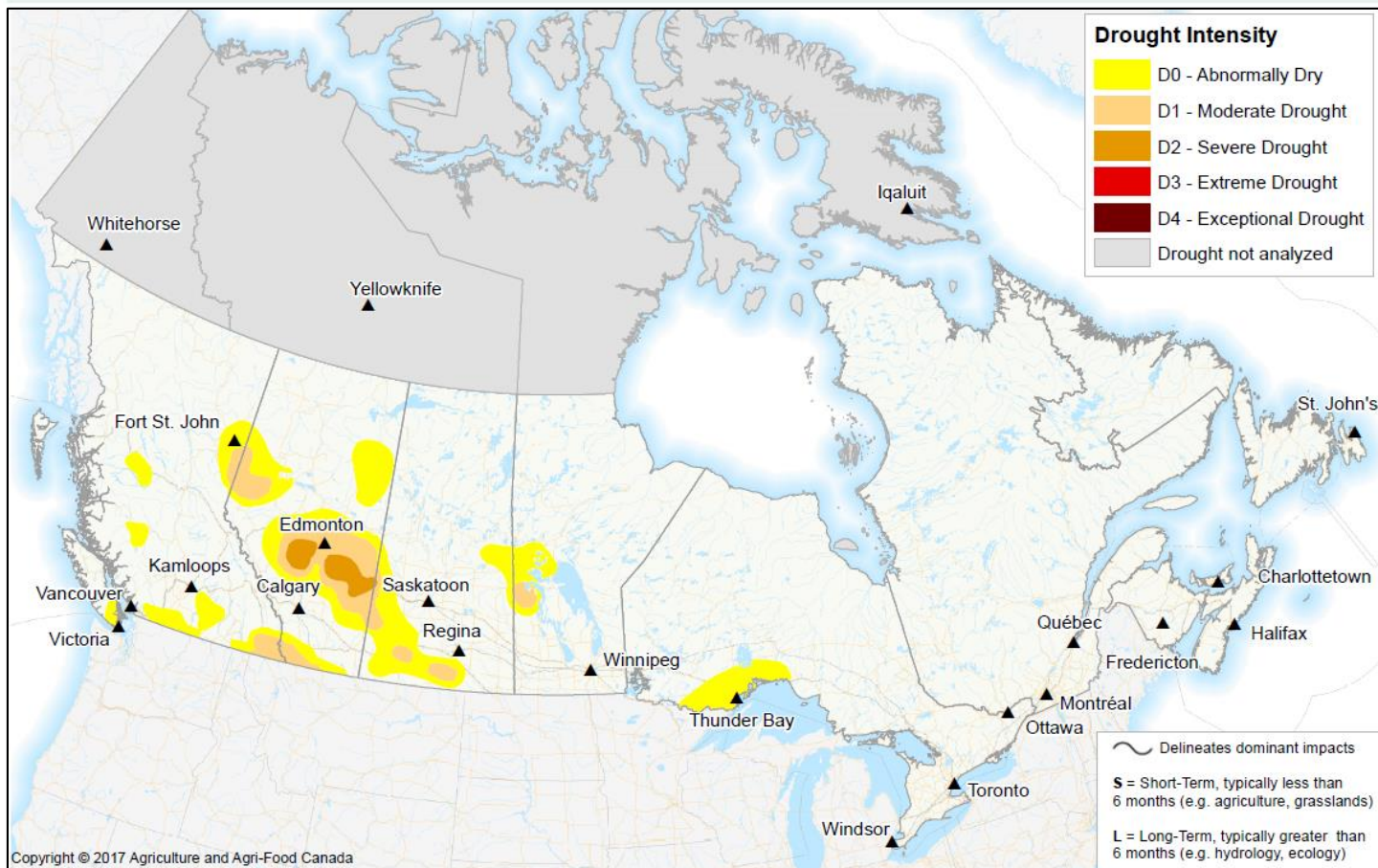


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of January 31, 2009



During January, drought conditions in Canada remained relatively unchanged, as can be expected for this time of year. Small regions of northern British Columbia have improved throughout the past two months; however, the southeast portion of the province remains in drought. Due to very low precipitation throughout much of the fall and winter period, drought conditions persist through much of central Alberta. Southern Saskatchewan continues to receive above normal snow accumulations, although water availability is still a significant concern. The dry conditions in west-central Manitoba remain relatively unchanged with below-normal precipitation throughout January. One new feature on the map is the emergence of an abnormally dry region in the southern areas of North-Western Ontario. Additional details of these regions are discussed below.



Pacific Region (BC)

Vancouver Island and adjacent coastlines continued to receive below-normal precipitation with most areas depreciating throughout the month of January. Central regions of Vancouver Island are the driest, reporting 40-60% below normal in each of the past three months. The southern region of Vancouver Island reported similar conditions, 60-85% below normal over the last three months. Snow pillows in the area are about 250 mm (10 inches) below normal. As a result, the central and southern portions of Vancouver Island have once again been classified in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) condition. The British Columbia interior, including mountainous areas north of Vancouver, are reporting 60-85% of normal precipitation over each of the past three months, representing a departure from normal of about 400 mm (16 inches). The area west of Kelowna and northeast of Abbotsford is also showing below-average precipitation accumulation over the past three months. The Nelson-Cranbrook area continues to report below-normal precipitation over the past three months as well. South of Cranbrook, conditions improved slightly in January. However, to the East, in the southeast corner of the province, precipitation remains well below normal. As such, the drought classification has remained similar in this region to the previous month's assessment. The area west of Williams Lake is still below normal, with less than 40% of normal for January precipitation. In contrast, the Peace River region around Fort St. John has steadily improved to 115-150% of normal precipitation over the past three months, including greater than 150% of normal precipitation in January, which has resulted in a reduction of the D0 (Abnormally Dry) and D1 (Moderate Drought) in that region.

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

Like British Columbia, the Peace River region in Alberta continues to improve, receiving up to 150% above-normal precipitation over the past three months. In fact, much of the region is approaching normal precipitation levels, and in a few isolated areas, has even surpassed normal for the five month period. These conditions have resulted in a reduction of both the D0 (Abnormally Dry) and D1 (Moderate Drought) areas throughout this region. In the central region around Edmonton and to the north, areas have also gravitated towards normal. However, looking at short term and long term indicators, the region southwest and southeast of Edmonton is still extremely dry. Dry conditions intensified in the Red Deer and Coronation areas with less than 40% of normal precipitation in each of the past three months. Snow pack in this region is also light, reporting at less than 30 mm (1.2 inches) of snow water equivalent in some places. January precipitation amounts were extremely low in the east-central part of the province, with monthly precipitation below 35 % of normal over a large region. Precipitation accumulation over the five-month period was also below 50% of normal. As a result, the D1 (Moderate Drought) and D2 (Severe Drought) classifications have expanded throughout this region. The bulk of southern Alberta from Red Deer to the Saskatchewan border, and south to the US border, is 40-60% of normal precipitation for January with an area near Lethbridge reporting less than 40%. In contrast, the region east of Calgary (Strathmore area) is reporting above normal, and SWE (Snow Water Equivalent) is approaching 100 mm (4 inches). In the

southwest around Pincher Creek, the area remains drier than normal, at 40-60% for January. This region has been consistently below normal for the past six months and as a result remains in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) to a D1 (Moderate Drought) classification.

Southern Saskatchewan continues to receive above normal precipitation. January totals in the south-central regions were more than twice the normal. There is optimism that the above-normal snow accumulations should replenish the on-farm surface water supplies and improve soil moisture going into the spring; thus alleviating some of the lingering drought conditions in the south-central region of the province. However until the snow melts, producers continue to be affected by last summer's drought and will continue to be forced to haul water for livestock. As a result, this region has remained in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) to a D1 (Moderate Drought) classification. Conversely, the southwest region, including Swift Current, Maple Creek, and Consul, continue to be dry and have slipped further below normal during January, as much of the area reported less than 40% of normal precipitation. Although Prince Albert and surrounding area has abundant snow cover, with above average precipitation in January, to the east near Hudson Bay, conditions have not been so favorable. In this region, conditions remain dry with below average monthly precipitation. Coupled with that and a below-normal fall and winter, this region remains in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) classification. The Swan River area in west-central of Manitoba continued to receive below average precipitation and are now less than 40% of normal over the past three months, having received less than 10 mm (0.4 inches) in January. The Swan River region has been dry for some time now, receiving less than 75% of average precipitation for the fall and winter period and less than 85% over the twelve month period. Precipitation has been below normal for more than two years in this region; therefore, this area has been classified in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) to a D1 (Moderate Drought) drought condition, even though current stream flows are near normal. In the Interlake region of Manitoba, precipitation has been reported at 40% of normal over the past two months and 60-85% over the past three, with less than 3 mm (0.12 inches) of precipitation received in January. Although the precipitation amounts are extremely low in this region over the last three months, we have been hesitant to classify this region as a dry or drought region due to excessive fall moisture, which caused significant flooding. As spring approaches, this area will be monitored closely.

Central Region (ON, QC)

A small region of northwestern Ontario around Thunder Bay has received below-normal precipitation throughout the past number of months, resulting in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) classification. Although areas north and east of Thunder Bay are below 40% of normal in January, this area has remained near 60% of normal over the past three months. There are currently no concerns for drought in Quebec or Atlantic Canada.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (2009).

For more information reach us at www.agr.gc.ca or call us toll-free 1-855-773-0241.