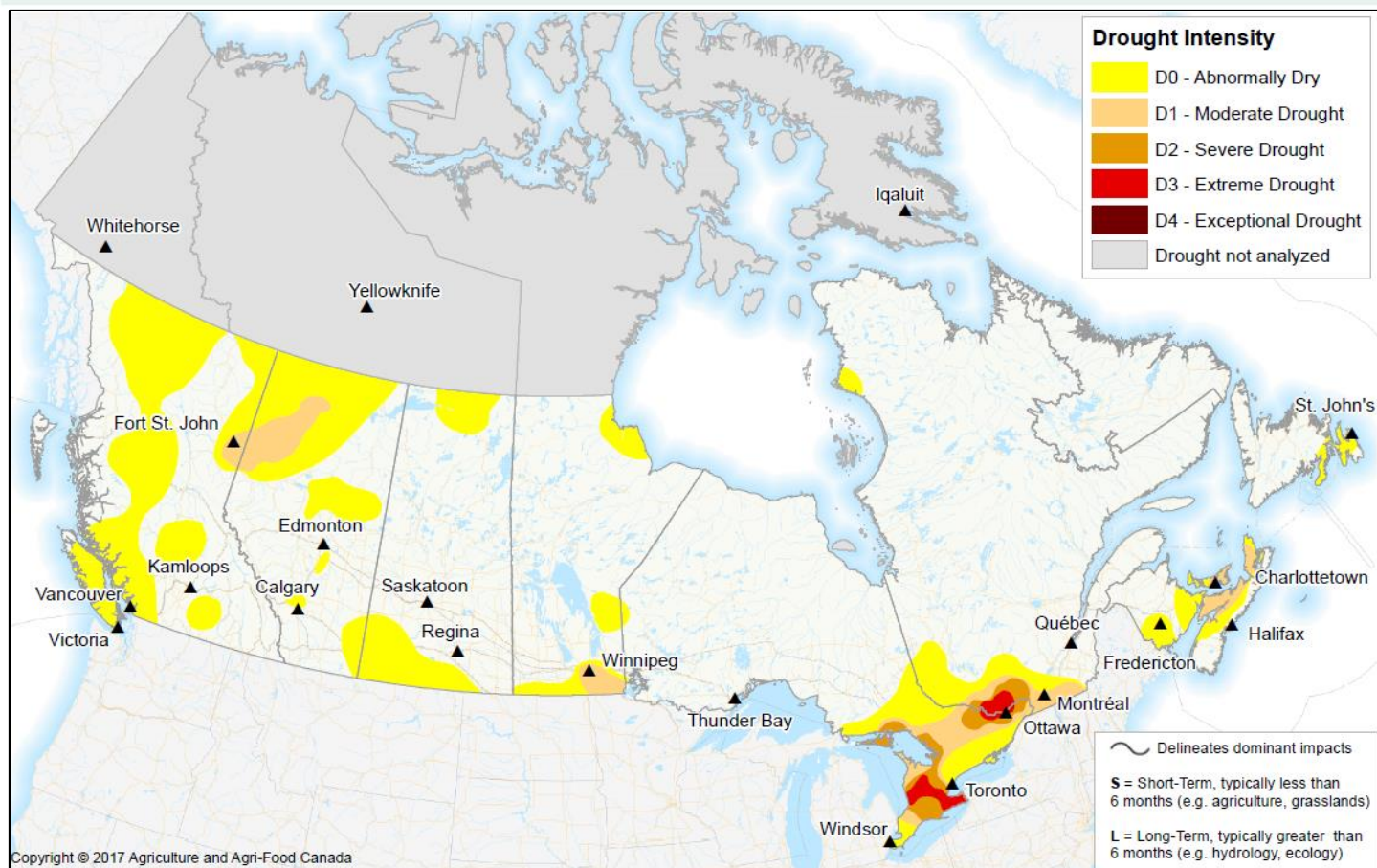


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of August 31, 2012



August brought high heat and low rainfall to most regions of Canada. The hot, dry weather intensified drought conditions throughout Eastern Canada, and took moisture out of the ground in the west, southern Ontario, southern Quebec, and the Atlantic region. The heat affected annual crops, forages and pasture land everywhere. Moderate drought remained in northeast British Columbia, northwest Alberta, and southern Manitoba.

## Pacific Region (BC)

Drought expanded 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 (4.5 in) of precipitation. Annual crops fared well with some timely rainfall, but long-term impacts to



forage and pasture are a concern. Low stream flow advisories continued throughout the British Columbia region, and grain crops were suffering from water stress. Crop yields are forecast to be slightly below average as a result. The hay yield is also expected to be below average. On the British Columbia side, precipitation has been below normal over the past three months, and median stream flow remained much less than average.

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

Drought and abnormally dry conditions occurred in Western Canada. Due to above average spring rainfall drought was not an initial concern for most regions, but low rainfall through August drove soil moisture reserves down across southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. Southern Manitoba remained in Moderate Drought (D1), where less than 70 percent of normal rain has fallen since April 1. On-farm water supplies remained lower than normal in the southeast area. Reports indicated that pastures north of Winnipeg and in the southwest region of Manitoba will be done by the end of September, which would bring about the need for supplemental feeding. Hay production was reported to be 10 to 20 percent lower due to the drought, though annual crops were faring well as harvest began.

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

Extreme Drought (D3) persisted in southern Ontario within areas southwest of Toronto and those surrounding Ottawa. Though August rainfall was near normal, over the past three months it was less than half in, and since September 2011 the deficit is over 240 mm (9.6 in) in the driest areas. Monthly river flows remained down to less than 30% of normal in these areas. Harvest progressed throughout the month with crop yields that were lower than average, and the lack of soil moisture impacted winter wheat planting. Tree fruits, which were already suffering from an early season frost, were also affected by the dry conditions; peach, pear, and plum yields are forecast to be down 30, 60, and 33 percent, respectively. Level 1 and Level 2 low water advisories were maintained across more than twenty Ontario Conservation Authorities. The Level 1 and 2 advisories call for voluntary water use reductions of 10 and 20 percent, respectively.

Across southern Ontario, the lack of rainfall was accompanied by high temperatures. Since April 1 the area is short over 100 mm (approximately 4 inches). The Hamilton area in particular has had about half of its normal rainfall between March and August. Producers began supplementing their cattle's feed on pasture in late July as green grass completely dried up. Some in the area sought to import barley from the west for feed stock. The price of hay in the area has tripled, with large round bales that normally sell for \$30 going for \$100 or more. Good quality dry hay was going to US dairies for 18 cents per pound, whereas normally it would be 6 cents per pound. Reports indicated that some producers were travelling over 500 km to purchase hay. Producers shipping cows to local market found prices dropped about 20 cents

per pound from earlier this year. Despite the lower prices more sell offs are expected. Altogether Ontario's cattle herd has retracted by 20% since 2004.

Drought conditions in southwest Quebec also worsened in July. Much of the region is short over 125 mm (5 inches) since April 1. As a result, second cut hay production was lower than normal, and yields for most annual crops in the region are forecast to be average at best. Parts of northeast Ontario and northwest Quebec remained classified as Abnormally Dry (D0); over three months this area is short 60 to 80 mm (2.4 to 3.2 inches) of moisture. Numerous wildfires continued throughout Ontario. Over 1,100 fires have already been reported this year, twice the ten-year average. Across Quebec, a provincial fire ban was instituted.

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

In Atlantic Canada, Moderate Drought (D1) occurred in eastern Prince Edward Island and western Nova Scotia. Rainfall remained below average in August, little more than half of normal in many places. Since April 1 these areas are over 120 mm (4.5 in) short of moisture. Crops were parched in the dry conditions, and irrigation ponds were drawn down to exceptionally low levels. Vegetable yields came in smaller than average. However, the warmer and drier conditions were welcomed by wine makers, who expect a stellar crop.