

Crop Conditions as of September 10, 2009

Weather conditions during the last two weeks have been mainly warm and dry, despite some rainfall received in the northern areas of the province (North East, North West, and Peace Regions). The favorable conditions have helped advance crop maturity, and allowed harvest to progress. Provincially, 17 per cent of the 2009 crop is in the bin, compared to three per cent two weeks ago, and 35 per cent at this time, in most years. Additionally, 26 per cent of the crop is in the swath, with 57 per cent standing in the field. Combining is most advanced in the Southern Region at 32 per cent complete, while the Peace Region lags behind with six per cent. Table 1 below presents estimates of harvest progress, by region. Shown in Table 2 is the percentage of crops in the swath. The delay in harvest, coupled with a lack of moisture in many areas, could reduce the seeded acreage for winter cereals this fall.

Overall, provincial average yields for major grains and oilseeds are estimated to be significantly below their 10-year averages. For most specialty crops, which are grown primarily in the Southern Region, average to above average yields are expected. With respect to quality, grade estimates for major crops in the Southern Region are generally favorable, based on preliminary results of early samples. Elsewhere in the province, the majority of crops are still in the field, and weather conditions remain key with respect to quality. In general, crop development remains behind normal, with multiple growth stages and weed infestations reported in many fields. As a result of this, more swathing and desiccation are taking place this fall, compared to most years. Additionally, hailstorms and frost have caused crop damage in some local areas.

Harvest of second cut hay is estimated at 55 per cent complete on dryland, and 85 per cent under irrigation. Hay yields, with varying quality, are mostly below their 10-year averages. To help secure forage supplies, some cereals and canola are being harvested for forage production. Some of these crops either tend to have poor yield potentials or are too far behind in development to reach maturity for grain harvest. Straw baling is also reported in many areas. Additionally, pasture conditions in the province are rated as 59 per cent poor, 35 per cent fair, and six per cent good.

Grasshopper infestations remain a problem in some areas of the North East, North West and Peace Regions. Also, dry conditions remain largely unchanged in most areas of the province.

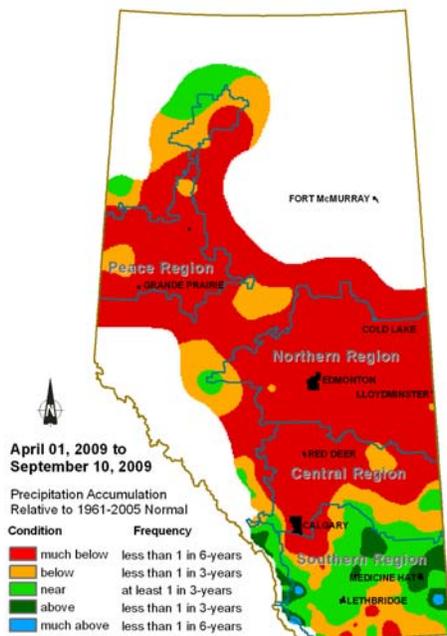


Table 1: Alberta Crops Harvested, as of Sept 10, 2009

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	30.2%	17.7%	11.8%	21.8%	3.8%	19.0%
Durum Wheat	33.2%	28.3%	11.8%	21.8%	3.8%	31.3%
Oats	18.9%	5.3%	0.8%	2.1%	0.2%	3.6%
Barley	30.0%	13.4%	9.6%	21.8%	12.5%	19.2%
Canola	20.4%	5.0%	0.4%	12.5%	1.4%	6.0%
Dry Peas	92.5%	83.8%	57.7%	52.1%	69.3%	77.4%
All Crops	32.1%	14.9%	8.5%	16.3%	5.8%	17.1%

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Table 2: Alberta Crops in the Swath, as of Sept 10, 2009

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	20.0%	21.3%	20.1%	19.6%	1.3%	17.9%
Durum Wheat	20.5%	32.5%	20.1%	19.6%	1.3%	21.9%
Oats	29.6%	27.0%	11.9%	5.7%	3.8%	14.0%
Barley	19.5%	24.7%	23.5%	20.4%	2.9%	20.7%
Canola	50.5%	38.9%	44.2%	43.9%	70.0%	50.2%
Dry Peas	1.5%	3.8%	4.6%	19.3%	4.5%	3.8%
All Crops	22.9%	26.1%	27.0%	25.8%	30.6%	26.0%

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2009 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- The recent hot, dry weather conditions have helped advance crop maturity and allowed harvest to progress rapidly. About 32 per cent of the crop has now been combined, with 23 per cent in the swath. Overall, yield estimates for major grains and oilseeds are below their 10-year averages, despite some eastern parts of the region reporting excellent yields. For most specialty crops, yield estimates range from average to above average. With respect to quality, grade estimates for major crops are generally favorable, based on preliminary results of early samples.
- Harvest of second cut hay is virtually completed. Hay yields range from below average to average, with quality rated as fair to excellent. Straw baling is reported in many areas. Additionally, producers are concerned about the lack of moisture, which could reduce the seeded acreage for winter cereals this fall.
- Pasture conditions are rated as 57 per cent poor, 34 per cent fair, and nine per cent good.

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- The warm, dry weather conditions during the last two weeks have been favorable for crop development and harvest operations. Nearly 15 per cent of the crop is already in the bin, and 26 per cent is in the swath. Estimated crop yields vary across the region, with poor yields reported mainly from eastern parts of the region. Some western areas of the region have reported significant yield losses, as a result of the hailstorm on August 3. Overall, crop yields are markedly below their 10-year averages. Some annual crops are being salvaged for forage production. Also, the seeding of winter cereals is underway.
- About one-third of the region is harvesting second cut hay, which is estimated at 60 per cent complete. Hay yields are generally below average, with quality ranging mostly from fair to good.
- Pasture conditions are reported as 43 per cent poor, 47 per cent fair, and ten per cent good.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- The recent warm weather conditions have helped advance crop maturity, and harvest is starting to progress. Overall, nine per cent of the crop has been combined, and 27 per cent is in the swath. Crop yields are estimated to be well below their 10-year averages in most areas of the region. As well, crop development remains behind normal, with multiple growth stages and weed infestations reported in many fields. Also, there is crop damage due to frost and the September 6 hailstorm. Grasshoppers remain a problem in some areas. Additionally, dry conditions prevail across the region.
- Some producers have started the second cut haying operation, and yields are generally poor.
- Pasture conditions are rated as 71 per cent poor, 27 per cent fair, and two per cent good.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- During the last two weeks, significant precipitation has been received in some northern parts of the region, while most other areas have reported light rain showers. Despite the rainfall, harvest has been progressing, and stands at 16 per cent complete, with another 26 per cent in the swath. Estimated crop yields are significantly below their 10-year averages. Strong winds and hailstorms have caused some crop damage, especially, for canola in the swath. Grasshoppers and gophers remain a problem in some areas.
- Harvest of second cut hay is estimated at 55 per cent complete, with yields significantly below average. Hay quality in the region varies, ranging mostly from poor to fair. Some annual cereals, mainly oats and barley, have been harvested for forage production.
- Pasture conditions are reported as 68 per cent poor, and 32 per cent fair.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- Rain showers have caused some delays in harvesting during the last two weeks. Overall, only six per cent of the crop has been combined, with 31 per cent in the swath (primarily canola). Crop yields in most areas of the region are projected to be below their 10-year averages. Some spring cereals are being harvested for forage production, as these crops are too far behind in development to reach maturity for grain harvest. Grasshoppers and frost have caused crop damage in some areas.
- In general, crop development remains behind normal. Dry, warm weather is needed, to hasten crop maturity, and allow harvest to progress.
- Pasture conditions are rated as 59 per cent poor, 30 per cent fair, and 11 per cent good.

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