



drought.ch – Swiss platform for early detection of drought

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The web-based platform drought.ch for early detection of drought provides daily information about the current situation of upcoming drought in Switzerland and provides forecasts for the next days. The objectives of the platform include the following: 1) spatially differentiated information on drought; 2) classify and plot the intensity of hydrological indicators based on 30-year climatology; 3) open to the public research-based platform.

The summer 2015 was marked by two persistent heat waves in July. In contrast to the summer 2003, the spring 2015 was without anomalies in terms of precipitation and temperature. The summer precipitation had a strong west-east gradient, which was also reflected in the drought. While in June only the Rhone valley was affected by drought, in July all Swiss regions were affected. Some rivers reported discharges very close to the minimum; also records of water temperatures were measured at several locations. Thus one can speak of a national event in July and August.

The platform drought.ch was used active in particular to reports in the media and also served as the basis for decisions of responsible authorities. The availability of information from different sources is estimated by the public in general and allows the user a complex view about drought.

The currently implemented COSMO-LEPS forecasts are used for the upcoming five days. In addition, since April 2015 monthly ENS-Forecasts were integrated experimentally. These two prediction systems have now been evaluated for the heat wave of summer 2015 and compared to the climatological forecast. As the preliminary results show, the first indication of a drought was recognizable relatively early, which manifested clearly itself by closing the time gap to the summer drought.