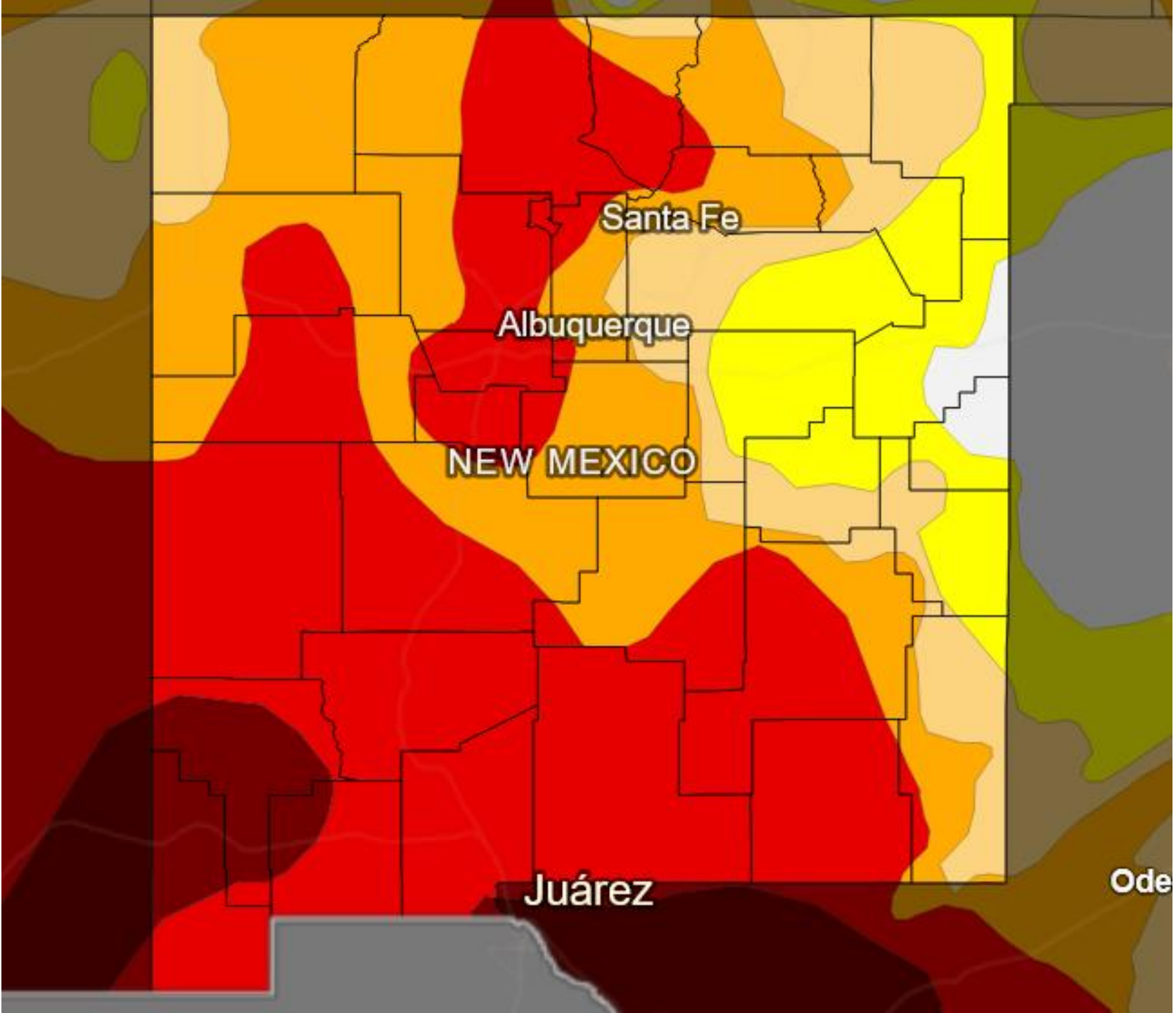




Legend

U.S. Drought Monitor Categories

D0 D1 D2 D3 D4



Legend

Drought & Dryness Categories	% of NM
D0 – Abnormally Dry	10.4%
D1 – Moderate Drought	12.9%
D2 – Severe Drought	26.2%
D3 – Extreme Drought	45.1%
D4 – Exceptional Drought	4.2%
Total Area in Drought (D1–D4)	88.4%

Image from 05/14/25
https://www.drought.gov/states/new-mexico

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Opening Panel

Lisa Henne (Moderator)

Increasing Human Engagement to Navigate Social and Economic Impacts of the Water Crisis

Panelist

Tribal - Dr. Lani Tsinnajinnie, UNM

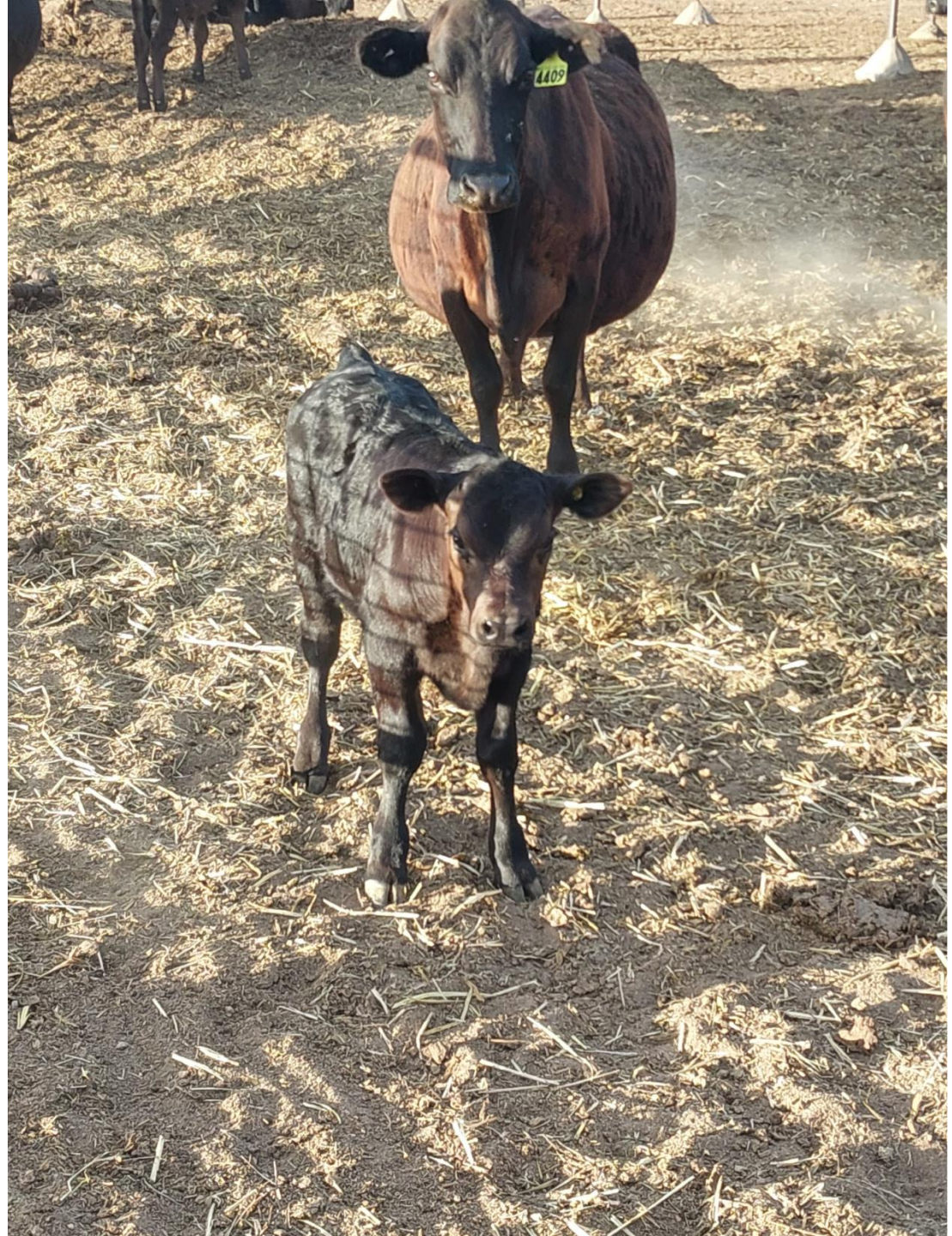
Agriculture – Janet Jarratt

Environmental – Dr. Manuel Montoya , UNM

Economics – Dr. Jingjing Wang , UNM

2025 NM Water Dialogue

Janet Jarratt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BBER NM Property Tax Study: Agricultural, Working, and Natural Lands
Prepared for the NM Legislature October 2021

The most recent available data shows that New Mexico lost 5.1 million agricultural acres (11%) over the last two decades (1997-2017). Pasture & Rangeland lost 4.6 million (-11%), Cropland lost 353,601 (-16%) and Irrigated land declined by 178,582 (-22%).

Underlying demographic trends suggest agricultural land conversion will accelerate over the next 20 years as a large percentage of farmers will retire. This is evidenced by the fact that three out of four farmers and ranchers in New Mexico are 55 years of age or older and the average age of New Mexico farmers is 61. The retirement of these producers will cause large landholdings to shift into new ownership hands statewide.

Broad economic and population trends suggest low to negative growth in contrast to rising real estate values. In New Mexico, over the last ten years, two out of three counties experienced negative population growth -- four out of five counties experienced either no growth or negative population growth.

With the second-highest poverty rate nationally and the third-lowest median household income, compared to other states in the country, New Mexico is among the poorest as measured by annual income. Nevertheless, New Mexico ranks 12th among all states in the U.S. for percent of total land holdings being used for agriculture.

Based on our review of available data and by developing our own estimates, we assess that land conversion will likely continue unmitigated in New Mexico under the current policy regime with specific economic and fiscal implications. …. Based on these annualized rates, BBER estimates the potential annual agricultural acre loss has averaged 218,000 acres per year over the last 20 years. On a forward basis, if this average holds, and these converted acres are used primarily for residential development, BBER estimates that tax revenues would increase by $10.1 million per year; however, removing these acres from agriculture will likely result in the **loss of agricultural production and job losses that we estimate to be $3.5 million and 35 jobs, respectively. We also estimated the added infrastructure cost needed to provide utilities and services to undeveloped acres at $11.7 million and the ecosystem services cost of $1.5 million, resulting in a total economic and fiscal impact loss of $6.8 million.**

• Failure to adjudicate is a great barrier to both efficient water transfers to other uses and
to farmers protecting their water rights from uncompensated takings.

• The state ceasing depletions analysis and publication and moving to diversion only reporting gives the appearance that ag is a huge sink for water and ignores the fact that the irrigation water is recycled to the drains and diverted again downstream as well as recharging the domestic and M&I wells. A case in point: Albuquerque reach looses on average 70kaf per year from ditches and drains, with water moving to the cones of depression rather than toward the river.

• Failure to adjudicate means water rights are fought for one person at a time, and only upon application to transfer. Most people have no understanding of how to prove their water rights, what documents to seek, and where to look. Many are handicapped by the fact that many land records including irrigation information was stored in churches, some of which, like the church in Tome, burned and all records proving rights to the 1700s lost.

• Lack of transparency in how the water rights are "managed" in relation to wet water. Examples are the MRGCD providing water for ESA compliance without full accounting or receiving compensation. Another is the dispensation of "credit water" to ISC, BoR, and MRGCD when there is a strong argument that the credit water is a product of farmer conservation and disbursing credits to other entities is questionable. It should be remembered that MRGCD owns the SJ/C contract water, but water applied to

• Recognize that many of us love our land, have a story for every acre, and want to leave it whole and healthy for future generations. The land's greatest value is in its potential.

• Shortage sharing always arises as a "solution" to water shortages. Shortage sharing can work, at least for a while, when all of the participants have common use and priority. In the context of regional or statewide shortage issues, shortage sharing just means taking my water for planting more houses. Farmers only loose, while M&I gain.

• Water management decisions are made by entities that are fully self-interested and seek to increase their control, and the public has little or no knowledge of these decisions and their implications.

• Recently, the ABCWUA had the drought level at "0", while we irrigators were informed that we would be out of water before the end of May. A normal irrigation rotation is 21 days, not 3 or 4 days a week as someone at Los Pablanos was complaining to me about when I was on the MRGCD board.

• I believe that if people in municipalities were given the choice of how to use their conserved water it would be to support farmers or species, and not to grow more houses.

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New Mexico Water Dialogue

30th Annual Statewide Meeting

Emerging Voices Panel

Diane Agnew (Moderator)

Perspectives on Growing Up with Climate Change and Water Scarcity

Panelist

Vidal Gonzales

Desiree Loggins

Aidan Manning

Stephanie Mladinich

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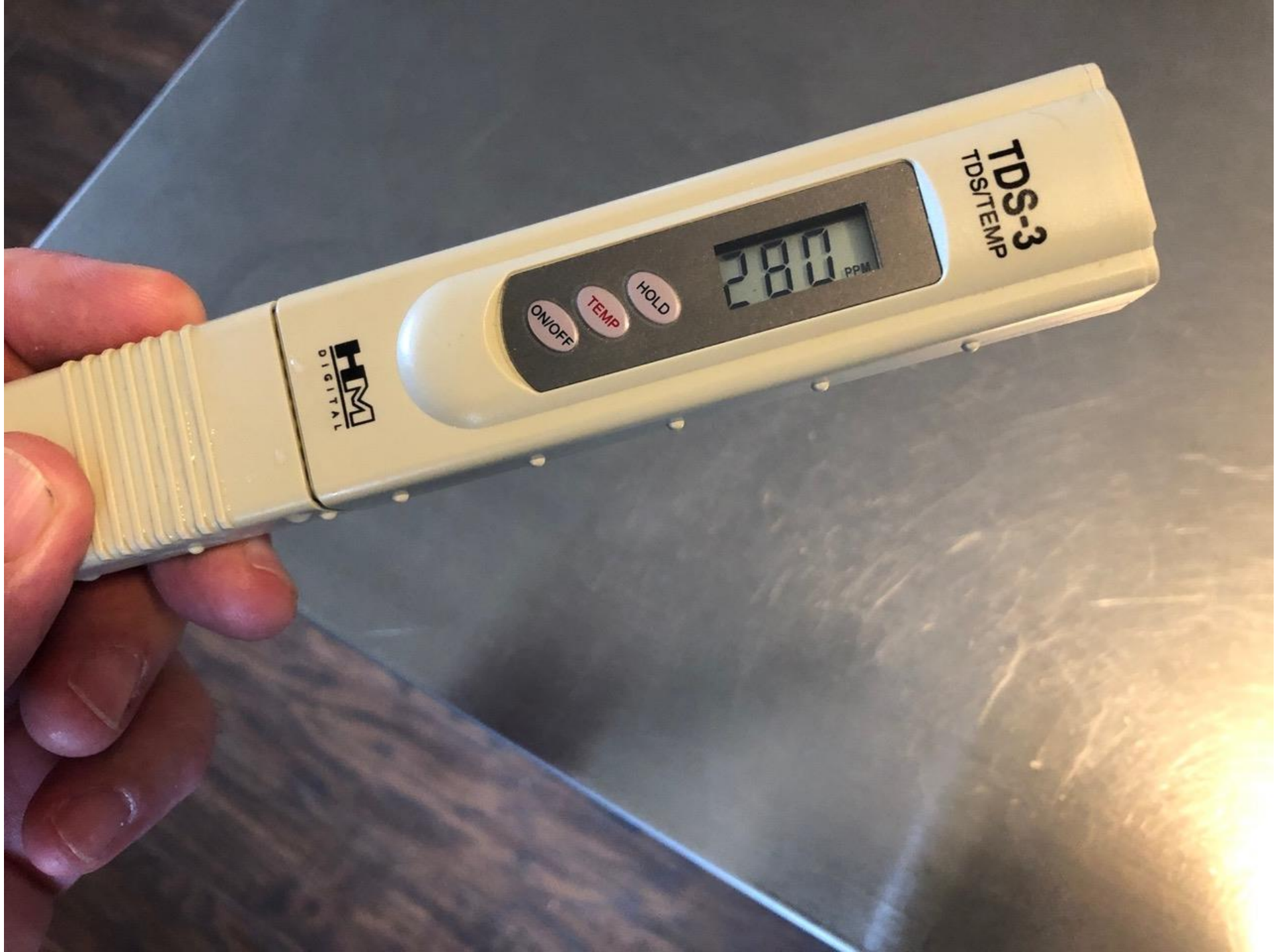
Presenter: Mike Davidson
NM Water Dialogue: In Action
May 15, 2025


THE PORTALES NATIONAL BANK
Welcome to
PORTALES
Home of 12,000 friendly people
(and three or four old grouches.)


THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA


EVERY
DROP
COUNTS


RCR4ALL
GOT WATER? VOTE!


TDS-3
TDS/TEMP
ON/OFF
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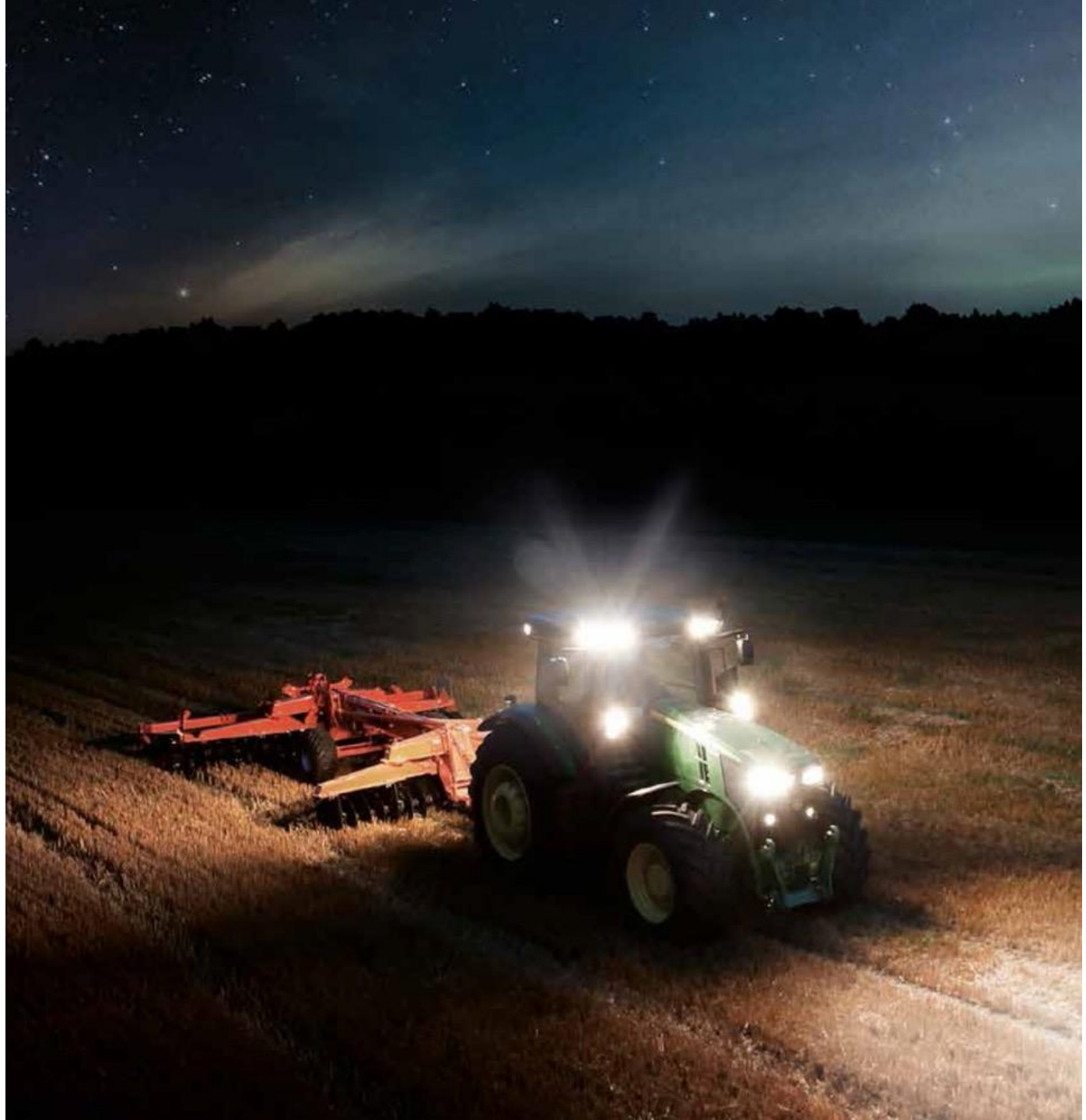
PPM
HM
DIGITAL



Thank you!

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