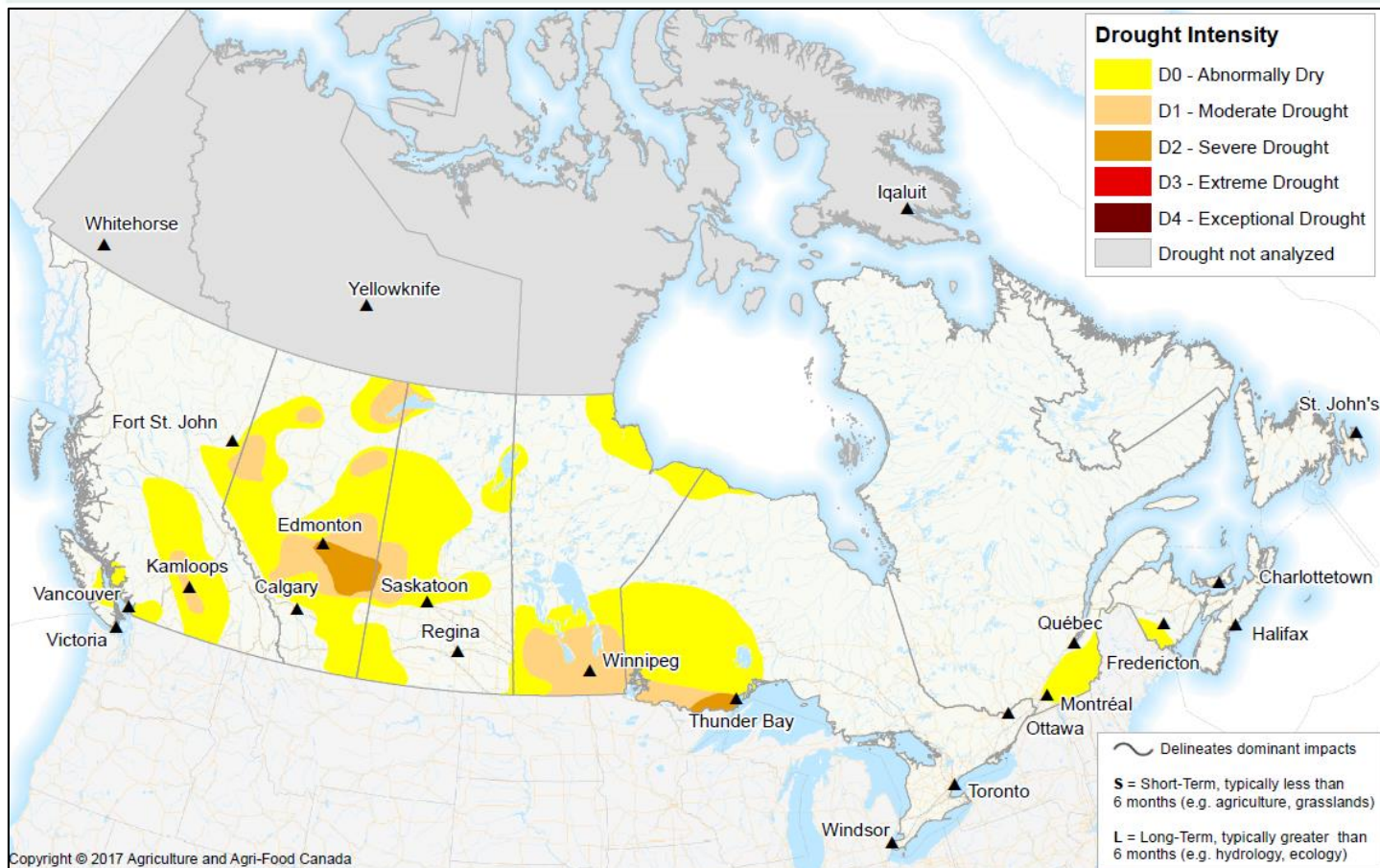


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of January 31, 2012



January brought below or well below normal precipitation to most regions of southern Canada, and normal precipitation in northern regions. Temperatures across the Prairie Provinces and east into Ontario were 3-8°C warmer than normal. These exceptionally warm conditions coupled with the lack of snow cover kept the regions much drier than normal, and warranted expanding drought classifications even though impacts during the winter months is minimal. As of January 31, approximately 23% of the analyzed area of Canada was designated to be in drought. Looking ahead, above normal precipitation is expected in British Columbia and parts of central Canada, while temperatures are to be above normal everywhere across the country, except in B.C.

Pacific Region (BC)



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In British Columbia, moderate drought (D1) continued in the central interior. The Okanogan region has received less than 40% of average precipitation since October 1, and snowpack was about 75% of average. Abnormally dry (D0) conditions remained across parts of Vancouver Island and the South Coast which have been short about 200- 300 mm (8-12 in) over the past six months. Typically the west coast receives much of its yearly precipitation in the winter months, so the dry conditions would be alleviated quickly with a return to near normal levels over the next couple months.

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

The prairie region came through January with limited snow cover and higher than normal temperatures. Concern about drought ahead of the coming crop year continued to mount across the region, however there is still significant time to receive the required precipitation prior to the spring. Spring runoff of winter snowpack is normally required to fill reservoirs and dugouts, however at this time there are very few water shortages in the areas with below normal precipitation. For regions that had low soil moisture going into the winter, including central Alberta, western Saskatchewan and southern Manitoba, the drought conditions could intensify quickly in the spring without adequate late winter or early spring precipitation. Well below normal spring runoff is expected due to the low snow pack and low soil moisture. The forecast spring conditions are a sharp contrast to last spring which saw very high runoff amounts across the Prairies along with unprecedented flooding.

East-central Alberta is 100 mm (4 in) below normal precipitation since September 1, 2011, and was upgraded from D1 (Moderate Drought) to D2 (Severe Drought). That level of departure is significant for the region which normally receives about 400 mm (16 in) yearly. Drought conditions also persisted throughout the Peace River region of northwest Alberta, which was classified D1. Over the past six months much of the region has had 40-60% of normal precipitation. The region had a respite from its multi-year drought last summer when rainfall was above normal, but long term impacts continue and more severe drought conditions could develop quickly. In southern Manitoba, areas surrounding Winnipeg were 90 mm (3.8 in) below normal precipitation since November 1, 2011, and remained classified D1. Since Christmas, many producers in the region have been hauling water for cattle where shallow wells have gone dry. In Saskatchewan, much of the west-central and southwest regions were abnormally dry (D0).

Long term drought remained in the Lake Athabasca region of northern Alberta and Saskatchewan, where a dry autumn was followed by limited snow fall, leaving the region classified D1.

Central Region (ON, QC)

Northwest Ontario also remained in long term drought (D1) with some places at less than 50% of normal all winter; as a result local Conservation Authorities maintained the Level 1 and Level 2 Low Water Conditions in the region. Like the Prairies, snowfall has been sparse over this northern boreal region which could bring an early start to the fire season next year if the forest remains dry.