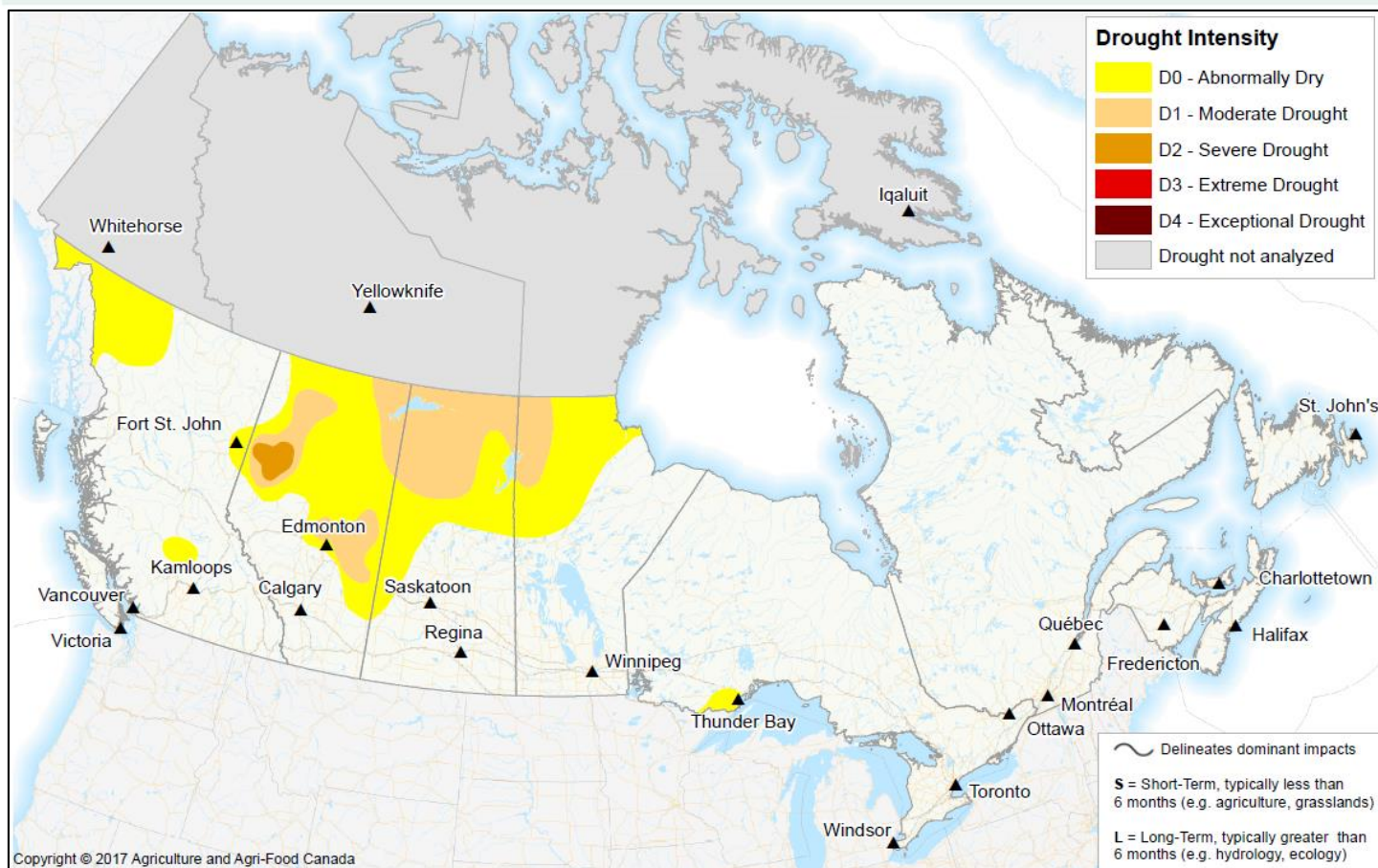


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of May 31, 2011



In May, dry conditions intensified across the northern and central portions of Western Canada, while the southern prairies and eastern regions of the country continue to receive adequate to abundant rainfall. Widespread dryness led to a rash of forest fires across northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. Precipitation stagnated in the Peace River region of northwest Alberta and stalled improvement in the region that has been in significant drought for three consecutive years.

## Pacific Region (BC)

A small area in central B.C. remained D0 where water use restrictions were put in place. The area had similar restrictions on irrigation and domestic use last year, and improvement to water levels was not as robust as other areas. Overall, drought conditions in British Columbia



continued to improve, with the D1 designation in the northwest downgraded to D0 and a D0 classification removed from the central region. Above normal snow pack brought streams to capacity in formerly dry areas, and snow pack at higher elevations yet to melt raised concern for possible flooding.

## **Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)**

Abnormally Dry (D0) conditions now stretch across the northern half of the three Prairie Provinces, with the Moderate Drought (D1) classification expanding significantly throughout much of northern Saskatchewan and into northern Manitoba and Alberta. The most severe drought affected area remains the Peace River region of northwest Alberta. The D2 (Severe Drought) classification remains as spring rain failed and was minimal throughout the month of May, following above average spring runoff. Since April 1 rainfall in the region is 40-60% of average with isolated regions being below 40% of normal, which led to a D1 (Moderate Drought) classification expanding northward. Minimal rain brought seeding to completion on time or slightly ahead of schedule, but now moisture is required to bring crops along. Pastures started out the season well, and began to show signs of recovery; however the lack of rainfall in the past month has pushed this recovery back.

In eastern Alberta a region was designated D1 where precipitation was less than 40% of normal since April 1. Early emerging crops were not affected much by the dry conditions, as there was adequate soil moisture in the early spring. However the soil is now drying up and plants are showing signs of moisture stress in regions that have not received timely rain. Typically the Prairie region receives most of its annual precipitation from April to June, so with only one month remaining in that span drought will likely intensify with continued low rainfall and summer heat.

A D1 designation enveloped the Lake Athabasca region of Alberta and Saskatchewan, and reached into northwest Manitoba. Forest fires raged, out of control at times, in northeast Alberta and Saskatchewan. One fire in Alberta had already consumed 9,400 hectares (23,000 acres) as of June 1. Alberta has already surpassed the ten year average for both number of fires and area burned. Fire bans were in place across Alberta and all north-central regions of Saskatchewan, where a number of communities were evacuated. Without normal or better precipitation accumulation over the next few months fire danger will remain high.

## **Central Region (ON, QC)**

Abnormally dry areas east of Manitoba, apart from a small area in northwest Ontario, were removed from drought classifications.

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