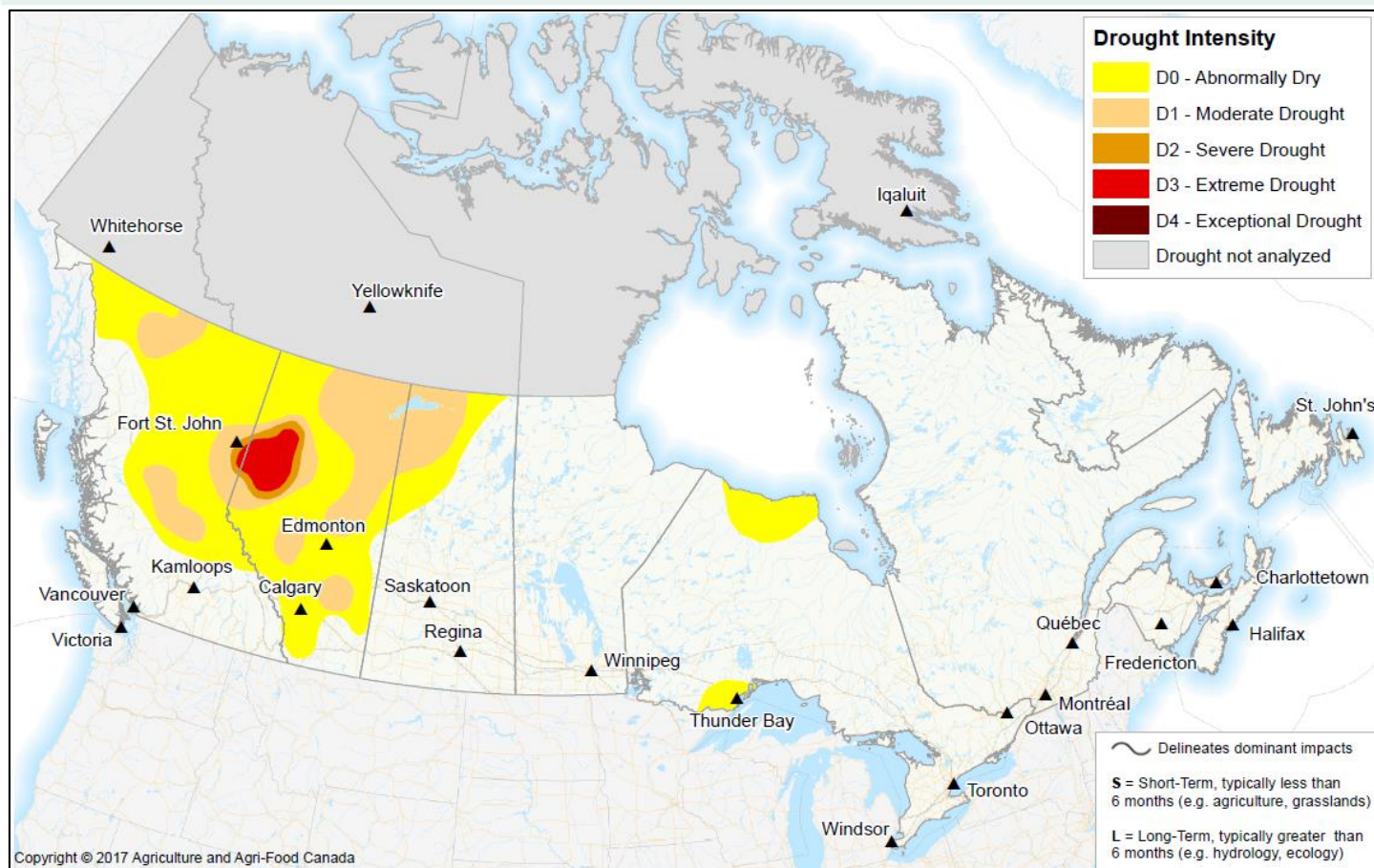


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of December 31, 2010



As of December 31, the percentage of agricultural area in Canada remains relatively unchanged at just over 25% of the total land. Over the course of December the country saw changes in drought extent with Western Canada being slightly drier and Eastern Canada slightly wetter. Drought classifications persisted in central and northwest Alberta, northeast Saskatchewan, and parts of northern and central British Columbia.

The most severe drought remained in the Peace River region of eastern B.C. and western Alberta. Based on a period from April 1 to December 31, 2010, parts of the Peace River region remained in the driest tenth percentile. Over the course of one year some areas within this region have reported precipitation deficits of more than 220 mm (8.6 in). Since the onset of winter precipitation levels have stayed below normal; therefore, the D3 (Extreme Drought) designation has remained in place. In order to recharge soil moisture reserves, winter



precipitation will need to be well above normal and spring thaw will need to occur at a slow rate to reduce surface runoff. Seasonal predictions for northeast British Columbia and northwest Alberta indicate above normal precipitation levels for the winter and early spring based on the current La Niña conditions. This definitely provides some cautious optimism for recovery.

A slightly reduced D1 (Moderate Drought) classification persisted in the west-central region of Alberta. Over the past year this region's SPI values have stayed between -1.0 and -1.5 with a precipitation deficit of up to 120 mm (4.7 in). A region in east-central Alberta that has experienced precipitation trending below average and SPI values less than -1.5 over 90 days has also been designated D1 (Moderate Drought). A D1 (Moderate Drought) classification endured in northeast Alberta and northwest Saskatchewan due to the amount of precipitation ranging from 40 to 60 percent of normal in the past four months. Another D1 (Moderate Drought) area northwest of Prince George in central British Columbia remained unchanged as precipitation continued to be well below normal. Over 9 months this region has deficit of more than 170 mm (6.1 in). The recovery of this region will depend on an above normal amount of snow cover during the winter as that is traditionally the main method of water replenishment. Currently, mountain snow pack in the Prince George area is about 50% of normal.