

# Tibet drought worst in 30 years: Chinese state media

June 20 2009

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A Tibetan herdsman monitors his flock of sheep from a distance outside Tongde. A drought in Tibet has intensified into the region's worst in three decades, leaving thousands of hectares parched and killing more than 13,000 head of cattle, China's state media has said.

A drought in Tibet has intensified into the region's worst in three decades, leaving thousands of hectares parched and killing more than 13,000 head of cattle, China's state media said Saturday.

The report by Xinhua news agency follows a warning by China's top weather official last month that the Himalayan region faced a growing threat of [drought](#) and floods as [global warming](#) melts its glaciers.

Drought conditions have hit five of Tibet's six prefectures since last year, affecting 15.3 percent of the remote plateau, Xinhua said, quoting

the regional drought relief and [flood](#) control headquarters.

It also said 13,601 head of cattle had died, but did not say over what time frame the deaths occurred.

Some weather stations had not received significant rainfall in 226 days, the report said.

"The drought has also been worsened by higher than normal temperatures. Tibet has experienced temperatures 0.4 to 2.3 degrees Celsius (0.7 to 4.1 Fahrenheit) higher than normal years," it said, quoting a top Tibetan weather official.

The head of the [China](#) Meteorological Bureau, Zheng Guogang, last month was quoted by Xinhua as warning that global warming was accelerating glacial shrinkage, causing Tibet's lakes to swell.

"If the warming continues, millions of people in western China will face floods in the short term and drought in the long run."

Experts have repeatedly warned of catastrophic consequences downstream if global warming continues to melt the snows and [glaciers](#) of mountainous Tibet, source of many of Asia's mightiest rivers.

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