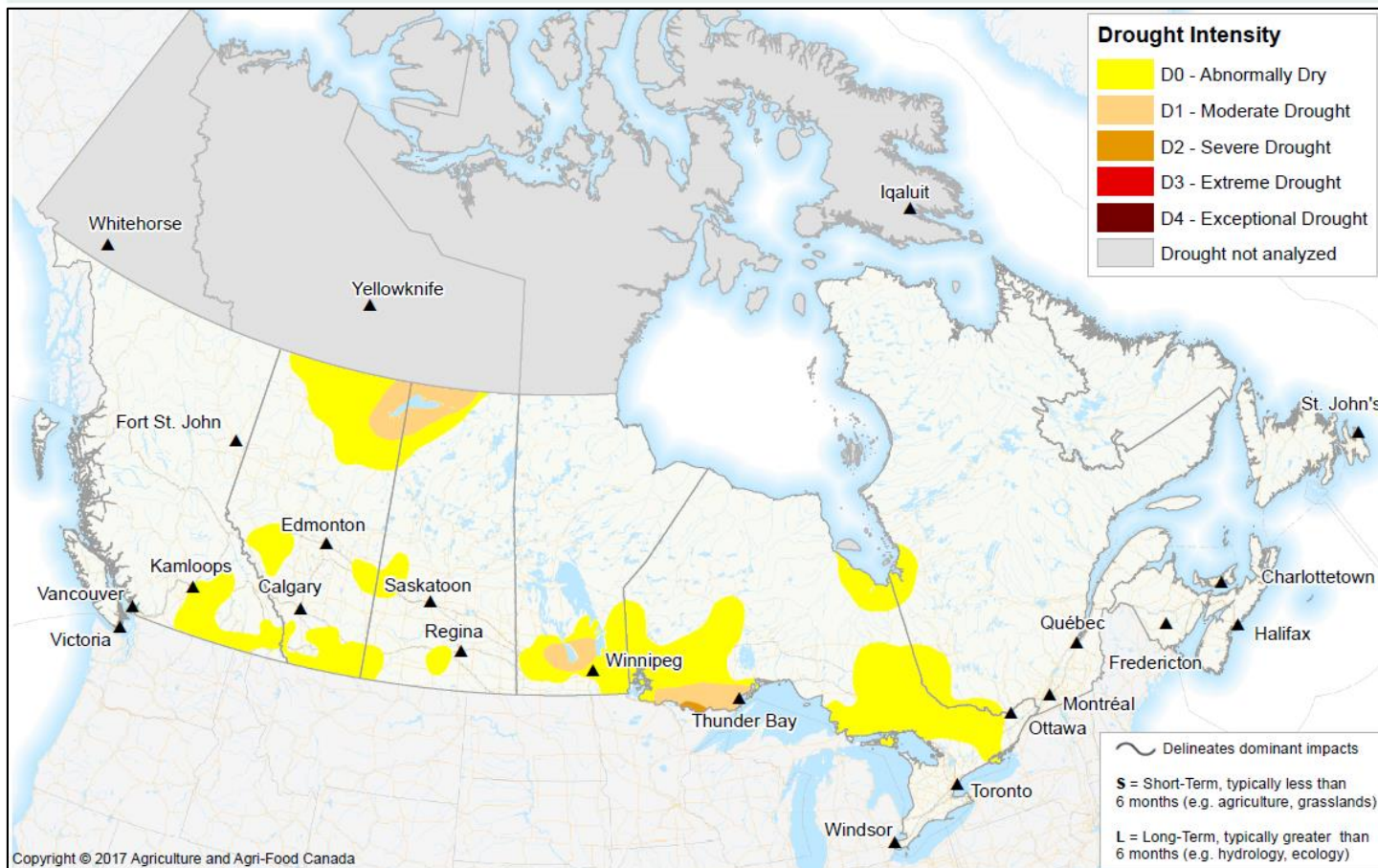


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of September 30, 2011



September brought above-normal temperatures to nearly every region of Canada. Above-normal temperatures combined with little rainfall in western Canada kept annual harvest progressing, but also brought on concerns for drought. Abnormally dry regions emerged throughout the Prairies and drought strengthened in southern Manitoba and northern Ontario. There were no concerns for dry conditions in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, where a series of post-tropical storms brought high winds and heavy rainfall.

## Pacific Region (BC)

In British Columbia, parts of the southern interior near the US border and the southern region of Vancouver Island had less than 75% of normal rainfall over the past four months, and



remained in the D0 class. Fire bans continued in the central-interior region of British Columbia and parts of the prairie region as well, but no water use restrictions were expected. Stream flows were still average or better throughout the province, and high elevation mountain snow accumulation had begun in some areas.

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

The July to September period made for one of the driest summers on record in southern Manitoba. Dry conditions and above average temperatures throughout September resulted in continuation of Moderate Drought (D1). Over that time precipitation deficits were more than 110 mm (4.3 in) in some areas. The low rainfall and hot temperatures, nearly two degrees above average, were good for harvest and helped mature late-seeded crops, but also shut down pasture production and forced cattle home for the winter earlier than normal. The second-cut hay yield was low due to the lack of moisture in August, and pastures were rated poor condition. Cattle producers had to dip into winter feed reserves to make up for the shortfall. Dry conditions also resulted in reduced soybean yields. By month's end soil moisture across southern Manitoba was generally rated as dry to fair.

September rainfall was generally less than 50% of average across the agricultural regions of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia which resulted in the emergence or expansion of Abnormally Dry (D0) classifications. As in Manitoba, limited rainfall and additional heat in September helped bring annual harvest to a close, but left cropland and pastures short of moisture, particularly in the south-central and western regions of Saskatchewan. Some areas of southern Saskatchewan had the fourth warmest September on record with average temperatures nearly 3.5°C above average. Southern Alberta also saw limited precipitation, and was designated D0.

Long-term effects also continued in the Lake Athabasca region of northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. Rainfall was 20-30 mm less than normal over the past month, so the D1 designation persisted. Since April 1, stations in the area have received less than 60% of average precipitation.

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

Dry conditions continued in northwest Ontario, and portions of northeastern Ontario with a large amount of these regions classified D0. Dry conditions contributed to a very busy fire season in northwest Ontario; through September, the area burned was over ten times greater than the ten-year average, and fire bans remained in place across the northwest. Lake levels on Superior, Michigan and Huron all remained below their respective long-term averages for September. Abnormally dry conditions also continued across northeast Ontario where rainfall was less than 60% of normal over the past three months. In southern Ontario, stream flows ranged around 70% of average up to mid-September. As a result, Conservation Authorities

maintained low water flow advisories in the region, which included voluntary water use restrictions.

Long-term drought remained in northwest Ontario. Following a few months of improving conditions, the Thunder Bay region was classified D1 once more. Over the past year precipitation has been about 130 mm (5 in) less than normal. Stream flows throughout the region were below average as well.