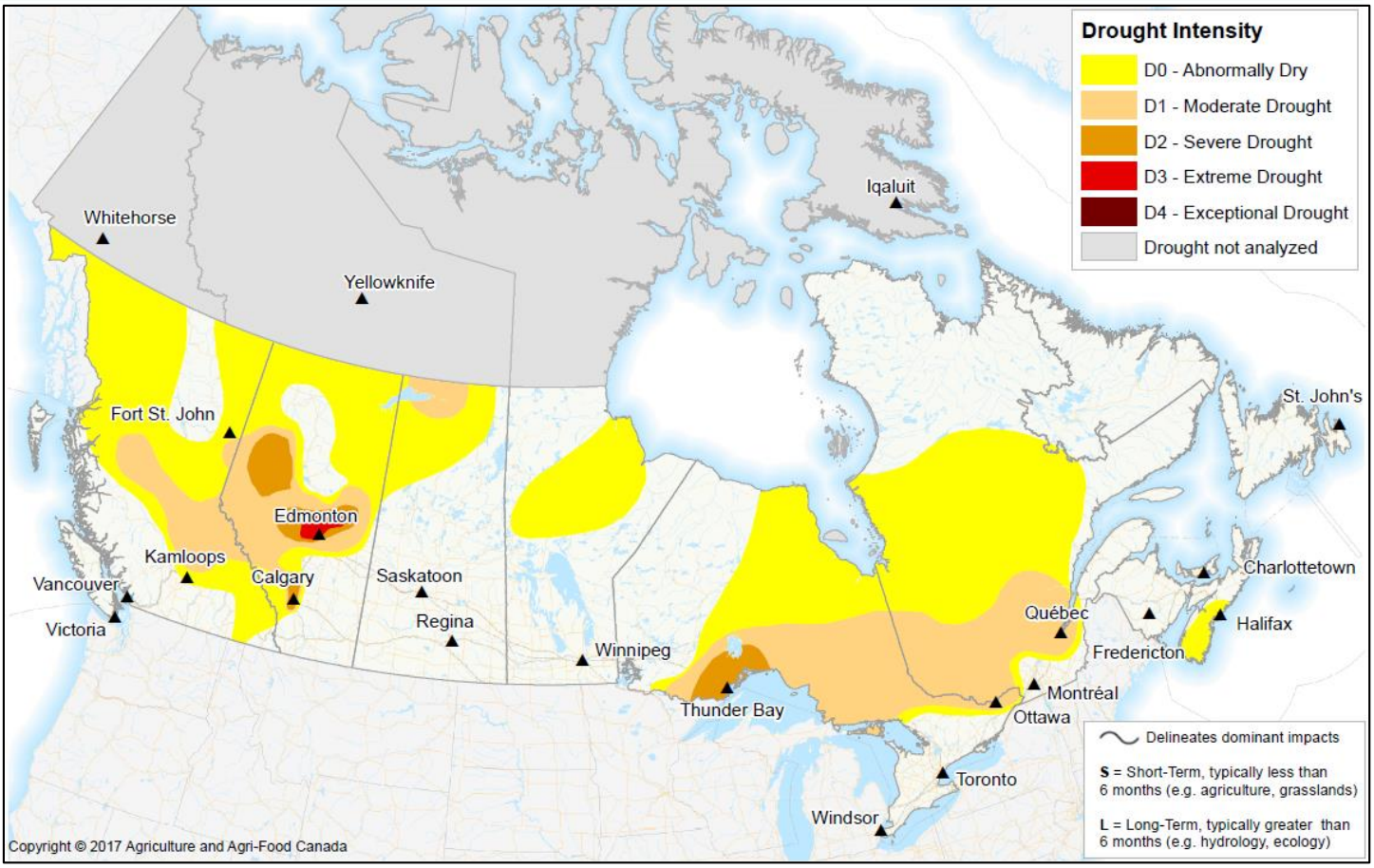
Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of June 30, 2010



In June, conditions across Canada ranged from record wet in the west to drier than normal in the north and east. In British Columbia's southern interior, conditions continue to improve with near normal precipitation reported through June. The Prairies continued to improve as well, as nearly the entire southern portions of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba received greater than 200 percent of normal precipitation. However, the northwest portion of Alberta and British Columbia Peace River Region has not received the same magnitude of precipitation as in the south, leaving conditions very dry. In eastern Canada, southern Ontario has seen significant improvement with recent precipitation. The Maritime region has also had a wet month, resulting in improved moisture conditions. Conditions in Northern Ontario and Quebec continued to be hot and dry. Abnormally dry conditions have also emerged throughout Canada's northern areas.

Pacific Region (BC)

The Northern and central regions of British Columbia continued to be dry, most notably the Fort St. John, Prince George and Williams lake areas. Water restrictions were implemented in the Chimney Creek watershed due to extremely low water flows in the Cariboo region. Southern British Columbia continued to improve from May to June, receiving above normal precipitation. The Kamloops area specifically received greater than 200% of normal precipitation in June with similar conditions reported in the Cranbrook area. The Okanagan and Kootenay regions both received ample moisture to reduce the Abnormally Dry and Moderate Drought designated zones.

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

The southern Prairies continued to receive abnormally high amounts of precipitation into June. In fact, many areas of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan have received over 200 mm (7.8 inches) above normal precipitation since April 1, making it one of the wettest spring seasons on record. As a result, agricultural impacts have decreased, as pastures and on-farm surface water supplies have started to recover. This has pushed drought boundaries northward and westward out of Saskatchewan entirely, and into northern regions of Alberta. Most notably, the D3 (Extreme Drought) designation was reduced by more than fifty percent compared to last month. However, north-western and west-central Alberta areas continued to be the most drought impacted regions in the country, with classifications of D2 (Severe Drought) designation, and a small D3 (Extreme Drought). Although conditions in the central region continued to improve, the severity both in precipitation deficits and length of drought from previous years has resulted in lingering impacts and slower recovery.

The Peace River Region of north-western Alberta and north-eastern British Columbia received below normal precipitation throughout the growing season, and is in a long-term moisture deficit. Extremely low amounts of precipitation were received in this region throughout the month of June resulting in continued D2 (Severe Drought) designation, and a slight expansion of the D1 (Moderate Drought) zone westward. Since April 1, 2010, this region has received less than 60 percent of normal precipitation. According to Alberta's drought report, subsoil moisture in the region is rated at 49 percent poor, 30 percent fair, and 18 percent good. Pasture and tame hay are rated at 33 percent poor, 44 percent fair, 22 percent good, one percent excellent. Agricultural crops and forages will require timely rains in order to develop in this region.

A D0 (Abnormally Dry) zone emerged throughout north-western regions of Canada, leaving only a few pockets of near normal conditions. In contrast to the southern regions, these areas have received below normal spring precipitation, and have struggled with higher than normal forest fires. More than 700,000 hectares were burned to the end of June in northern Saskatchewan in

2010, while the 10-year average is 167,000 hectares. Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon are also well ahead their 10-year averages. Due to extended dry periods and significant moisture deficits, a small D1 (Moderate Drought) designation has been included in Saskatchewan's Lake Athabasca Region.

Central Region (ON, QC)

The storm systems that moved throughout the Prairie region made their way into western Ontario, cutting into the D0 (Abnormally Dry) zone. Southern Ontario's precipitation ranged from normal to greater than 200 percent of normal, and continued its improvement from May with the D0 (Abnormally Dry) and D1 (Moderate Drought) boundaries extending further north of Georgian Bay. Precipitation around Lake Superior pushed the D2 (Severe Drought) designation west of Marathon leaving a significantly reduced area in the northwest. The D1 (Moderate Drought) zone in northern Ontario and western Quebec spread eastward through Ottawa and Quebec City, and north into the Lac Saint-Jean region. Although northern Ontario and Quebec's precipitation was slightly less than normal since April 1st, the deficits range between 120mm (4.7 inches) to greater than 240mm (9.4 inches) below normal since September 1st of last year. Lakes throughout the region were showing symptoms of the low amounts of precipitation. Water levels on all the Great lakes increased through June but continue to be below last year's levels, ranging 5-7 inches below 2009 levels. Fire danger remains high for much of the northern regions in the eastern Canada as dry conditions continue with only a small number of stations reporting near normal conditions. This season, Ontario is nearly double the 10-year average with more than 600 fires to date.

Atlantic Region (NS, NB, PE, NL)

Moisture conditions throughout Atlantic Canada improved in June, erasing the D0 (Abnormally Dry) boundaries in Newfoundland and New Brunswick. A reduced D0 (Abnormally Dry) zone replaced the D1 (Moderate Drought) zone throughout the south and east coast of Nova Scotia. Warmer temperatures were welcomed in the latter half of the month to dry out saturated fields in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

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