Table 3. Guide for Estimating Actual Available Field Soil Moisture by the "Feel" Method.

SOIL TEXTURE CLASSIFICATION				
Coarse (loamy sand)	**Sandy (sandy loam)**	**Medium (loam)**	**Fine (clay loam, silty clay loam)**	
Available Water (AW) in the Soil by Appearance (inches/foot soil)				
0.6-1.2 in/ft *AW@FC	**1.2-1.8 in/ft AW@FC**	**1.4-2.2 in/ft AW@FC**	**1.7-2.4 in/ft AW@FC**	
AW	**AW**	**AW**	**AW**	Moisture Deficiency
Leaves wet outline On hand when **1.0**	Appears very dark leaves wet outline **1.6**	Appears very dark leaves wet outline **1.9**	Appears very dark, leaves slight moisture **2.2**	0
squeezed. Appears moist, **0.7**	on hand, makes a short ribbon (0.5-0.75 inch)	on hand , will ribbon about 1 – 2 inches. **1.7**	on hand when squeezed, will ribbon > 2 inches.	0.2
Makes a weak ball. Appears slightly	Quite dark color makes a hard ball. **1.2**	Dark color, forms a plastic pall, slicks when rubbed. **1.4**	Dark color will feel slick And ribbons easily **1.8**	0.5
moist, sticks together slightly. **0.4**	Fairly dark color, makes a good ball **1.0**	Quite dark, forms a hard ball **1.2**	Quite dark, will make	0.7
Dry, loose, flows thru fingers. (wilting point) **0**	Slightly dark color makes a weak ball **0.7**	Fairly dark, forms a **1.0**	thick ribbon may slick when rubbed. **1.4**	1.0
	Lightly colored by moisture, will not **0.4**	a good ball	Fairly dark, makes a good ball. **1.1**	1.2
	ball. Very slight color **0**	Slightly dark, forms weak ball **0.6**	Will ball, small clods will flatten out rather **0.7**	1.4
	due to moisture. (wilting point)	Lightly Colored, small clods crumble **0.2**	Slightly dark, clods **0.4**	1.7
		Fairly easily. Slight color due to	Crumble. Some darkness due to	1.9
		moisture, small colds hard (wilting point). **0**	unavailable moisture, clods are hard, cracked **0**	2.2
			(wilting point)	

*** AW@FC:** Available Water @ Field Capacity = the available water a soil can store against gravity after irrigation and drainage.

Adapted from: Merriam, J.L. 1960. Field method of approximating soil moisture for irrigation. Am. Soc. Agri. Engr. Vol. 3. No.1.