

## Moisture Situation Update – October 17, 2013

### Synopsis

An unusually cool start to this year's growing season had many wondering if spring would ever come to Alberta. However, as usual, the weather did an abrupt "about face" and the snows quickly gave way to generally ideal growing conditions throughout most of the agricultural areas of the province. Areas that experienced seeding delays early on were rewarded with a warm and dry fall, perfect for maturing late seeded crops and aiding harvesting operations.

### Fall Precipitation Accumulations Relative to Normal (September 1 to October 17) -see map

- Areas south of the Trans-Canada Highway have seen at least near normal accumulations, with large areas of the southeast and southwest experiencing wet conditions, seen on average, less than once in 12 to 25 years.
- In contrast, most areas north of Red Deer and south of Slave Lake have been unusually dry, with a large area seeing conditions this dry on average less than once in 12 to 25 years. Some areas south of Lloydminster and west of Edmonton have been extremely dry, (less than once in 50-years).
- Generally across the Peace Region, this fall has seen near normal accumulations across the extreme north, grading to very low (once in 12 to 25 years), across the southeast.

### Soil Moisture Reserves Relative to Long-Term Normal as of October 17th -see map

- September generally marks the beginning of the soil moisture recharge cycle in Alberta, a cycle that generally lasts unto the early part of June. Soil moisture reserves are critical to crop growth, especially during short (a week or two) episodes of hot dry weather.
- Generally, soil moisture reserves are at least above normal south of the Trans-Canada highway.
- North of the TransCanada highway, extending well into the southern Peace Region, soil moisture reserves for this time of year are well below normal, with many areas throughout the north-central parts of the province classified as having reserves this low less than once in 12 years.
- Across the Peace Region soil moisture reserves, range from near normal in the central and western parts of the region, to low and very low across parts of the northern and southern portions of the region.

### Perspective

- While soil moisture reserves may be extremely low in some areas, there is still ample time to replenish these reserves ahead of next growing season.

### Interesting facts

- We are currently losing about 4-minutes of daylight each day. This maximum rate of daylight loss starts about mid-August and extends to about November 1st.
- By December 1st, we are only losing about 2-minutes per day.
- By January 1st we are seeing day length increase by about 1 minute per day. By February 1st daylight is increasing by about 3-minutes per day.
- Think positively.... In less than 10 weeks the days will be getting longer again!

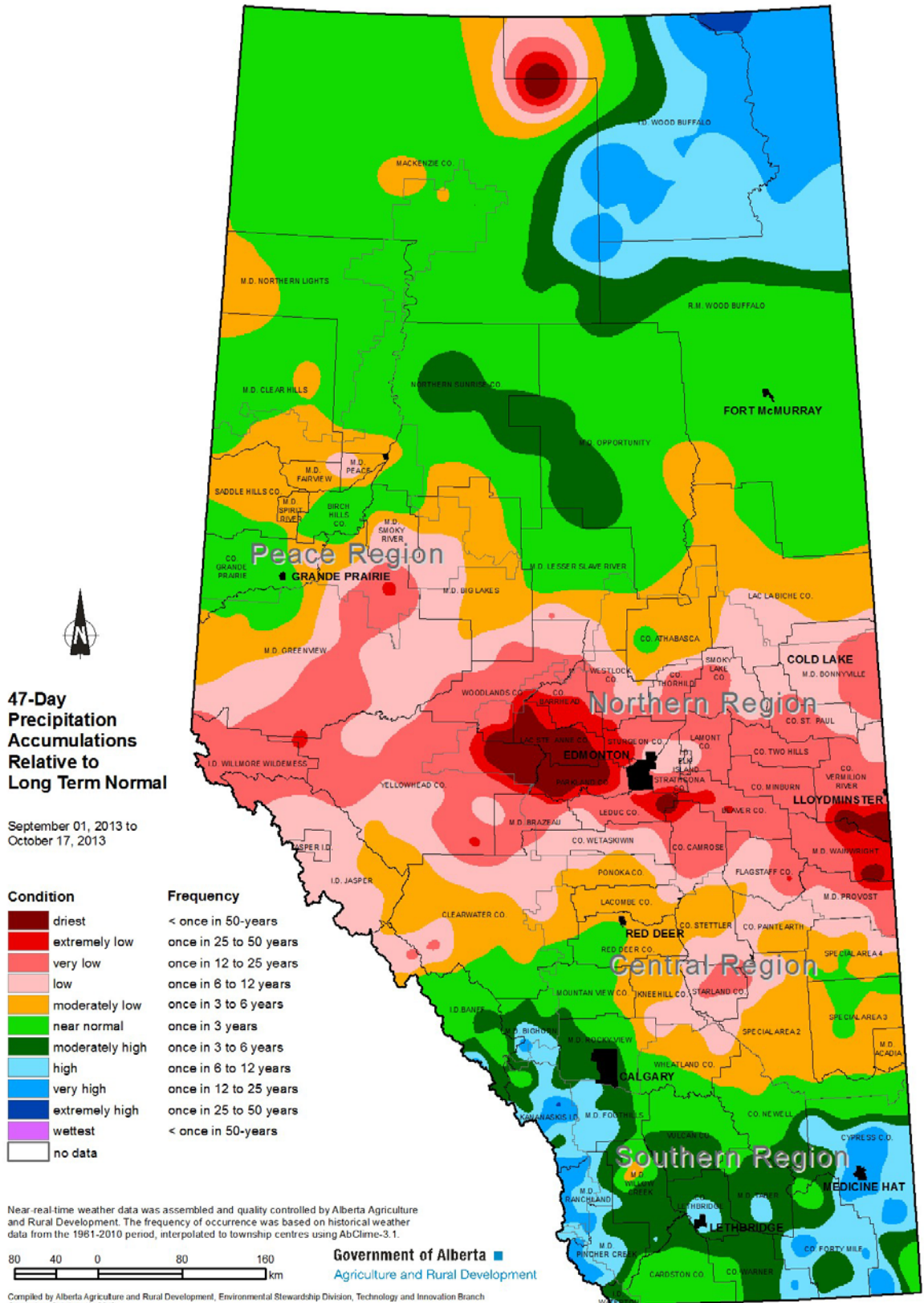
**Additional Maps** can be found at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca/maps](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/maps)

**Near-real-time hourly station data** can be viewed/downloaded at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations)

**Note:** Data has about a two hour lag and is displayed in MST (add one hour for daylight savings time)

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