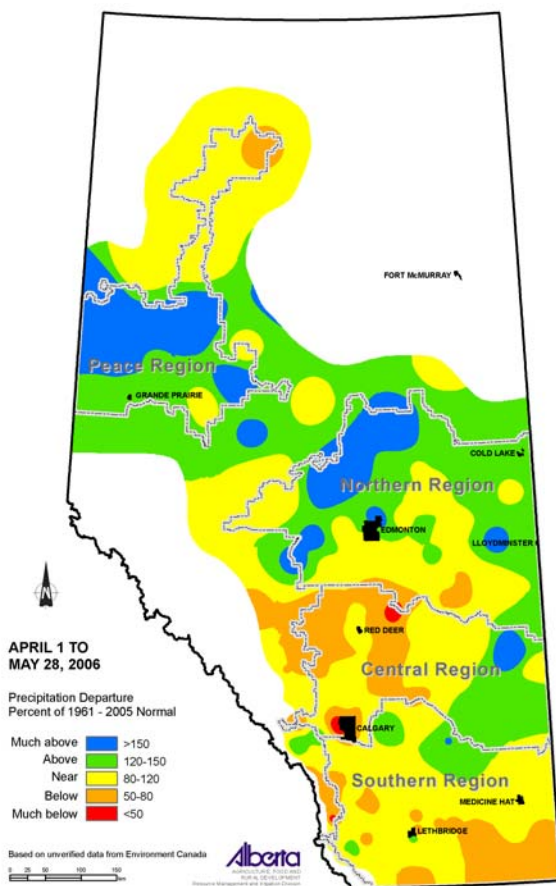


Crop Conditions as of May 25, 2006

Welcome to the 2006 Alberta crop reporting series. The delivery of the Alberta Crop Reporting Program is again being done in partnership with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) and a number of Agricultural Fieldmen. The release schedule of 2006 Alberta crop reports is available on the Ropin' the Web at: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191)

Crops and pasture this year are off to a good start in most areas of the province. Favorable growing conditions, including adequate moisture reserves and above normal temperatures, allowed early seeded crops to germinate quite well. Additionally, pasture and tame hay are showing good growth. Resulting from the recent rains, soil moisture conditions have been improving in the Peace Region. However, warm winds, in conjunction with lack of rainfall, have caused significant depletion of surface moisture in the Southern and Central Regions. Provincially, surface moisture is rated as 4% poor, 15% fair, 45% good, and 36% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is 5% poor, 17% fair, 50% good, and 28% excellent.

Alberta producers have now planted 87% of the 2006 crop, in line with seeding progress in most years. The Peace Region is the most advanced with 97% of seeding completed, followed by the Southern and Central Regions at 90%. The Northeast Region lags behind, with only 77% of seeding completed, while in the Northwest Region, it is about 85% complete. Wet fields could delay the completion of seeding to early June in the Northeast Region, while in most other areas, seeding is expected to be wrapped up by the end of May.



Estimates of provincial seeding progress by crop are as follows: dry peas nearly 100%, spring wheat and durum wheat 95%, canola 92%, barley 77%, and oats 70%. Seeding of specialty crops, which are grown primarily in southern Alberta, is virtually complete. Early seeded crops have emerged or are emerging. Spraying for post-emergent weed control has just begun.

With the recent moisture received, pasture and tame hay in the Peace Region are improving, and are rated mostly as fair or good. In most other areas, pasture and tame hay are developing nicely. Provincially, pasture is rated as 5% poor, 20% fair, 55% good, and 20% excellent, while a slightly better rating is reported for tame hay.

In terms of soil erosion, most noticeable damage came from strong winds, although spring runoff was also problematic in some areas of the province this spring. Some insect problems/concerns are also reported. In general, Alberta producers have adequate supplies of feed grains and forages.

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)

- Above normal temperatures and warm winds helped wet fields to dry and allowed seeding to progress rapidly. Overall, seeding of major crops is estimated at 90% complete in the region, and should be wrapped up by the end of May. The southwestern parts of the region lag behind with only 50-70% of seeding completed. Due to various factors, reseeding occurred in some areas.
- Planting of specialty crops is virtually complete, with the exception of dry beans, which is about three-quarters complete.
- Warm winds, in conjunction with lack of rainfall, depleted much of the surface moisture reserves in many areas. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 5% poor, 29% fair, 46% good, and 20% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is 3% poor, 11% fair, 60% good, and 26% excellent. Irrigation is currently being applied in the region.
- About three-quarters of pasture and over 80% of tame hay are rated as good or excellent.

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

- Seeding is estimated at about 90% complete in the region.
- Significant depletion of surface moisture also occurred in this region, due to high temperatures and lack of precipitation. However, moisture reserves remain adequate in most areas of the region. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 4% poor, 18% fair, 54% good, and 24% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 3% poor, 9% fair, 38% good, and 50% excellent.
- Pasture and tame hay are developing nicely and are rated mostly as good or excellent.

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

- Seeding is delayed due to rains, and excessive moisture in some areas. Overall, seeding is estimated at about 77% complete in the region.
- Moisture conditions remain very favorable in the region, but some fields are still too wet for seeding. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 5% fair, 46% good, and 49% excellent. Sub-surface moisture is reported as 5% fair, 64% good, and 31% excellent.
- In general, pasture and tame hay are rated as good or excellent.

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

- Recent rains slowed seeding progress in the region, which is estimated at about 85% complete.
- Some areas in the region remain dry. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 11% poor, 15% fair, 37% good, and 37% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 14% poor, 17% fair, 50% good, and 19% excellent.
- Over 70% of pasture and tame hay are rated as good or excellent.

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

- Timely rain showers brought much needed moisture and significantly improved soil moisture conditions, particularly at the surface level. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 4% fair, 38% good, and 58% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is 5% poor, 43% fair, 43% good, and 9% excellent.
- Seeding is estimated at 97% complete in the region. Crops still to be seeded are mainly oats, barley and some canola. Some alfalfa winterkill is reported, partly due to lack of snow cover.
- Pasture and tame hay are improving, and are rated mostly as fair or good.

**Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Statistics & Data Development Unit
May 30, 2006**

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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)