

# Agricultural Moisture Situation Update

November 8, 2020

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## Synopsis

Over the weekend a large system blanketed a significant amount of the province's agricultural areas with snow. Snowfall accumulations are currently greatest in the extreme south-east corner of the province and through parts of the northern Peace Region, with some lands in these regions estimated to have upwards of 30 cm of fresh snow.

Soil moisture reserves at freeze up are highly variable across the province with about 50% of the agricultural areas estimated to have below average reserves at fall freeze up. Large areas that are drier than normal exist through parts of the southern Peace Region, the western-half of the North West Region and throughout a wide band along the border area lying between the Southern and Central Regions.

## Snow pack accumulations as of November 8, 2020 (Map 1)

Over the weekend a slow moving disturbance brought wide ranging snows to most of the province, with the hardest hit areas located south of a line running from the Crowsnest Pass all the way up to Provost (located approx. 120 km south of Lloydminster). Within this area, snowfall totals ranged from 15 to 30 mm of snow water equivalent (SWE), which for this storm translates to 20 to 40 cm of fresh snow. Outside of this zone, most of the agricultural areas of the province received between 6 to 15 mm of SWE. Areas that received only a minor amount of snow (< 3 mm SWE) are confined to a large tract of land running along the foothills between Staveley all the way up to Rocky Mountain House.

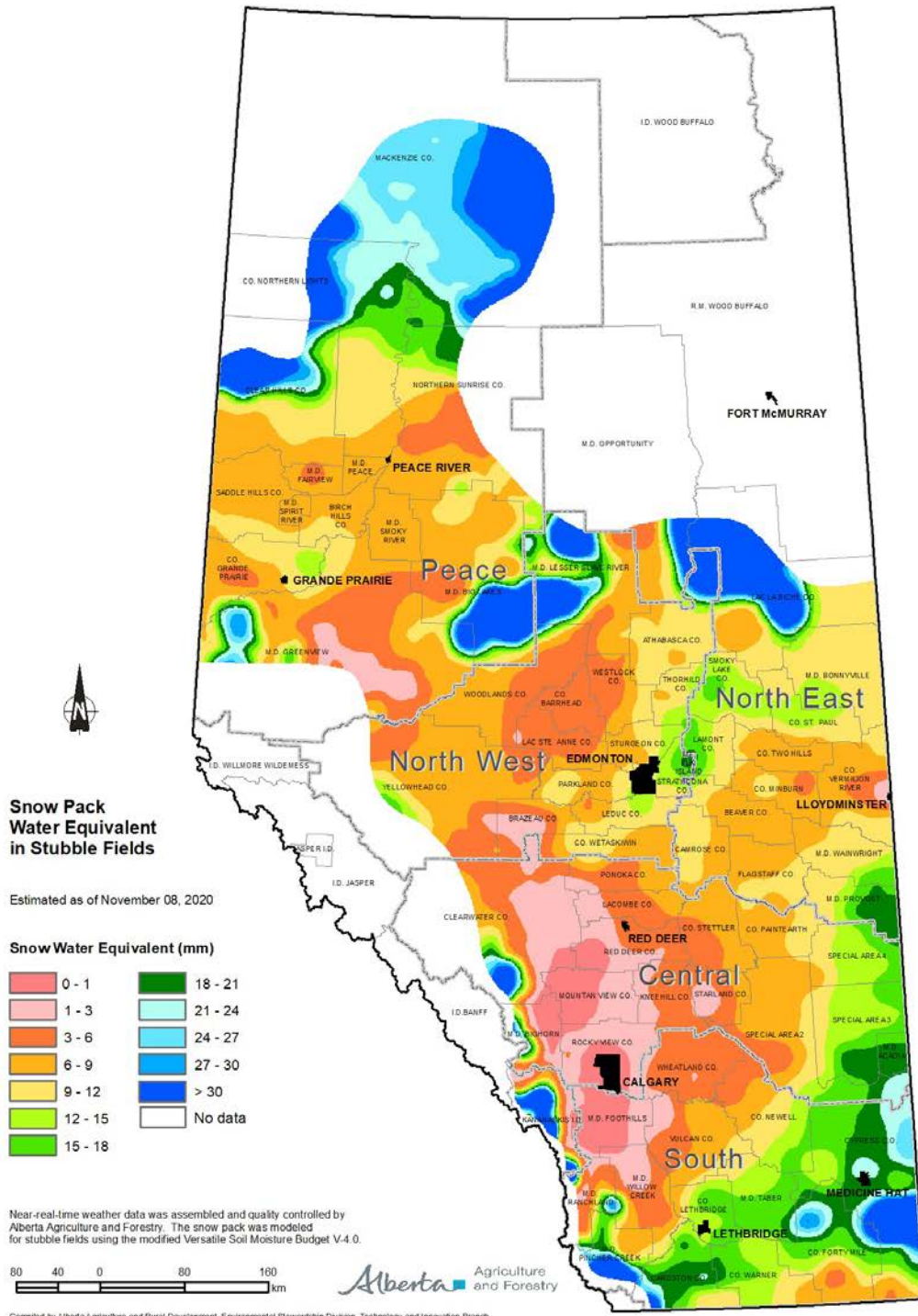
Earlier in the week (November 3 to Nov 6), the northern Peace region was also hit by a major snowfall event, with areas in the extreme north receiving upwards of 20 mm of SWE. This is a good start to winter snow packs for this area that has been suffering from a multi-year dry spell that appears to have ended starting on about August of 2019. That being said, it's not possible to predict with any confidence if this trend will continue or if it will end anytime soon.

## Soil moisture reserves as of November 8, 2020 (Map 2)

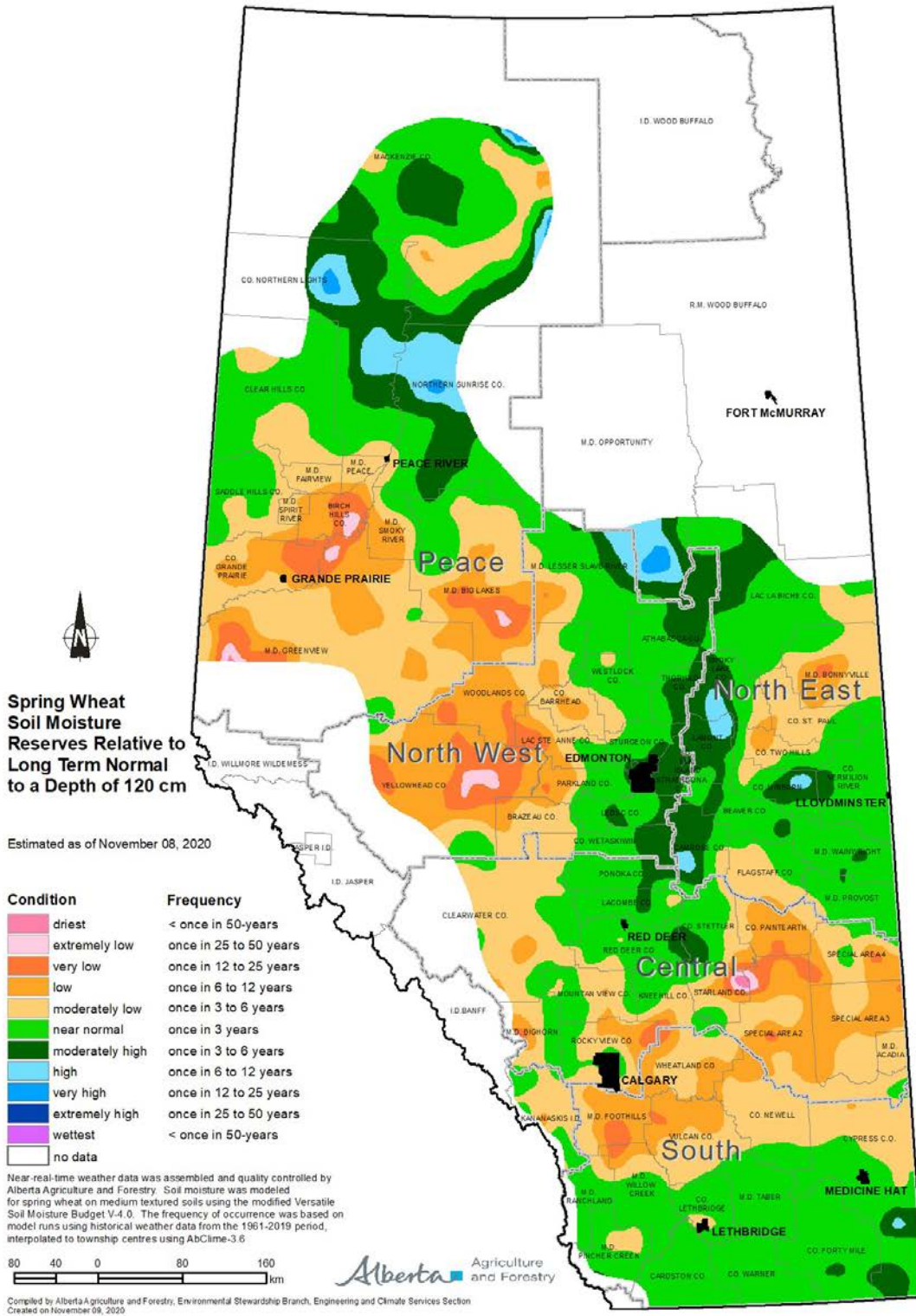
Soil moisture reserves heading into this winter are highly variable across the province, ranging from one in 6 to 12 year highs along the western border of the North East Region to one in 25 year lows through small pockets located in the central parts of the Peace, North West and Central Regions.

Across the south-half of Southern Region much of the land has near normal moisture reserves under above average snowpack's for this year. Snows are expected to melt and improve conditions here further, at least in the short term; however, this part of the province is typically subjected to plenty of snow free days during the winter along with dry Chinook winds. As a result, it's yet to be seen if this moisture will be available for next year's crops.

Map 1



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