

Alberta Crop Report



Crop Conditions as of August 13, 2019

This Crop Report is in memory of James Wright, who contributed hugely to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program since 2002 and passed away on August 8, 2019.

Frequent rain since July accompanied with cool temperature increased excessive soil moisture particularly in the North East and North West Regions. Hailstorms damaged some mature crops in southern parts of the province and destroyed some field crops in other areas. Additionally, a light frost occurred in the western to central parts of the Peace Region, with the lowest recorded temperature at -1°C (See map on the next page). There are concerns of yield and quality loss if a frost happens again, particularly for vulnerable canola fields that are still in the flowering stage across the province. Forecasted warmer temperatures and sunny days will be welcomed to help crops mature and reduce excessive soil moisture into the harvest season.

Provincial crop condition ratings declined slightly from the previous crop report, two weeks ago. Currently, 67 per cent of crops in Alberta are in good or excellent condition, compared to the 5-year average (2014-2018) of 60 per cent (see Table 1). Regionally, crop conditions in the North East and North West Regions declined respectively, by two and nine per cent, due to excessive moisture and cool temperature. For the Central and Peace Regions, crop conditions improved, while it almost remained unchanged in the Southern Region.

Harvest operations have begun in the Southern Region and for fall-seeded crops in the Central. Spring-seeded cereals are behind in the Central, North East and North West Regions, due to wet weather conditions. Provincially, the estimated dryland yield index declined from primary estimates and is now five per cent above the 5-year average (See Table 2). The index is skewed by higher than normal yields in the Central, Peace and North East Regions, which offset below normal yields in the Southern and North West Regions. Yield index in the Southern Region is 14 per cent below the 5-year average due to the dry spring, while in the North West Region is eight per cent below average due to excessive moisture.

Table 1: Regional Crop Condition Ratings as of August 13, 2019

	Per cent rated in Good to Excellent Condition					
	South	Central	N East	N West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat*	53.4%	83.1%	86.3%	49.9%	70.1%	71.3%
Durum Wheat	38.3%	38.2%	---	---	---	38.3%
Winter Wheat	44.0%	43.4%	93.5%	---	---	44.3%
Barley*	54.4%	87.8%	79.9%	47.2%	69.3%	70.4%
Oats*	57.4%	78.3%	81.9%	53.1%	65.9%	68.7%
Fall Rye	84.5%	68.4%	94.3%	---	---	74.3%
Spring Triticale	40.0%	49.2%	---	---	---	47.7%
Canola*	53.7%	85.4%	81.4%	43.1%	66.4%	69.3%
Dry Peas*	49.1%	73.6%	79.7%	38.1%	66.4%	61.6%
Lentils	27.7%	39.5%	---	---	---	29.6%
Chickpeas	26.3%	25.0%	---	---	---	26.2%
Flax	57.7%	67.2%	100.0%	---	---	64.1%
Potatoes	93.4%	100.0%	---	---	---	88.6%
All Crops, August 13	50.2%	81.9%	83.0%	46.1%	67.7%	67.1%
All Crops, 5-year Average	52.4%	57.3%	73.1%	61.4%	58.9%	60.4%
All Crops, 10-year Average	63.9%	65.2%	70.8%	62.6%	57.8%	65.0%

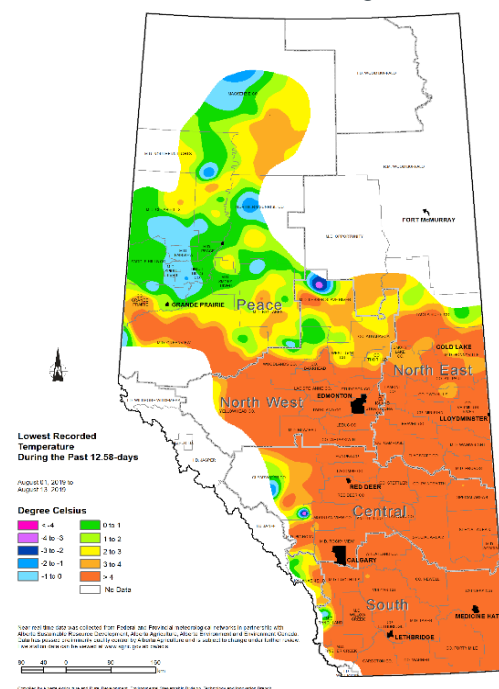
Source: AF/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey

Pasture and tame hay growth conditions showed some improvements in the Central and North East Region. However, it declined in the Southern Region due to continuing dry conditions and in the Peace and North West Regions due to wet and cool conditions. Some producers in areas with excessive moisture are silaging their hay in order to prevent rotting. The Provincial average yield for first cut dryland hay is estimated at 1.4 tons per acre, which is just above the 5-year average of 1.3 tons per acre. However, over the past five years, 94 per cent of first cut hay across the province has been baled by this time of year, while in the current year only 62 per cent of haying is finished. Haying is particularly behind in the North East, North West and Peace Regions. Also, the quality of the baled dryland hay is rated as 43 per cent good to excellent compared to the 5-year average of 68 per cent good to excellent. First cut haying in irrigated fields is virtually complete, with yield at 2.2 tons per acre (down from the 5-year average of 2.4 tons per acre) and quality is rated as 72 per cent good to excellent. Second cut haying operations are underway only in the Southern and Central Regions for both dryland and irrigated hay.

Table 2: Dryland Yield Estimates (Major Crops) as of August 13, 2019

	Estimated Yield (bushel/acre)					
	South	Central	N East	N West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	34.5	56.3	52.5	53.6	48.2	49.2
Durum Wheat	27.2	30.2	---	---	---	27.6
Barley	45.4	82.1	78.9	61.2	61.8	67.4
Canola	30.3	44.4	44.5	38.9	39.7	40.5
Dry Pease	29.5	43.8	44.8	43.1	46.5	39.3
5-year Yield Index	86.2%	115.9%	110.6%	92.4%	115.8%	104.6%
10-year Yield Index	81.4%	118.3%	117.9%	94.6%	119.1%	106.4%

Source: AF/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey



Regional Assessments:

The 2019 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

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

- Weather turned cooler in some counties, delaying harvest operations. Hailstorms in the first week of August damaged some mature crops. Peas in some fields are being desiccated. Harvest in most areas is underway, with about 10 per cent of crops now in the bin. Some of the poorer crops that did not germinate well in the spring or grow well over the season are being cut for silage or greenfeed, baled, plowed down or in some cases abandoned.
- First cut haying operations for both dryland and irrigated land are virtually complete, with respectively 52 and 72 per cent rated as good to excellent quality. Average yield on dryland is estimated at 1.0 ton per acre and 2.1 tons per acre on irrigated land, both lower than the 5-year averages. Second cut haying operations are underway.
- Pastures have been impacted by dryness and hot winds. Pasture growing conditions are now reported as 27 per cent poor, 38 per cent fair, 31 per cent good and four per cent excellent.

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

- Most areas in the region have had excellent growing conditions over the past two weeks and potential yields are mainly strong. Crops are filling well, but are about a week to 10 days behind due to cool temperatures and lack of sunlight in July. Hail damage was reported as severe for some fields. More heat is welcome to finish ripening for harvest. Excessive moisture has increased disease pressure, particularly in dry peas.

- First cut haying operation progress is at 75 per cent for dryland and 85 per cent for irrigated land and second cut is underway. Average yield is estimated at 1.3 and 2.5 tons per acre respectively for dryland and irrigated, both above the 5-year averages. Quality is rated as 58 per cent good to excellent for dryland hay and 75 per cent for irrigated.
- Hay and pasture growing conditions improved from the last report. Pasture growing conditions are reported as 23 per cent poor, 26 per cent fair and 51 per cent good, with similar ratings for tame hay.

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

- All spring-seeded crops are in need of warm weather as cool wet weather has slowed maturity. There are some drowned out and yellowed crops from excess water. Hailstorms in the first week of August damaged some crops.
- Hay yields are reported above the 5-year average, but haying operations are hampered by wet conditions. First cut haying operations are only 47 per cent complete, with the average yield estimated at 1.7 ton per acre compared to the 5-year average of 1.5 tons per acre. The quality is rated as 33 per cent good to excellent. The chance for second cut hay is minimal.
- Surface soil moisture is rated at four per cent fair, 49 per cent good, 30 per cent excellent and 17 per cent excessive.
- Pasture conditions are reported as two per cent poor, 13 per cent fair, 57 per cent good and 28 per cent excellent.

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

- Crops in parts of the region with excessive moisture have deteriorated with roots rotting and disease pressure increasing. Yield potential is impacted by wet conditions, but varies depending on the field topography, soil type, seeding date and the actual rain the crop received. Hailstorms in the first week of August hit some fields in the region.
- Haying operations are delayed in the region, with only 29 per cent of first cut hay complete, compared to the five-year average of 93 per cent complete by this time of the year. The yield for the baled portion of the first cut hay is reported at 1.7 tons per acre, on par with the 5-year average, with the quality reported at only 14 per cent good or excellent. There are some hay fields that were cut but are not yet baled due to the excessive moisture. Hay in these fields is rotting. There will not be any second cut hay, considering the delay in the first cut.
- As a result of frequent rain, cool temperatures and lack of sunlight over the last month, soil moisture ratings are now reported at 11 per cent good, 50 per cent excellent and 39 per cent rated excessive.
- Pasture growing condition deteriorated from July, but are still in good to excellent condition. About 14 per cent of pastures are rated as fair, while 36 per cent are good and 50 per cent are excellent.

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

- The reported frost in the western to central parts of the region was a light one. However, it could negatively impact yield and quality of cereals, particularly wheat in the dough development stage, and could damage canola crops still in the flowering stage.
- First cut haying operations are 49 per cent complete with the average yield estimated at 1.3 tons per acre, which is in line with the 5-year average. Quality is rated as 49 per cent good to excellent.
- Pasture conditions reported as seven per cent poor, 38 per cent fair, 46 per cent good and nine per cent excellent.

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