

CLAY CENTER (AP)—The state climatologist has advised Nebraska farmers, ranchers and cattle producers to plan for another year of drought.

At a meeting in Clay Center. State climatologist Al Dutcher estimated that Nebraska has a 70 percent chance of a second consecutive year of drought, even though he expects more snow and rain yet this winter and in the coming spring.

The Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln said more than 96 percent of Nebraska remains in the two worst stages of drought.

“We could still come out of this with normal ag yields if we have normal precipitation, but we’re still going to have this hydrological drought,” Dutcher said.

To end the hydrological drought, Dutcher said, 8 to 10 inches of moisture more than normal would be needed.

“I think everyone should really have a good drought plan in place. I don’t enjoy saying this any more than you enjoy hearing it,” Dutcher said.