

Alberta Crop Report



Crop Conditions as of May 7, 2019

Provincially, seeding progress is a little more than 16 per cent completed which exceeds the five year average. Planting is underway in the South and Central areas of Alberta. Producers in South area are undoubtedly ahead of the previous five year average seeding progress at 48 per cent with Central at 7 per cent, which is slightly behind their historical pace. As expected, sowing operations are just starting in the North East, North West and Peace areas. (See Table 1). Fall seeded crops in Alberta are up and looking good with ratings of 71 per cent good or excellent.

The over winter precipitation was lower than normal in most regions. Thankfully a spring turnaround brought snow and rain provincially. Snow pack accumulations as of April 30th were near normal and regions in the west side of the province were above. In terms of April temperatures, the South and Central regions were up to 4 degrees colder than normal. The North East and North West were up to 2 degrees cooler and the peace region ranged from 2 to 8 degrees warmer than normal. The short term forecast shows temperatures in the high teens to low 20's across Alberta with forecasted moisture in the southern end of the province.

As a result of the cooler spring temperatures and late snow, tame hay and pasture growth have had a slow start this year. Tame hay growth is currently 38 per cent good or excellent as compared to the five year average of 58 per cent. Pasture growth is at 34 per cent, whereas the historical average was 56 per cent rated as good or higher. Although feed is in tight supply for many, forage reserve feedback indicates that approximately 60 per cent of producers have adequate forage to get them through the next few weeks until grazing can begin.

Table 1: Alberta Seeding Progress as of May 7, 2019

	% Seeded					
	South	Central	N East	N West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	45.4%	11.9%	2.8%	1.9%	3.7%	15.3%
Durum Wheat	68.8%	7.3%	---	---	---	60.7%
Barley	41.1%	1.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.7%	13.4%
Oats	37.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	2.8%
Canola	18.9%	1.7%	0.1%	0.6%	1.4%	4.1%
Dry Peas	76.6%	27.3%	16.3%	3.3%	4.5%	37.8%
Mustard	64.3%	0.0%	---	---	---	41.8%
Flax	36.0%	0.0%	0.0%	---	---	21.8%
Potatoes	86.2%	0.0%	---	0.0%	---	77.2%
Dry Beans	0.0%	---	---	---	---	0.0%
Chickpeas	84.5%	0.0%	---	---	---	82.5%
Lentils	90.4%	2.5%	---	---	---	75.9%
Mixed Grain	15.0%	0.1%	0.0%	---	---	0.4%
Average	48.2%	6.8%	2.1%	1.1%	2.4%	16.4%
Last Year	1.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
5-year Average	27.8%	10.2%	1.7%	1.2%	2.6%	11.1%

Source: AF/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey

Precipitation during the growing season relative to normal indicates the western side of the province is near to above normal while the eastern edge, including part of the Peace area, did not fare quite as well (See the Map).

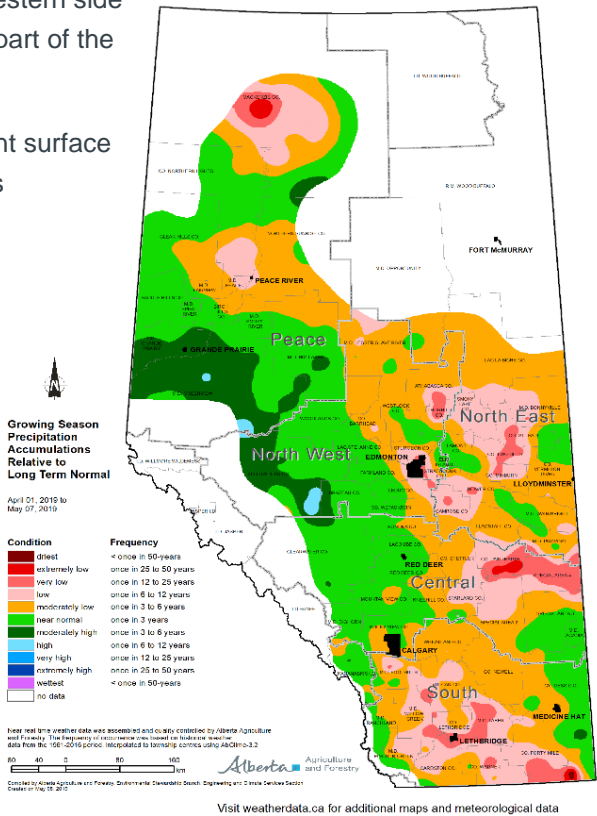
Observers estimate 69 per cent of the province as having good or excellent surface soil moisture (See Table 2). Only 9 per cent of sub-surface soil moisture is estimated as poor; 26 fair; 48 good; 14 excellent and 3 per cent estimated as excessive.

Table 2: Surface Soil Moisture Ratings as of May 7, 2019

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Excessive
South	13.7%	27.3%	51.6%	7.3%	---
Central	7.2%	18.1%	64.8%	9.9%	---
North East	0.8%	33.2%	49.5%	13.7%	2.8%
North West	---	11.7%	58.5%	24.1%	5.6%
Peace	---	4.4%	51.9%	25.3%	18.5%
Alberta	5.8%	21.9%	54.8%	13.7%	3.8%
5-year Average	4.2%	15.9%	40.9%	31.0%	7.9%

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)

- Below average winter precipitation occurred right across the region, while temperatures since early January have been cooler than the long term normal. There are also some reports of moderate soil erosion from wind.
- Seeding has progressed in fits and starts due to rain or snow events, but is currently well ahead of the five year average. Approximately 16 per cent has emerged as of May 7, with a few tips being touched by frost.
- Fall crops are in good condition with 81 per cent observed as good or excellent.
- Sub-surface soil moisture is estimated as only 44 per cent good or excellent as a result of last year's climate.
- Cool dry conditions have delayed the emergence of hay and pasture with 53 per cent of hay and 45 per cent of pasture rated as good or excellent.

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

- Winter precipitation was below normal throughout Central region with moderately cool temperatures since early January.
- Seeding progress is estimated to be slightly behind the five year average due to continued cool temperatures and inclement weather events.
- Crops sown last fall are reported as 66 per cent in good to excellent condition.
- Sub-surface soil moisture is estimated as 52 per cent good or excellent as a result of 2018's lack of moisture.
- Hay and pasture are slow starting. An estimated 35 per cent of hay and 33 per cent pasture rated as good, with zero rated excellent.

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

- This region also experienced lower than average precipitation during the winter months, with the exception of a small area on the western side. Moderately cool temperatures prevailed since early January.
- Producers have gotten a good start on seeding peas and have just begun sowing spring wheat.
- Fall seeded crops in this area are described as 62 per cent being in good or excellent status.
- Sub-surface soil moisture is estimated as 76 per cent good or excellent.
- Hay and pasture growth is held up with only 21 and 20 per cent respectively reported as good or excellent.

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

- Precipitation was rather more varied in the North West with the central portion near normal, and the north and east edges slightly below. Temperatures since early January have been relatively cool.
- Following the historical planting pattern, seeding has only just begun in this region.
- There is still a small amount of acres from 2018 that remain unharvested in the western portion of this region, with pockets of standing water in low places.
- Sub-surface soil moisture is rated as 89 per cent good or excellent and approximately 6 per cent excessive.
- Ongoing cooler temperatures and snow have deferred perennial growth significantly and little has emerged.

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

- A small part of the south area of this region realized near normal precipitation over winter, while the central and north was below normal. Near normal temperatures reigned across much of the region with some moderately cooler temperatures in the southern part since early January.
- Weekend snow hampered seeding, but the warming trend has allowed planting operations to get underway with minimal acres of peas and spring wheat reported in the ground.
- Sub-surface soil moisture is estimated as 75 per cent good or excellent, with a further 14 per cent excessive.
- Pasture in this region is reported as 64 per cent good or excellent with hay at 68 per cent.

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