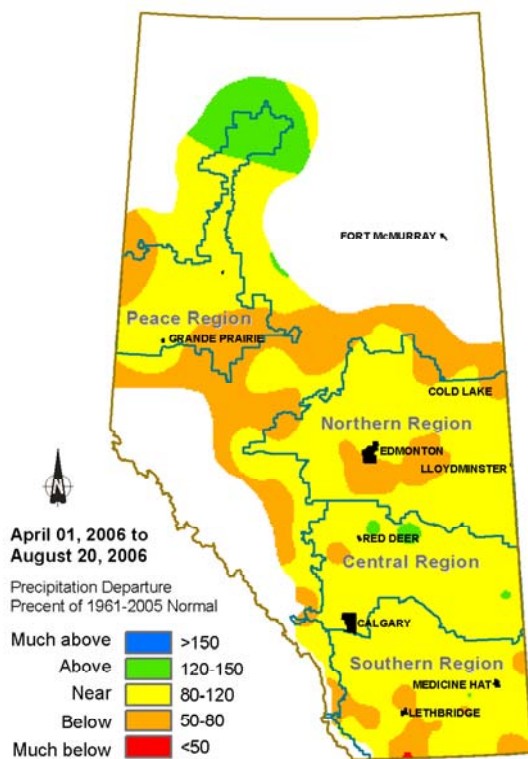


Crop Conditions as of August 17, 2006

Harvest in Alberta has begun early this year and stands at about 5% complete. This is about 10-15 days ahead of most years. Overall, crop yields are estimated to be down considerably from a year ago, reflecting the impact of hot, dry weather conditions in July. Recent hailstorms have caused crop damage, particularly in the Central Region. However, provincial average yields are still projected to be on par with 10-year averages for spring wheat, barley, oats and dry peas, and above 10-year averages for canola and durum wheat.

The Southern Region is the most advanced with 15% of combining completed, followed by the Peace Region at 5%. Elsewhere, harvest progress is estimated to be less than 5%. By crop type, estimates of provincial harvest progress are: dry peas 35%, durum 10%, barley and spring wheat 5%, oats and canola 1%. Additionally, crops in the swath are estimated to be: canola 40%, durum 20%, dry peas and barley 15, spring wheat and oats 10%. Over 40% of winter cereals are in the bin, with yields ranging mostly from average to above average. Harvest of specialty crops under irrigation has begun in the Southern Region, and yield prospects remain strong for dry beans, potatoes and sugar beets.



Scattered rain showers have been hampering haying operations. Some producers are still wrapping up the first cut, with yields being above average. The second cut is estimated at 20% complete on dryland and over 70% complete under irrigation. Due to hot, dry conditions in July, hay yields on dryland are below average, while yields are average under irrigation. With respect to silage and greenfeed production, yields vary significantly across the province. Additionally, pasture conditions in Alberta are reported as 29% poor, 38% fair, 29% good, and 4% excellent.

Most areas of the province remain dry. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 25% poor, 35% fair, 34% good, and 6% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is 30% poor, 30% fair, 35% good, and 5% excellent.

There are reports of spraying for bertha armyworms in the North East Region. Also reported are some pest problems with gophers, lygus bugs, flea beetles, army cutworms, root maggots, and other insects. Overall, crop damage from pests this year is less severe than in most years.

Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen and staff of AFSC for the partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2006 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

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

- Harvest is well underway and is estimated at 15% complete in the region. Additionally, nearly 20% of the crop is in the swath. In general, yield estimates are down from a year ago, but remain above the 10-year averages. There are numerous reports of crop damage from hailstorms, sawflies, lygus bugs, and cabbage seedpod weevils. Silaging, mainly of spring cereals, is near completion.
- Combining of fall-seeded cereals is about two-thirds complete, with yields mostly ranging from average to above average. Harvest of specialty crops has begun, and yield prospects remain strong for dry beans, potatoes and sugar beets.
- The second cut haying operation is estimated at 45% complete on dryland and 75% complete under irrigation.
- Due to lack of precipitation, soil moisture, pasture and standing hay have been deteriorating.

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

- Harvesting has just begun, and is estimated at only 1% complete in the region. The recent rain showers have been hampering harvesting operations. Overall, yield prospects are estimated to be on par with 10-year averages for spring cereals, but above the 10-year average for canola. Hailstorms have caused significant crop damage, with severe yield losses reported in some areas (including Lacombe/Red Deer).
- Most producers are still wrapping up the first cut hay crop, although the second cut has begun in some areas. The recent rain showers have caused some losses in hay quality.
- Soil moisture, pasture and standing hay vary in condition, ranging mostly from fair to good.

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

- Combining is about 3% complete in the region. Nearly 45% of dry peas is in the bin, while harvest of other crops is minimal. For canola, about 1% has been combined, and 35% is in the swath. Overall, yield prospects range from near average for spring cereals to above average for canola.
- There are reports of crop damage from hailstorms and spraying for the control of bertha armyworms.
- In some areas, the second cut haying operation has begun, and yields are below average.
- Soil moisture and pasture conditions range mostly from poor to good.

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

- Harvest is estimated to be about 2% complete in the region. Crops in the bin are mostly dry peas, with an estimated 22% being combined. About 1% of canola is in the bin and 46% in the swath. Overall, yield prospects are estimated to be below 10-year averages for spring cereals and canola.
- The second cut haying operation is 12% complete. Pasture conditions range from poor to good.

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

- Combining is about 5% complete in the region. Nearly 20% of dry peas are in the bin, while harvest is 5% complete for spring wheat and barley. For canola, about 55% is in the swath and combining is expected to begin in 10-15 days. Overall, yield prospects range from below average to average for spring cereals. For canola, yields are expected to be above average. Crop yield prospects vary considerably across the region, and are estimated to be above average in the northern parts, but well below average in the western areas along the B.C. border. Also reported are light bushel weights for cereals, and crop damage from hail.
- The second cut haying operation is nearly 60% complete. Pasture conditions range from poor to good.

**Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Statistics & Data Development Unit
August 23, 2006**

**Chuanliang Su, Crop Statistician
E-mail chuanliang.su@gov.ab.ca
Phone: (780) 422-2887**

Note to Users: The contents of this document may not be used or reproduced without properly accrediting the Department of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Economics and Competitiveness Division, Statistics and Data Development Unit.

The 2006 Alberta crop reporting series is available on the Internet at: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191)