Moisture Situation Update – May 30, 2014

Synopsis:
Over the past few days, a major rain event occurred within the province, bringing well over 60 mm of precipitation to the Fort McMurray area, and upwards of 30 to 50 mm across those agricultural areas, lying west of Highway 2 between Calgary and Edmonton and north of the Yellowhead Highway between Lloydminster and Edson.

Precipitation accumulations over the past nine-days, as of May 30 11:00am, 2014 –see map

- A large part of the province, west of Highway 2 between Calgary and Edmonton and north of the Yellowhead Highway, saw significant spring rains, with many areas seeing well over 30 mm of precipitation, over the past few days.
- For those areas north of the Yellowhead Highway, this rain may be well received, given that soil moisture reserves in many of these areas were below normal, prior to this event.
- In contrast, many areas west of Highway 2 had near normal soil moisture reserves prior to this event, and may not have needed the extra moisture quite yet, as seeding is likely still underway.
- Of particular note is the area west of Highway 2 between Red Deer and Calgary. Some of these areas had soil moisture reserves estimated to be at least one in 6 to 12 year highs prior to the event. The extra 30 to 40 mm of precipitation has certainly pushed soil moisture reserves much higher here. These areas would clearly benefit from warm dry weather over the next few weeks.
- Across those areas that were previously dry (the extreme northern and central Peace Region) less than 5 mm was recorded over the past several days. They will need at least near normal moisture soon, in order to encourage good pasture growth and help in germinating newly seeded crops.
- The driest areas of the Central Region, through Camrose, Beaver and Flagstaff County, saw upwards of 20 mm, providing, at the very least, a brief respite to previously rising concerns surrounding a potential lack of moisture.

Perspective

- For those areas west of Red Deer, June and July are the wettest months of the year, on average seeing upwards of 100 mm each month. These areas should be noted as having a potential for “excess moisture”, if above average rainfall accumulations continue.

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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