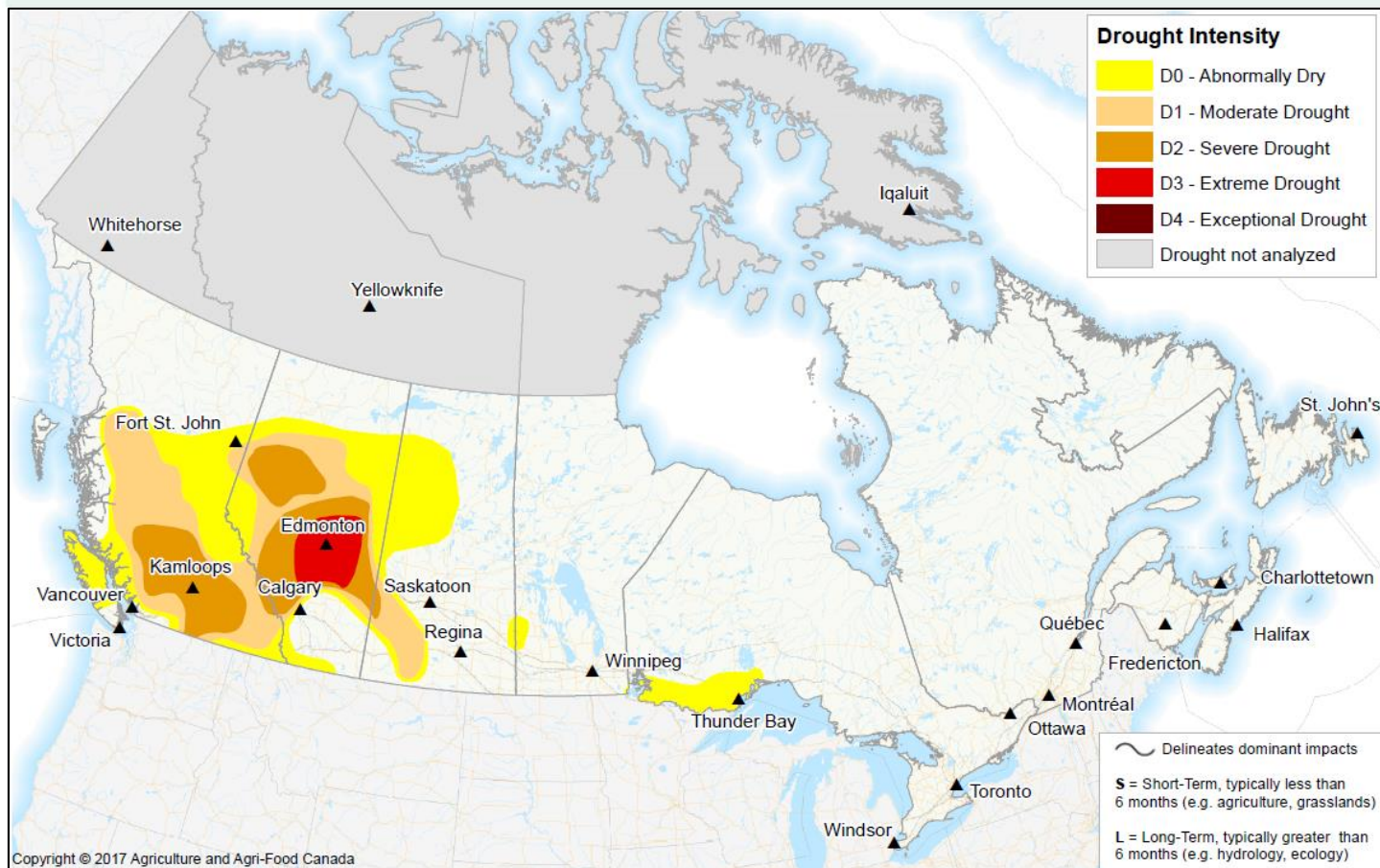


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of October 31, 2009



The most significant drought region in Canada remains central and northern Alberta. Significant concerns also remain in southern and central British Columbia. In October, the percentage of land area in Canada south of the 60th parallel classified as drought or abnormally dry remained consistent at 20%. The percentage of agricultural area classified as drought or abnormally dry decreased from 44% to 36%.

In October, precipitation was generally normal or above normal across Canada. The southern interior of British Columbia, much of Alberta, and parts of northern Saskatchewan and the Maritimes all received greater than 200% of normal precipitation. Southern Manitoba and northwestern Ontario received below average precipitation in October. The drought-stricken regions of northern Alberta continue to have severe moisture deficits as a result of low growing season precipitation, where they received less than 60% of normal rainfall.



Temperatures dropped to 1-2°C (1.8-3.6°F) below normal throughout most of the Canadian landscape in October. Following one of the warmest Septembers ever recorded, a significant portion of the Southern Prairies experienced departures of up to four degrees C below normal. Many areas even received an early snowfall during the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend, and temperature minimums dropped below -10°C (14°F) during much of that span. The cooler conditions, coupled with above normal precipitation, halted crop progression and harvest operations throughout the prairie region.

Pacific Region (BC)

Drought continues to be a concern throughout southern British Columbia where precipitation deficits remain. Although precipitation was above normal in October, seasonal precipitation since April 1 was 60% of normal. This resulted in a continuation of the D1 (Moderate Drought) and D2 (Severe Drought) classifications. The exceptionally dry conditions kept fire danger high and led to reduced crop yields. Western British Columbia has remained at 60% of normal precipitation over the past three months, meaning the D1 (Moderate Drought) classification persists. Conditions have been said to be similar to those experienced during the drought year of 2006, when stream flows were at record lows. In contrast, Vancouver Island and the southern coast continued to receive upwards of 150% of normal precipitation over the last month, helping to alleviate the persistent dry conditions experienced over the summer. As a result, drought conditions on the island were downgraded from D1 (Moderate Drought) to D0 (Abnormally Dry).

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

Drought conditions remain a significant concern in central and northern Alberta, where soil moisture reserves are extremely low. Although conditions improved slightly in the central region, soil moisture continued to deteriorate in the northern region, and resulted in an expansion of the D3 (Extreme Drought) and D2 (Severe Drought) classifications. For much of central and northern Alberta, water availability is a concern, with on-farm water supplies being very low or unusable. Many natural water bodies have been significantly reduced, with some creeks and sloughs becoming dry. Generally, this region has only received 40% of normal precipitation since November 2008. As a result, the region has a precipitation deficit of more than 300 mm (12 inches). For these critical areas, well above average snowfall and spring precipitation is needed to bring reserves to near normal; otherwise, it is likely that the drought will persist into next growing season. Pastures remained in very poor condition, with reports of cattle being fed since late August. Livestock Auction marts have been very busy throughout the fall as many producers are reducing herd sizes or exiting the industry altogether. Hay prices remain high due to reduced quality and quantity of forage crops. Rather than pay high feed and transport costs, producers indicate a reduction in herd size is their most feasible economic option. In northwestern Alberta, the extent of drought remained consistent, with the Peace River Region continuing to be assessed in a D2 (Severe Drought), due to less than 60% of

normal precipitation over the past six months. On-farm water supplies have been reported to be extremely low, and hay yields have been reported as well below normal. Drought regions in southwest Saskatchewan have expanded southward toward the US border due to precipitation being less than 65% of normal over the past three months. Hay yields were below average on non-irrigated fields and water supplies were low, with some lakes in the region being up to two metres (6.5 feet) below normal levels. Areas in western Saskatchewan have had less than 70% of normal precipitation since November 2008, resulting in a continuation of the D1 (Moderate Drought) classification. As in Alberta, significant snowfall and spring precipitation is needed to bring soil moisture reserves to near normal. Areas that have come out of abnormally dry classifications due to greater than normal precipitation over the last month include a portion along the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border, and areas in southern Ontario and eastern Quebec. In particular, the southern Ontario region received up to 150% of normal rainfall, which alleviated low water level concerns.

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