

How long does it take to end a drought?

Contributed by Matt Ryan

Depending upon what one means by "ending the drought" it can take from days to weeks to a season or more.

Generally, a drought is considered a period of time — 30-40 days — with no rainfall. More accurately, a drought results from a long period of diminished rainfall, say a season or two in a row, or a year, during which half or less of the average amount of rain falls.

Some periods with less rain are more critical than others. In the West there is a definite rainy period running from October to April with the core months from November to February usually being the wettest. A dry fall or winter season will cause far more problems than a dry summer when, in many places, it's not unusual to go a month or two without rain.

A rule of thumb is the longer the drought has existed, the longer it will take to end it. In most cases, rainfall will resume 5 to 10 days after starting rainmaking operations. The nature of the atmospheric energy is to pulse again after the initial rain, and then, as far as rainmaking goes, we wait and see.

Mostly these days the droughts have are long-term, and so the operations have to continue for some time, several weeks to a season of patiently waiting, watching, and well-timed work.