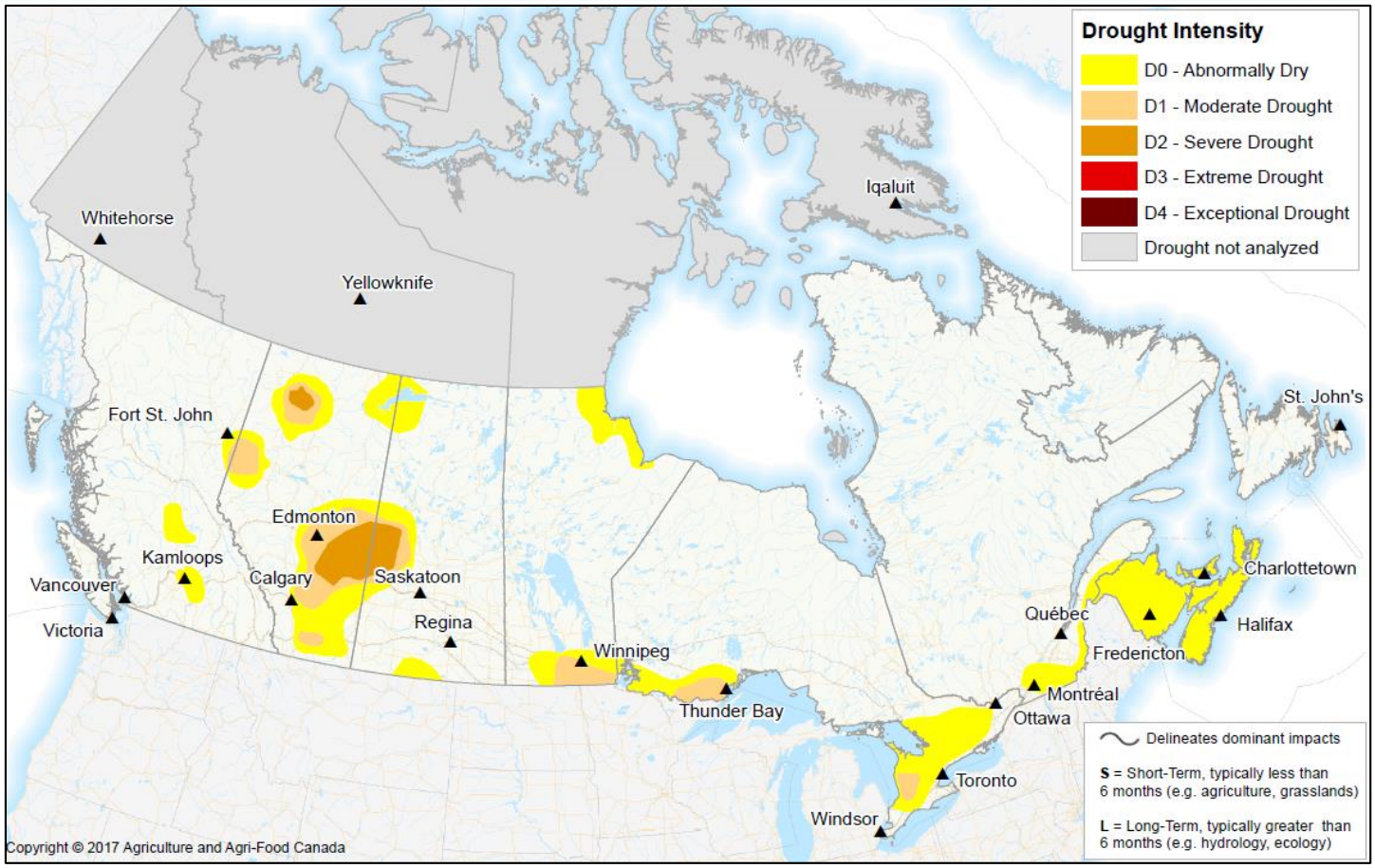
Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of March 31, 2012



Exceptionally warm weather throughout March coast to coast accelerated the arrival of spring. Lower than normal snowpack throughout much of the country resulted in low runoff and accelerated the drying of soils. Some significant spring storms occurred in many of the drought regions reducing the severity and extent in many locations; the overall the extent of drought across the country was reduced from February. The most significant drought remained in central Alberta and southern Manitoba. Dry conditions took hold in southern Ontario, and stayed consistent in Eastern Canada. Looking ahead to June, temperatures are forecast to be above normal everywhere except British Columbia, which is to be below normal. The three month precipitation forecast from April to June calls for below normal precipitation across the Canadian agricultural region however, precipitation is very difficult to predict.

Pacific Region (BC)

In British Columbia, the moderate drought (D1) area in the central interior was reduced to encompass the northern portion of the Okanogan region. Mountain snowpack recovered in March to be about 90% of normal, up from 75% of normal in February. Approximately 90% of the winter snow pack has accumulated, which is a good sign for

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

The Prairie Provinces had negligible snow cover all winter which quickly disappeared in March with daily highs up to 10 degrees above normal. That is a sharp contrast to March 2011 where above normal snowfall brought tremendous spring runoff and flooding through the spring season. This season central Alberta and west-central Saskatchewan are dealing with Severe Drought (D2) conditions due to the lack of winter snowfall. Sloughs and dugouts dependant on runoff did not fill up, and pastures remained very dry. Since September 1, 2011 the region is short more than 100 mm (4 in) of precipitation. That level of departure is significant for the region which normally receives about 400 mm (16 in) yearly. Mountain snowpack in the Rockies was above normal, with will result in good streams flow through the summer.

The Peace River region of northwest Alberta remained classified D1. Over the past six months much of the region has had only 40-60% of normal precipitation, and in March some areas received less than 40%. 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 without some timely spring rainfall.

In Manitoba, a significant rain/snow mix in later March brought some much needed moisture to parts of the southern and central regions. The runoff from the spring storms helped to fill dugouts. As a result, the D1 area was reduced. However, areas surrounding Winnipeg remained over 100 mm (4 in) short of precipitation since September 2011, and remained classified D1. Producers in the region continued to haul water for cattle where shallow wells have been dry since late December. Also, many rivers across southern Manitoba had already reached their spring runoff peak and began receding by late March; an unusual occurrence brought about by the lack of snow cover over the winter. Low lake water levels were also reported across the eastern region.

Long term drought was alleviated in the Lake Athabasca region of northern Alberta and Saskatchewan, leaving the region classified D0 from D1, where winter precipitation was higher than expected.

Central Region (ON, QC)

In Ontario, daily highs in March approached 26ºC in some places, scoring the previous records. The exceptionally warm weather brought an early start to spring seeding in some areas, but also brought on drought conditions. Southwest Ontario along Lake Huron was classified D1

(Moderate Drought) where precipitation since November 2011 has been very sparse; record dry for some places. Northwest Ontario remained in long term drought (D1) with some places at less than 50% of normal all winter. Local Conservation Authorities maintained the Level 1 and Level 2 Low Water Conditions in the region. Similar to 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.

Atlantic Region (NS, NB, PE, NL)

Western New Brunswick and the Gaspé region of Quebec continued to be classified abnormally dry where precipitation remained less than 75% of normal over the past six months. To date there has been minimal impact, but the region will continue to be monitored closely.

For more information reach us at www.agr.gc.ca or call us toll-free 1-855-773-0241.