

## Moisture Situation Update – July 9, 2014

### Synopsis:

Dry weather across parts of the central Peace Region has led to significant declines in soil moisture reserves over the past few weeks. Moisture reserves are estimated to be approaching one in 50-year lows across a relatively large area south of the Peace River, affecting Saddle Hills County, the M.D.'s of Fairview and Spirit River, and the eastern parts of the County of Grande Prairie, and central parts of Birch Hills County. Reports from the affected areas indicate that crop growth is just beginning to be affected and rains are needed immediately to insure moisture stress is minimized. Weather forecasts from Environment Canada are indicating hot dry weather will arrive on Friday and persist until at least Wednesday next week (July 16<sup>th</sup>).

Alberta's crop report (as of June 30<sup>th</sup>) is indicating that "83% of crops in the province are rated in good or excellent condition". Across the Peace Region this number drops to 62%, with 25% rated as fair. Likely those areas that are dry have been relying on dwindling stored moisture reserves and timely, albeit below average rainfalls.

### Precipitation accumulations over the past 60-days, as of July 9, 2014 –see map

- Several stations across the northern and central Peace Region have recorded less than 50 mm over the past 60 days with the least amount recorded at the Tompkins Landing AGCM station (18.7 mm) 40 Km southwest of Fort Vermillion and 33.8 mm at that Teepee Creek AGCM station 25 Km northeast of Grande Prairie. Normal accumulations for this same period are typically around 120 mm.
- Wetter conditions have prevailed across the northeast lake country including Lloydminster, Cold Lake, Lac La Biche and Smoky Lake, with several stations recording over 200 mm, which is 75 to 100 mm more than normal.
- Across southern Alberta, recent rains have brought the 60 day accumulations to well over 250 mm for several locations, south and west of Lethbridge, which is about 75 to 100 mm more than normal.

### Soil moisture reserves relative to long term normal, as of July 9, 2014–see map

- Soil moisture reserves are extremely low through the central and northern parts of the Peace Region, with a few small pockets north and northwest of Grande Prairie estimated to have reserves this low on average less than once in 50-years. Delayed seeding due to late snow melt, cool temperatures, and relatively high humidity of late, has helped alleviate the situation somewhat, but this area currently has little capacity to resist hot dry weather. Rain is needed here now.
- Areas with excessive moisture include much of the northeast lake country, with parts of the County of St. Paul and the M.D of Bonneville showing small pockets grading to one in 50 year highs.

### Interesting Facts

- Since May 1, the Hoselaw AGCM station, located about 10 km southwest of Bonnyville, reported 242 mm, almost 100mm more than the long term average.
- Since May 1, the Agteck AGCM station, in Lethbridge reported 272mm, which is about 120 mm more than the long term average.

**Additional maps** can be found at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca/maps](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/maps)

**Near-real-time hourly station** data can be viewed/downloaded at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations](http://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)

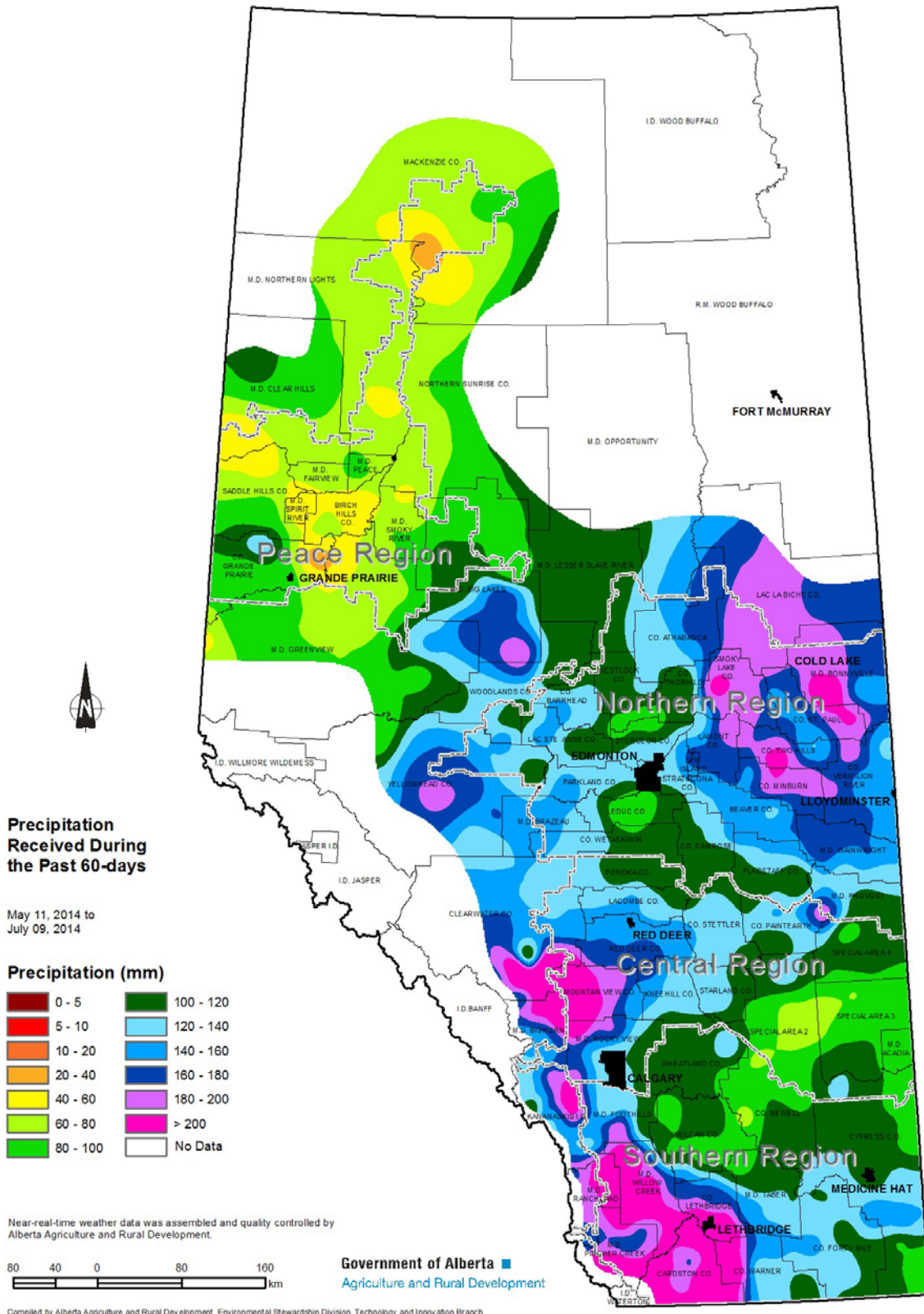
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