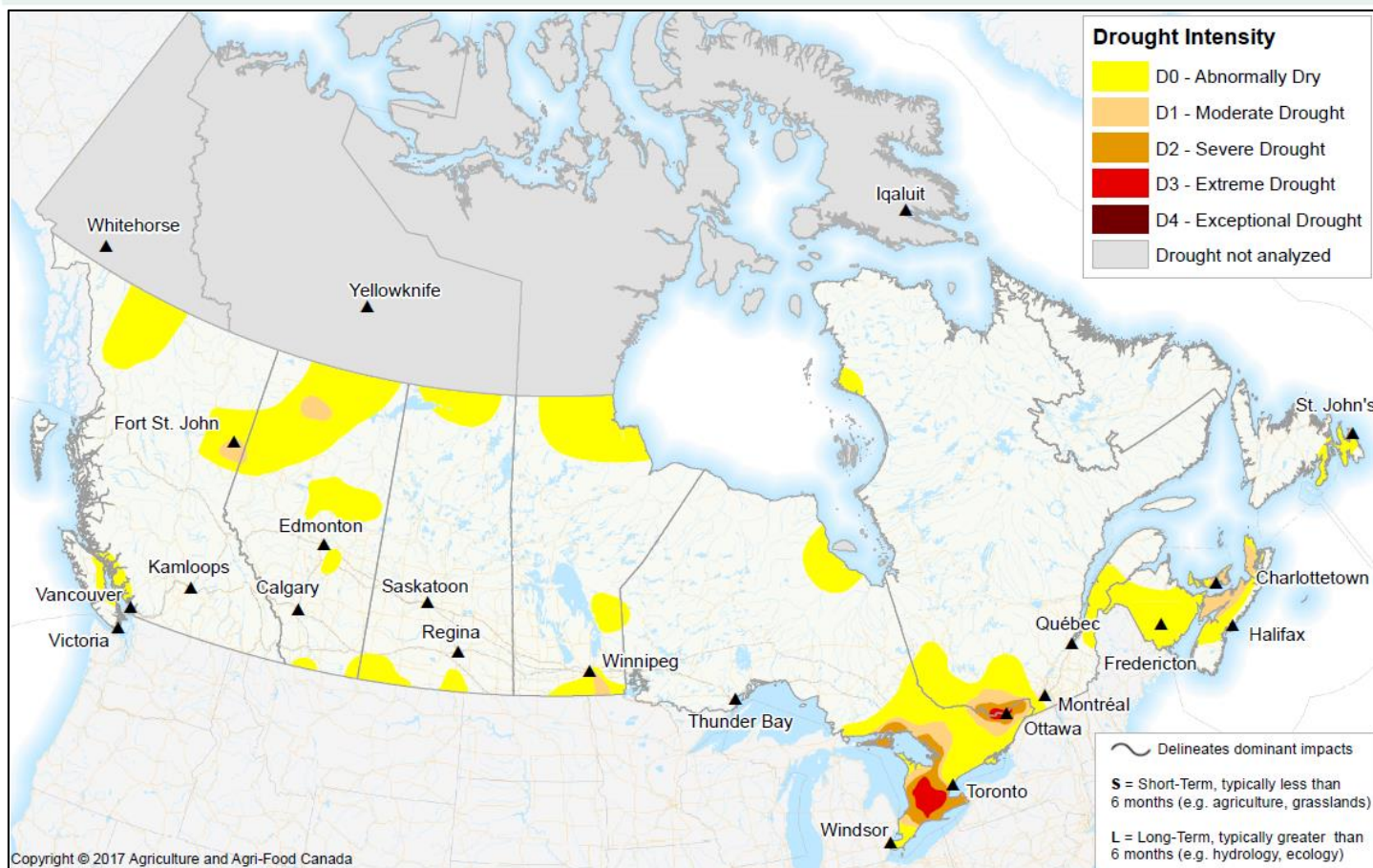


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of July 31, 2012



In July, hot and dry weather intensified drought conditions throughout Eastern Canada, including southern Ontario, southern Quebec, and the Atlantic region. Corn, soybean, fruit and vegetable crops all suffered in the heat. In western Canada, moderate drought remained in northeast British Columbia, northwest Alberta, and southern Manitoba. Abnormally dry pockets were also reported throughout the northern Boreal Forest region, which increased the threat of forest fires.

## Pacific Region (BC)

Drought conditions worsened across the Peace River region of northeast British Columbia and northwest Alberta. Since September 2011, the areas on the Alberta side are short over 120 mm



(more than 4.5 inches) of precipitation. Annual crops fared well with some timely rainfall so far this season, but long-term impacts to forage and pasture continued. On the British Columbia side, precipitation has been below normal over the past three months, and median stream flow was much less than average.

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

On the prairies drought was not a concern for most regions, apart from southern Manitoba which remained in moderate drought (D1). Less than 70 percent of normal rain has fallen since April 1. Flows on the Red River, and other lakes and rivers in the southeast area, were below normal, and on-farm dugouts were lower than normal. Hay production was expected to be 10 to 20 percent lower due to the drought, and annual crop yields could also be impacted.

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

Extreme drought (D3) gripped southern Ontario, including areas southwest of Toronto, and areas surrounding Ottawa. For these places seasonal rainfall is down over 125 mm (5 in) since April 1; more than half the normal amount. Corn, wheat and soybean crops are expected to suffer significant yield losses as needed July rainfall did not arrive. Level 1 and Level 2 low water advisories were maintained and expanded across more than twenty Conservation Authorities throughout the region. The Level 1 and 2 advisories call for voluntary water use reductions of 10 and 20 percent, respectively. River and lake levels across the region remained well below average. In particular, outflows from the Ottawa River basin were at record low for July. Lake Ontario also fell 35 cm (14 in) below its long-term average based on records since 1918. The last time the lake was that low at the end of July was in 1965.

Across southern Ontario, the lack of rainfall was accompanied in mid- to late July with daily highs over 35°C (over 95°F), which set new records in many places. According to Environment Canada, Ottawa received only 12 mm of rain in July whereas normally close to 90 mm (about 3.5 inches) is expected. Since April 1 the area is short over 100 mm (approximately 4 inches). Cattle producers continued to deal with the drought that has dried up pastures and forced supplemental feeding in areas southeast of Ottawa, with more cattle expected to move to market as herds are further reduced. Community pastures in the area sent cattle home in mid-July as the grass completely dried out. Reports indicated that some producers were travelling over 500 km to purchase hay. Produce prices for all fruits and vegetables are expected to climb higher, and even wild mushroom availability was impacted by the dry spring and summer to date.

Drought conditions in southwest Quebec also worsened in July. As in Ontario, much of the region is short over 125 mm (5 inches) since April 1. As a result, hay production is anticipated to be 10 to 20 percent less than normal, and hay prices have already more than doubled in some areas. The dry conditions also caused pollination problems, so the apple crop is forecast to be

approximately 15 percent less than a year ago. Water levels fell substantially over July, with new record low levels set for the St. Lawrence River at Montreal. That prompted public advisories for mariners and recreational boaters. Parts of northeast Ontario and northwest Quebec remained classified as D0 (Abnormally Dry); over three months this area is short 60 to 80 mm (2.4 to 3.2 inches) of moisture. Numerous wildfires continued throughout Ontario, where over 1,100 fires have already been reported this year; that is more than twice the ten-year average. Across Quebec, a provincial burn ban was instituted.

## **Atlantic Region (NS, NB, PE, NL)**

In Atlantic Canada, moderate drought (D1) emerged in eastern Prince Edward Island and western Nova Scotia. Rainfall remained well below average in July, little more than half of normal in many places. Since April 1 these areas are over 120 mm (more than 4.5 inches) short of moisture. In PEI crops were wilting, and water use restrictions were put in place in the Charlottetown area in mid-July. Northwest Nova Scotia received about 25 percent of normal July rainfall. Wells in the area were drying up, and water shortages were expected heading into August. Crops were parched in the dry conditions, and irrigation ponds were drawn down to exceptionally low levels. As a result, vegetable yields are expected to be much smaller. Newly planted fruit trees were in danger as well. Local residents stated the drought conditions are the worst in the region since the late 1990s.