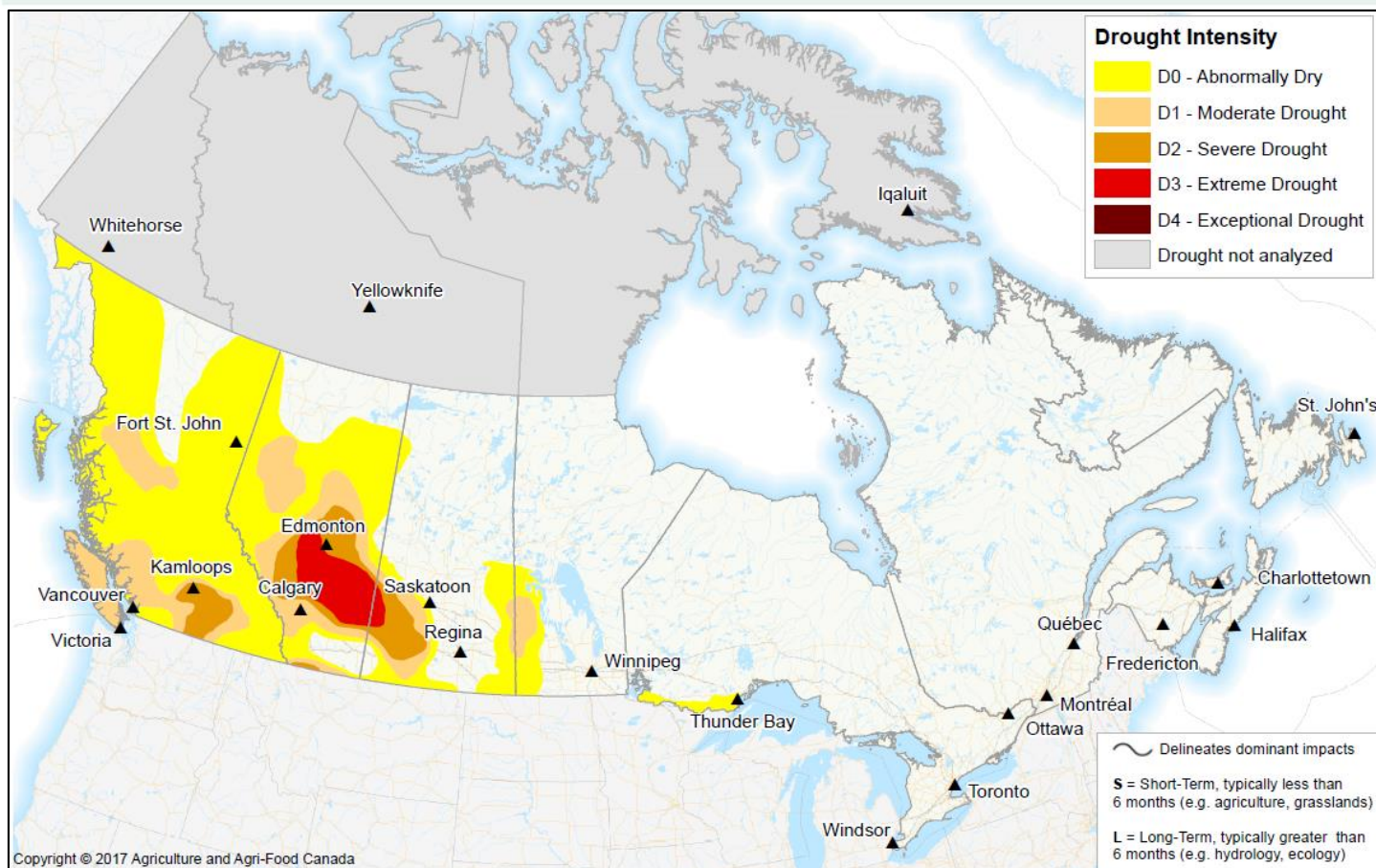


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of July 31, 2009



During the month of July, there was little relief in drought conditions throughout much of western Canada. Most of western Canada's agricultural region continued to be assessed in a drought classification, with 27 per cent classified in a D1 (Moderate Drought) or worse drought condition. This represents nine per cent of Canada's land mass below the 60th parallel. This is a small increase from the previous month, where 25 per cent of Canada's agricultural land or eight per cent of Canada's land mass below the 60th parallel was classified as D1 or worse. Drought severity and extent increased in central and northwestern Alberta and much of British Columbia. Record high temperatures and below normal precipitation in British Columbia resulted in extreme forest fire risk and low water supplies. Temperatures for July were generally below or near normal across Canada, with the exception of the Pacific Coast and central interior of British Columbia. Although these cool temperatures reduced the severity of the drought in the western Prairies, they also contributed to slower crop development and



loweryields. Going back to December 2008, July marked the eighth consecutive month that temperatures were below normal across the Prairie provinces.

Pacific Region (BC)

Drought conditions intensified for much of northern British Columbia and the Peace River Region in northwestern Alberta. In northwestern BC, a D1 (Moderate Drought) classification was assigned to an area with less than 60% of normal rainfall over the past three months. This has had a negative impact on agriculture in the area. The emergence of a D1 classification in the Peace resulted from less than 40% of normal precipitation over the last couple of months and less than 60% since April 1. In this area, annual crops are nearly two weeks behind, and yields are expected to be only 50 to 70% of normal.

On Vancouver Island and on the lower mainland of British Columbia, drought continues to be a concern as many stream flows continue to be significantly reduced. The British Columbia Ministry of Environment issued a streamflow advisory on July 31 indicating that streams and groundwater aquifers in the southern interior were experiencing rapid decreases in water levels because of low winter snowpack and a hot, dry summer. Some streams and rivers in this region are experiencing record or near record low flows. As a result of the extremely warm temperatures, forest fires increased greatly, and many of them ravaged central regions of the province, forcing evacuations. During an intense heat wave throughout the last week of July, some areas reported daily highs of greater than 40°C (104°F).

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

Drought conditions continued to deteriorate in central and northern Alberta resulting in an expansion of the D3 (Extreme Drought) and D2 (Severe Drought) classifications. Although rain showers improved soil moisture, crops and pastures along the southern fringe of the drought-affected areas, the significant rainfall missed many of the most severe drought areas. Much of these areas received below normal precipitation in July and, in total, barely 100 mm (4 inches) since September 1 of last year. Due to minimal spring runoff and very low spring precipitation, many dugouts and sloughs are dry, and there have been reports of producers hauling water. The drought and cool temperatures have significantly reduced forage supplies, with reports of some producers importing feed from the United States and other regions of Canada. Because of poor pasture conditions and high feed costs, producers are selling cattle to reduce their herd size. At month's end, many regions had instituted fire bans, and at least 30 counties in Alberta and four rural municipalities in Saskatchewan had declared themselves agricultural drought disaster areas, with more being anticipated. Dry conditions throughout the growing season have resulted in a D0 (Abnormally Dry) classification along the US border stretching from Manitoba to Thunder Bay. Although much of Manitoba has experienced excessive moisture from significant rain showers over the last few months, dry conditions persisted in western

areas along the Manitoba–Saskatchewan border. Some areas have received less than 60% of normal precipitation since April 1 and were classified in a D1 (Moderate Drought) condition.

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