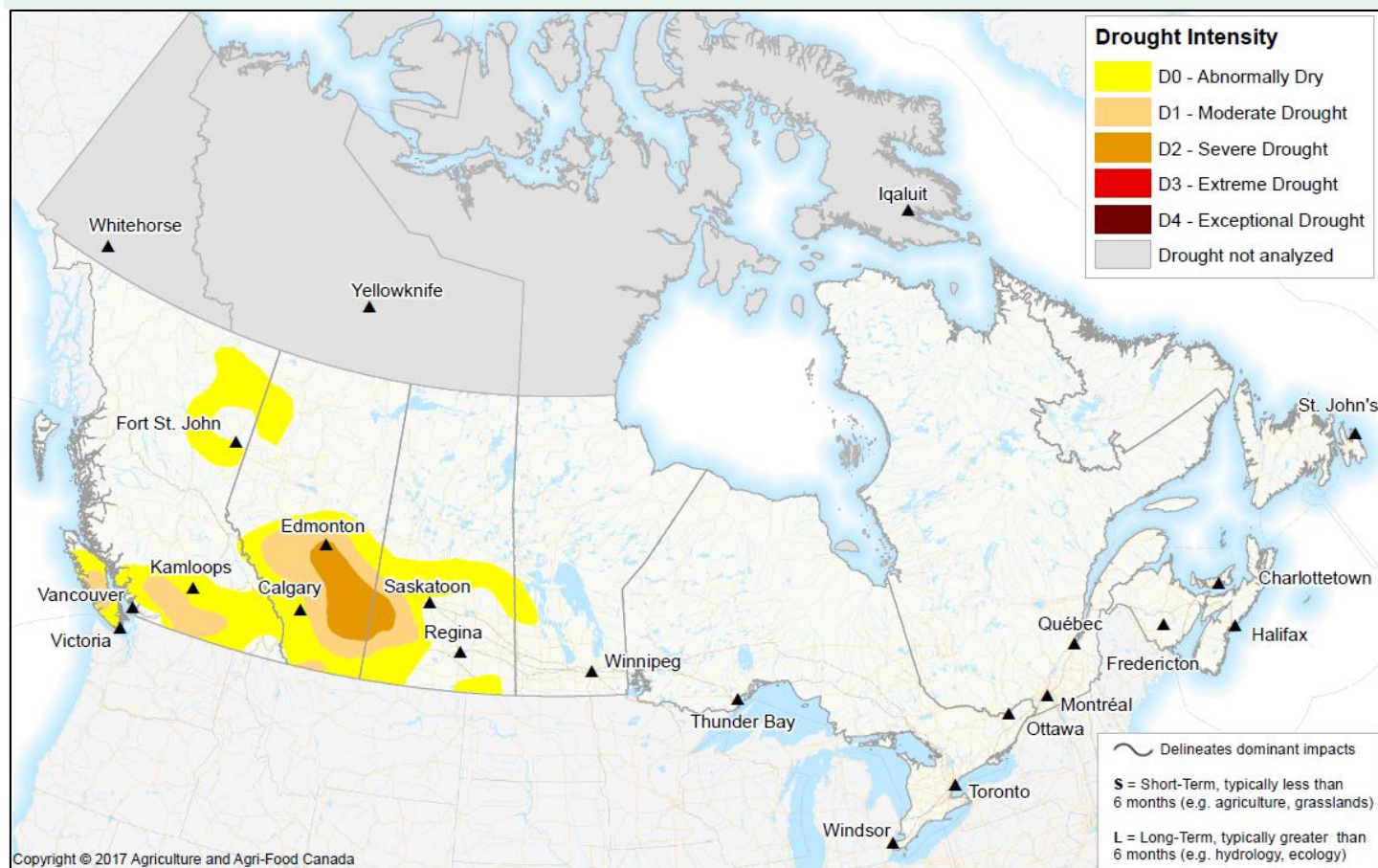


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of May 31, 2009



In May, drought conditions intensified in western Canada. Much of southern British Columbia remained abnormally dry as a result of below normal winter snow pack, low stream flow and below average spring precipitation. Drought severity increased in central Alberta and west-central Saskatchewan, having poor soil moisture as a result of well below normal precipitation over the past six months. Low precipitation amounts coupled with cooler than normal spring temperatures on the Prairies has resulted in significant impacts on the agriculture sector. Two additional abnormally dry areas have emerged this month, one in northern British Columbia and the other in northern Manitoba.

Pacific Region (BC)

Mountain snow packs continued to melt throughout British Columbia, resulting in below average runoff in the southern portions of the province. Vancouver Island remained classified as D0 (Abnormally Dry) as snow pillows at the end of May were reported at 50 to 60 percent or up to 500 mm (20 inches) below normal. Dry conditions in the central part of the island intensified as a result of nearly 50 percent of normal spring precipitation. Low precipitation amounts combined with well below average mountain snow packs has resulted in a D1 (Moderate Drought) classification for the area. The southern coast of British Columbia also had low snow packs and low precipitation, resulting in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) classification. In contrast, the lower mainland region of British Columbia received normal to above normal precipitation in May and consequently has been removed from the D0 (Abnormally Dry) classification. Interior areas of BC, including the Lower Fraser and Okanagan River basins, had snow packs up to 600 mm (23.5 inches) below normal and less than 80 percent of normal precipitation over the past six months. Some snow pillows in the Okanagan Valley were even reported below their minimum historical level. The Kelowna area received about 70 percent of normal precipitation in May and below normal precipitation over the past six months. As a result, the D1 (Moderate Drought) classification persists in the area. The southeast corner of the province also continued to receive below average precipitation, including areas just north of Nelson that had less than 60 percent of average precipitation in May. Low precipitation amounts combined with low spring runoff resulted in a D1 (Moderate Drought) condition for the region. A dry region also emerged in the northeast corner of the province centered on Fort Nelson, where spring precipitation has been 70 percent of normal over the past three months. As a result, much of this region was classified as D0 (Abnormally Dry).

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

In Alberta, all regions south of Edmonton have been classified in at least a D0 (Abnormally Dry) area. During May, conditions in the central region continued to deteriorate: the D2 (Severe Drought) classification expanded to include the Edmonton to Red Deer corridor and southeast to the Saskatchewan border. Many places in this large area have received just 60 mm (less than 2 ½ inches) since last September, with as little as 8 mm (less than one third of an inch) from April to May; making it less than 40 percent of normal. This lack of moisture has reduced pasture growth, and forage production potential is much lower than average. Cattle producers in the area have been feeding through the latter days of May because pastures have little to no growth. Because of the lack of snow cover in the winter and limited runoff in the spring, dugouts and sloughs are nearly dry, and many producers are hauling water. In addition, temperatures were up to two degrees below normal in May with many incidents of frost being reported. The cooler than normal spring follows a colder than normal winter that has reduced feed stocks of local cattle producers. Hay prices have increased dramatically because of the shortage and auction sales have witnessed a sharp rise in activity as producers seek to reduce their herds. The southern region of the province from Calgary to Medicine Hat is now

enveloped in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) condition because of below normal precipitation, in some areas less than 60 percent of normal over the past six months. In addition, a small area south of Lethbridge is classified D1 (Moderate Drought) as spring precipitation has been sparse, and water supply issues have been noted by area producers. The combination of cool weather, frost, and lack of moisture has resulted in reduced forage production in most areas. Forage conditions in the south have generally deteriorated since the beginning of May. Areas just east of the foothills that were anticipating above average to average production are now looking at average to below average, respectively. In Saskatchewan, the D2 (Severe Drought) persisted in the west-central region. The Kindersley area had less than 70 mm (under 2.5 inches) of precipitation since last September, which is 40 percent of normal. Water supplies are very low, which resulted in producers needing to haul water for livestock. Producers also were purchasing feed because of the slow start for forage and pasture development. The D1 (Moderate Drought) area has been expanded to north of Swift Current, including the Lake Diefenbaker area. This area received below 40 percent of normal precipitation for the past six months. As well, this region was forecasted to have a low water level because of low stream flow on the South Saskatchewan River. Although areas south of Swift Current, in the southwest corner of the province, had adequate snow cover, much of the moisture went to recharge dry soils from previous years of drought. As a result the region experienced minimal spring run-off and surface water supplies are limited. This region was classified as a D0 (Abnormally Dry). In the central region of the province, the D1 (Moderate Drought) area has crept east toward Saskatoon, where only about 20 mm (less than one inch) of precipitation fell during March, April, and May, making this the driest spring on record in more than 100 years. To the north, a dry belt stretches between the Alberta and Manitoba borders where fields remain dry after receiving less than half of normal spring precipitation. As a result, the North Battleford and Prince Albert areas remain in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) condition. Besides being dry, May was cooler than normal, with reports of widespread frost throughout the province; therefore hay crops and pastures are not improving, and hay yields will be severely reduced. In the southeast, the Estevan area along the US border is designated D0 (Abnormally Dry) because spring precipitation was less than 60 percent of normal. Most areas in Manitoba experienced excessive moisture, because of early spring flooding and above normal precipitation. The most significantly impacted regions include the Red River Valley and Interlake Region. Much of the province had temperatures of up to four degrees below normal during the spring, with many damaging frost events. This resulted in poor forage growth and seeding delays and prevented fields from drying out. In contrast, a potential drought concern exists in the Swan River area, where precipitation has been below 70 percent of normal for the past six months, and soil moisture reserves are low; as a result this area is classified D0 (Abnormally Dry).

Central Region (ON, QC)

In northeastern Quebec there was concern about dryness in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean Region early in May, but such fears were eased later in the month by storms that brought precipitation amounts to normal levels. This region will continue to be monitored.

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