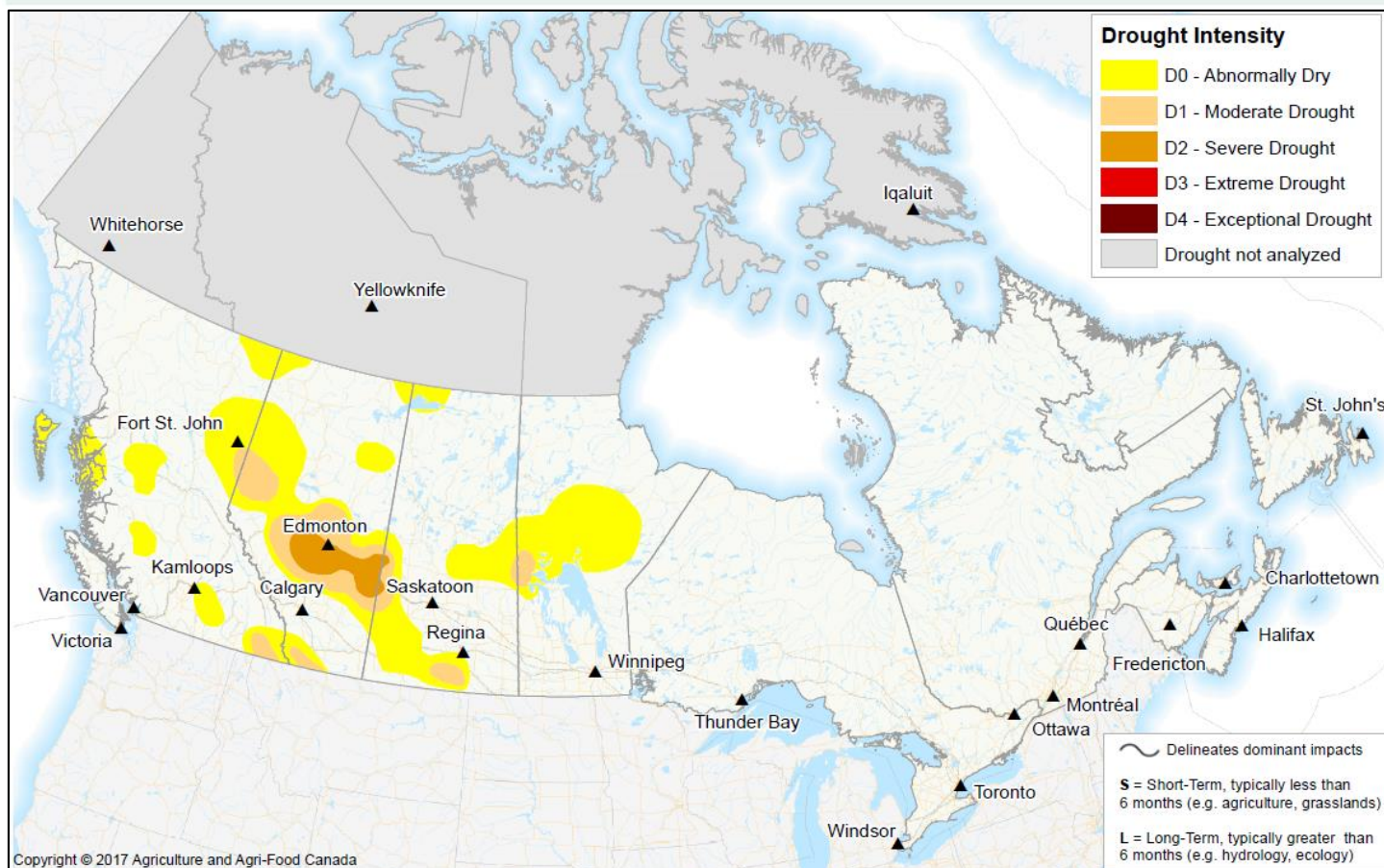


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of December 31, 2008



Abnormally cold and lots of snow best described December for most of Canada. For the first time in over 30 years, all of Canada saw a white Christmas. In Western Canada, a cold arctic air mass settled in and monthly temperatures plummeted more than 6 degrees Celsius below normal. The lower mainland of British Columbia saw near record snow fall amounts, which was in direct contrast to much of the Prairie region where Drought continues to be a concern. Dry conditions continue to persist throughout regions in the northwest and central Alberta, southern Saskatchewan and west central Manitoba. Some areas which saw small improvements included west central Alberta and southeastern British Columbia. Regions which saw little or no improvement due to very low monthly precipitation include west central Manitoba and west central Alberta.

Pacific Region (BC)



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Southern coastal regions of British Columbia received near record monthly snow fall, with most (88 cm) falling in a two week period near the end of the month. Although monthly precipitation was still near normal, the region is still below normal over the past 3-6 months. The Northern coastal regions, including the Queen Charlotte Islands and adjacent coasts, reported considerably lower, at 60-85% of normal over the last 6 months, with some areas near record low for the 4 month time frame. Adjacent areas to the east, including the Williams Lake area, remained dry, receiving 40-60% of normal precipitation. These areas both remain classified as Abnormally Dry (D0). The British Columbia Peace Region continued to receive near normal precipitation, resulting in a reduction of the Abnormally Dry (D0) and Moderate Drought (D1) classifications. Even though the area surrounding Kamloops and south to the US border has received above average precipitation in the last 30 days, and slightly above normal from the past 3 months, it is still classified as Abnormally Dry (D0) due to low stream flows (40-60 percent of normal). The Kootenay region, including Cranbrook, remained well below normal, with much of the region receiving less than 10 mm of precipitation, only 1/6 of the normal December precipitation. Stream flows in this region are also significantly below normal, causing this area to slip back into a Moderate Drought (D1) classification.

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

Above normal precipitation throughout southern, northern and parts of the west central Alberta improved conditions, however, east central regions of the province continued to receive well below normal precipitation. Above normal monthly precipitation stretched north from Calgary along the foothills where monthly precipitation was close to 200 percent of normal in most regions. As a result, portions of this region were reduced to an Abnormally Dry (D0). Similarly, areas northeast and east of Edmonton also received well above normal December precipitation. Although this region improved greatly throughout the month, the 4 month precipitation is around 60 percent of normal. Below normal precipitation continues throughout central regions of the province including areas southeast of Edmonton and southwest of Lloydminster. Over the last 4 months these regions have received between 30-50 percent of normal. As a result, the D2 region increased significantly in east central Alberta. Very low monthly precipitation was also evident in areas northwest of Edmonton, with some regions getting below 50 percent of normal for the same time period. While, average precipitation was received during the autumn and early winter period in the Peace Region of northwestern Alberta. This region remains in a Abnormally Dry (D0) and Moderate Drought (D1) classification due to prolonged drought and dry conditions during the 2008 growing season. The southwest corner of the province, south of Lethbridge, received well below normal precipitation since September 1 (less than 50% of normal), and thus remains in a Abnormally Dry (D0) and Moderate Drought (D1) classification.

In December, conditions throughout Saskatchewan switched from being unseasonably warm and dry to unseasonably cold with above normal precipitation throughout much of the province. Temperatures were generally 5 degrees Celsius above normal in November and over 5 degrees Celsius below normal for December. Drought conditions, however, remain similar to last

month's assessment: dry regions include the east central, west central and the south central. Although monthly precipitation was down (less than 50 percent) for southern regions around Regina and westward towards Swift Current, the region has been near normal over the past 4 months. Southeastern Saskatchewan, around Weyburn and Estevan, received upwards of 150 percent of normal over the past 4 months. Even though precipitation is near average, there continues to be a concern for water supplies, as dugouts were dry and producers were hauling water for their livestock. Therefore, this region remains in a Abnormally Dry (D0) and Moderate Drought (D1) classification. In the central areas of the province, both the east and west improved, with the exception of the Hudson Bay region, which remains below normal (40 percent) over the past 4 months. The west central region of the province also improved, with some areas receiving over 150% of normal. This has resulted in a reduction in the Moderate Drought (D1) and Severe Drought (D2) in this region.

In Manitoba, below average precipitation continued throughout the southwestern and central regions. The west central region around Swan River, The Pas and Flin Flon, all remain well below normal, with precipitation levels at 40-60 percent of normal since September 1. Dry conditions have also emerged in the central regions of the province. As a result, a small Moderate Drought (D1) area has emerged and the Abnormally Dry (D0) region has been expanded to the east. With areas south of Swan River receiving near 150 percent of normal for the month, and four month precipitation near normal, the Abnormally Dry (D0) classification in the Dauphin area has been removed. A small Abnormally Dry (D0) region has been added back to the map in the southwest as a result of significant precipitation deficits in the past two months. Below normal precipitation fell throughout the Interlake region of east central Manitoba as well, however, at the time of freeze up this region had more than adequate soil moisture and therefore has not been classified. The southeast part of the province continues to receive above normal precipitation. This normal precipitation, in conjunction with record snowfall south of the border in North Dakota, resulted in early talks of potential spring flooding throughout the Red River region.

Central Region (ON, QC)

For the most part, eastern Canada received adequate to abundant precipitation throughout the Fall and early Winter period. Moisture conditions were generally good at freeze-up and water supplies were at, or near, full supply. Southern Ontario, as well as southern Quebec, was hit by a number of abnormally large snow fall events in December, including record snowfall in the week prior to Christmas. These events resulted in monthly precipitation of above, to well above, normal throughout the entire region, and caused some regionalized flooding. The Sudbury-Manitoulin area, previously classified as Abnormally Dry (D0), has improved significantly, receiving well above average precipitation in December and near normal over the past 3 months.

Atlantic Region (NS, NB, PE, NL)

Atlantic Canada continued to receive sufficient precipitation throughout December as well. Winter storm events in Atlantic Canada have been frequent with above normal amounts for this time of year, including a major ice storm causing significant damage throughout the eastern regions. Isolated areas in southeastern Ontario, southern Quebec, and northern Nova Scotia remained below normal over the last 4 months; however, there are no drought concerns for this region.

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