

Moisture Situation Update – June 10, 2014

Synopsis:

Over the past 30-days precipitation accumulations have been below normal across most of southern Alberta, through the Special Areas, and through a small portion of the central Peace Region. This, along with new crop growth, has led to a steady decline in soil moisture reserves, with parts of east central Alberta experiencing reserves this low on average less than once in 12-years. Other areas of growing moisture concerns include a small portion of the central Peace Region located east of Sexsmith, estimated to have reserves this low less than once in 25-years, and also parts of the extreme northern Peace Region.

In contrast, precipitation accumulations through about 60 % of the agricultural areas have been at least near normal with parts of the northeast seeing 30-day accumulations this great, on average, less than once in 12-years.

Weather forecast from ESRD's Fire Weather Section - Special thanks to Nick Nimchuck

- Two major systems are poised to sweep into Alberta over the next 5-days or so. This first one, arriving on Friday, is expected to bring 20-40mm to southern Alberta and the foothills areas as far north as Edson.
- The second system arriving on Sunday, should see similar accumulations, but it's possible this system will reach farther into east central Alberta as well.
- If this forecast is accurate, the developing dry conditions in southern Alberta, may be alleviated.

Precipitation accumulations over the past 30-days, as of June 10, 2014 –see map

- Generally north of the Yellowhead Highway, and west of Highway 2, from Calgary to Edmonton, precipitation accumulations have been well above average with most areas receiving at least 80 mm of precipitation, which is ample to sustain early crop growth.
- Drier conditions have been experienced south of the Trans-Canada Highway and through the Special Areas, with some areas receiving less than 20 mm over the past four weeks.
- Throughout much of the Peace Region, most areas have seen 30 to 50 mm, which is about normal for this time period. However, the northern Peace Region remains slightly dryer than normal (20-30 mm) along with the Sexsmith area, just north of Grande Prairie where 30-day accumulations are estimated to be this low on average about once in 6-years.

Soil moisture reserves relative to long term normal as of June 10, 2014 –see map

- Throughout the Peace Region, soil moisture reserves are variable, ranging from one in 50-year lows through the Sexsmith area, to one in 12-year lows through parts of the northern Peace Region and generally near normal elsewhere. However, it is important to note that the arrival of the wet season here lags other areas of the province with wetter conditions typically arriving in the latter half of June and persisting until the beginning of August.
- Much of the central parts of Alberta, generally east of Camrose, are seeing reserves dwindle with a couple of "county sized" pockets of one in 12-year lows developing. These areas are in need of rain soon, followed by at least near normal precipitation accumulations over the next several weeks.
- If rains continue west of Highway 2 and north of the Yellowhead Highway, excessive moisture conditions may develop. However, such conditions in aggregate, generally affect poorly drained areas more, with well drained areas being less affected and/or potentially benefiting, providing that moisture loving pests are kept in check.

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Perspective

- A delayed start to spring has given way to generally favorable, but cool conditions across most of the province. The majority of the growing season still lies ahead with ample time to turn those dry areas around.
- Cool weather of late has helped alleviate some potential moisture stress in those dry areas, hopefully buying time ahead of the traditionally wetter weeks to come.

Additional maps can be found at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/maps

Near-real-time hourly station data can be viewed/downloaded at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations

Note: Data has about a two hour lag and is displayed in MST (add one hour for daylight savings time)

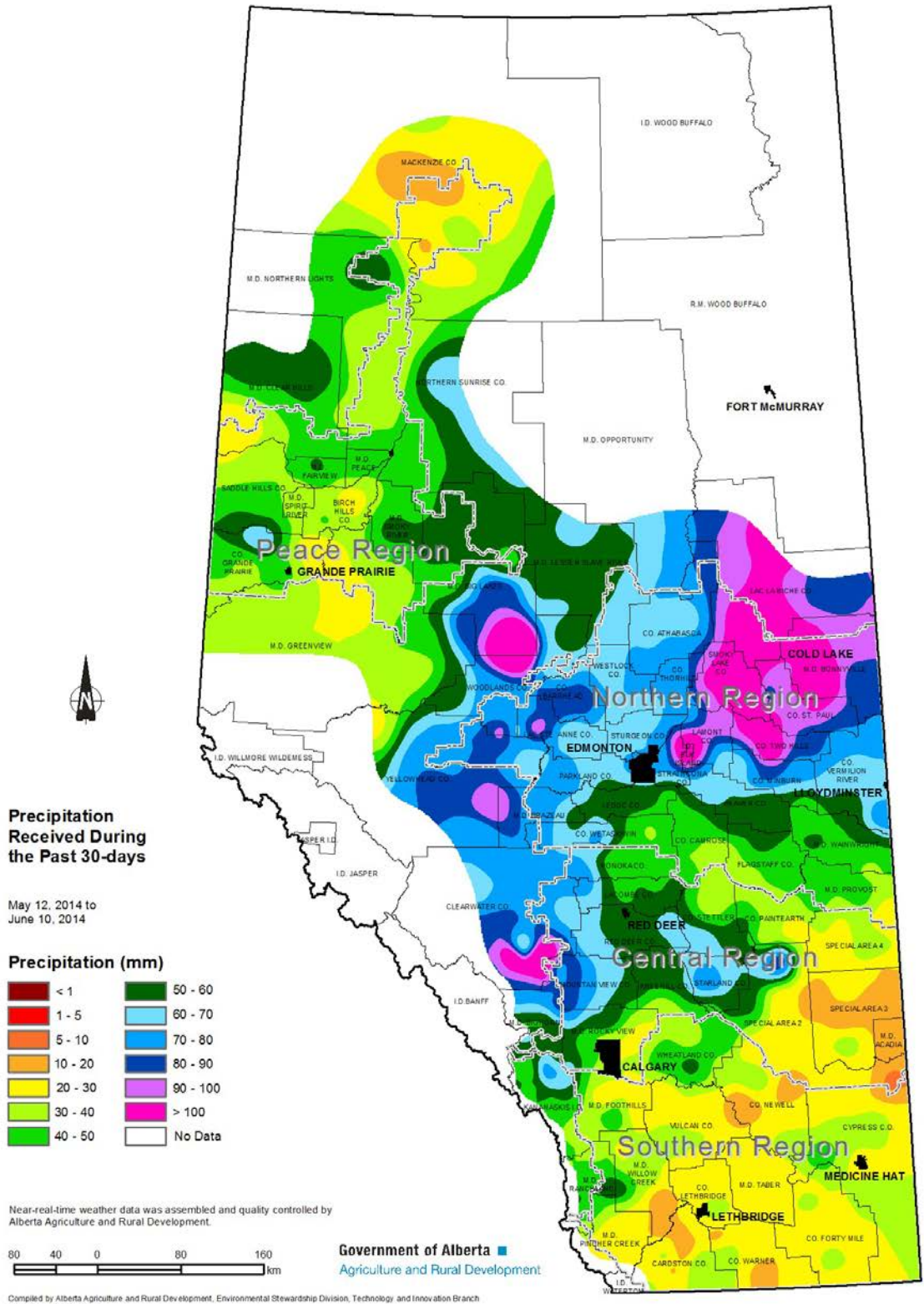
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