

Moisture Situation Update – August 13, 2014

Synopsis:

Across the central and northern parts of the Peace Region hot dry conditions continue to prevail, with many areas not seeing appreciable rains since about July 23. In these areas soil moisture reserves continue to be estimated to be extremely low, with 60-day temperatures (since June 7th) estimated to be this warm on average less than once in 50 years.

Recent rains across the Central Region have brought upwards of 80 mm to some locations in a series of storms through the early part of August. With the exception of parts of the Peace Region, most areas have seen adequate moisture this growing season, and more recently above average temperatures, which has sped crop growth, in the wake of a cool start to the spring. On June 30, temperatures rose above 35°C in many locations across the Southern Region.

Forecast from ESRD's Fire weather section (Special Thanks to Nick Nimchuck)

- Over the next few days, expect to see this high pressure ridge break down in the path of an upper low that will move into the province this weekend. Areas south of the Swan Hills, down as far as Calgary are expected to see some rain, with upwards of 20-30 mm through the Athabasca and Lac La Biche areas.
- Next week conditions are expected to continue to be cool and wet, generally province wide. While it's a little too early to tell, it looks like the Peace Region may see some rain as well, starting around the middle part of next week.

16-day precipitation accumulations as of August 13, 2014—see map

- Generally south of the TransCanada highway, precipitation totals over the past two weeks have generally been less than 20 mm, as hot dry weather has persisted.
- In sharp contrast, across the Central Region frequent shower activity has brought over 40 mm to most areas, with some locations reporting over 80 mm of rainfall.
- Across the Northern Region precipitation accumulations are highly variable, ranging from less than 5 mm through Lamont County to upwards of 40 mm around Lloydminster and 83 mm near Ferintosh (south of Camrose).
- Through the Peace Region precipitation totals have ranged from less than 1mm in some locations to just over 35 mm near Beaverlodge in the west.

Perspective

- Province wide, over all conditions have been quite favorable for growing crops, with the exception of parts of the Peace Region. Interestingly, through the Peace Region, Nick Nimchuck notes that fires have not been a major problem this year, due to the unusually high humidity, which he notes has originated generally from within Alberta's wetter areas. For the most part this has helped to suppress fire danger, and as well, in some cases, likely helped alleviate crop moisture stress to some extent.

Interesting Facts

- On July 30, measured temperatures exceeded 35°C at 25 locations throughout Southern Alberta. The highest recorded temperature was 36.8°C at the Medicine Hat Station.
- On August 2nd between 3 and 4 am, the Ferintosh AGCM station recorded 41.9 mm of rain in a single hour.
- Other stations that recorded major downpours over a single hour are Morrin AGDM 34.3 mm (Aug. 4th), Consort AGDM 31.4 mm (Aug. 1st), and Youngstown AGCM 30.0 mm (Aug. 4th).

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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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