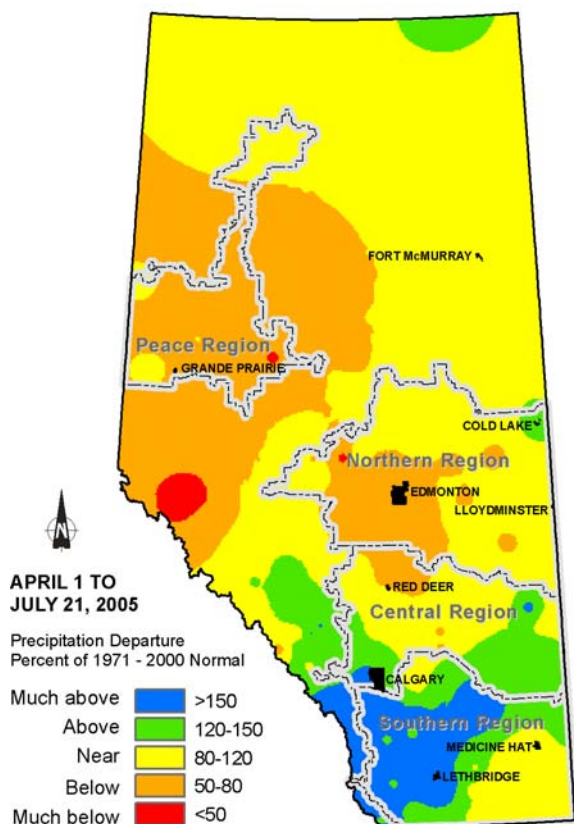


Crop Conditions as of July 21, 2005

Summer temperatures have finally made an appearance across Alberta; speeding up maturity of crops delayed by a cool, wet June. However, moisture has been scarce in the Peace region where the crops are showing some signs of drought stress. In mid July heavy hailstorms were reported to have caused severe damage to some areas in the Central and Southern parts of Alberta. Provincially, surface moisture is rated as 6% poor, 27% fair, 51% good, and 16% excellent, while rating of sub-surface moisture is 8% poor, 32% fair, 47% good, and 13% excellent. As crops move into the filling stage of development continued timely rainfall without the storms would be welcomed across the Province.

Major and specialty crops are mostly rated as being in good to excellent condition across most of the province. Spring cereals are mostly in the flowering stage and are rated as 2% poor, 14% fair, 63% good, and 21% excellent. A good to excellent rating is reported for winter cereals as well, which are mostly in soft to hard dough development. Canola on average is in the 50% flowering and 50% podding stage; it is rated at 4% poor, 22% fair, 58% good, and 16% excellent. Pulses have a big yield potential this season because of the cooler temperatures during flowering, they are rated at 3% poor, 10% fair, 50% good, and 37% excellent. Pulse development is reported as 45% flowered and 55% podded. And a good hand has finally been dealt to the eastern side of the province as “crops have not looked this good for many years”.



Pasture and tame hay growth is rated at 5% poor, 24% fair, 60% good, and 11% excellent. First cut haying operations are just over 50% complete. Scattered showers have delayed haying in some areas, but overall quality is looking good. Dryland yields are averaging 1.64 tons per acre and are rated as 14% poor, 30% fair, 44% good, and 12% excellent. Irrigated yields are averaging 2.44 tons per acre and are rated at 7% poor, 20% fair, 49% good, and 24% excellent.

Pest infestations across Alberta have been minimal. Fungicides for sclerotinia in canola and leaf diseases in cereals have been sprayed in some areas. Provincially, grasshoppers are reported at only 3.5% over threshold and Diamond-backed moths at 1.4% over threshold. Grasshopper hot spots have mainly occurred in the northern regions. Spraying for Diamond-backed moth larvae in canola has mainly happened in some areas in the southern region. Gophers continue to cause problems in pockets and are reported at 4% over threshold.

Special thanks go to members of the Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen and staff of AFSC for their contributions to the crop report.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2005 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

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

- Hot and dry weather with some scattered showers have been ideal for specialty crops, advancing crop maturity and haying, however, rain is needed because the soil surface is dry and to sustain the heavy, earlier seeded crops. Surface moisture is reported at 11% poor, 32% fair, 26% good, and 31% excellent.
- Crops overall look good and swathing of some winter cereals has started. Spring cereals rate at 53% good to 30% excellent; winter cereals rate at 67% good to 10% excellent; canola rates at 48% good to 23% excellent; and pulses rate at 50% good to 31% excellent.
- Haying is over 50% cut and baling and silaging is underway. Quality is reported as 4% poor, 28% fair, 49% good, and 19% excellent.
- Some canola has been sprayed for Diamond-backed moth larvae.
- Unsettled weather and heavy hailstorms occurred in some areas; damage is severe in the hardest hit areas.

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

- Crop conditions are the best they have been in years with cereals rated at 60% good to 20% excellent, canola rated at 62% good to 17% excellent, and pulses at 67% good to 22% excellent.
- Haying has been delayed due to some showers, yet it is 50% completed. Quality is rated at 10% poor, 30% fair, 48% good, and 11% excellent.
- Hailstorms have passed over much of the region and damage ranges from 10-100%, but surface moisture is rated at 5% poor, 26% fair, 52% good, and 17% excellent.

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

- All crops are looking very good and are advancing well. Cereals are rated as 74% good to 25% excellent, canola is rated at 65% good to 19% excellent and peas are rated as 76% good to 22% excellent.
- Surface moisture is reported at 5% poor, 17% fair, 68% good, and 10% excellent.
- First cut hay is nearing 50% completion with an average yield of 1.42 tons per acre. Rainfall has affected the quality, which is rated at 33% poor, 16% fair, 29% good, and 22% excellent.
- Grasshopper infestations are reported across the region, but this has not amounted to high levels of damage.
- Some canola has been sprayed for sclerotinia and leaf disease is showing up on many cereals.

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

- Crops have potential to be better than average throughout the region. Spring cereals are rated at 74% good to 16% excellent, winter cereals rate at 77% good to 11% excellent, canola rates at 67% good to 17% excellent, and peas are rated at 71% good to 14% excellent.
- Surface moisture is reported at 2% poor, 21% fair, 65% good, and 12% excellent.
- Spotty rainfall will continue to affect haying operations and quality. Yields are averaging 2.06 tons per acre and quality is rated at 7% poor, 20% fair, 53% good, and 20% excellent.
- Grasshopper pressure is rated at 6.5% over threshold for the region, but damage seems limited to barley and late seeded crops in the drier parts of the region.

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

- Most of the region is lacking moisture, crops are fairing well in areas and others are showing signs of drought stress. Surface moisture is 8% poor, 38% fair, 44% good, and 10% excellent.
- Crop conditions for cereals are 3% poor, 41% fair, 52% good, and 4% excellent. Canola is 10% poor, 42% fair, 46% good and 2% excellent. Peas are rated at 7% poor, 37% fair, 54% good, and 2% excellent.
- Haying is 65% completed with yields averaging 2.15 tons per acre. Quality is reported at 8% poor, 44% fair, 46% good, and 2% excellent.
- Spraying for grasshoppers is occurring in some areas as the region is rated at 9.2% over threshold levels.

**Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Statistics & Data Development Unit
July 25, 2005**

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