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DROUGHT

Although there were incidents of drought in recent years reducing yields and in some cases destroying harvests in certain areas, drought in general is not a major problem in Austria. Climate change can however be seen as one of the reasons for both these incidents and some flooding which occurred especially in the year 2002. Furthermore glaciers in the Alps have shows a disturbingly rapid decrease hinting to warming of the atmosphere beyond clearly measurable data.

The climatic development of the last decade showed that the years grow drier. As a consequence since the year 2000 one could identify drought damages not only in cultivation of crops but also in grassland. Most concerned are the cattle farmers because of lack of feeding stuffs. The cited Austrian Hail Insurance offers an insurance against drought with cereals but not with grassland. Different fostered research programmes elaborate on a model to identify damages in grassland, but, so far, are not ready for practice. It is still not possible to find the correct relation between the lack of rain (drought damage) and the loss of yields. There is still hope that once one can find a praxis relevant model to identify easily crop damages in grassland for compensation, as it is already the case with cereals.

Meanwhile on request of the most concerned regions the state offers a national grant for the acquirement of replacement feeding stuffs. Each of these grants has to be approved by the European Commission.