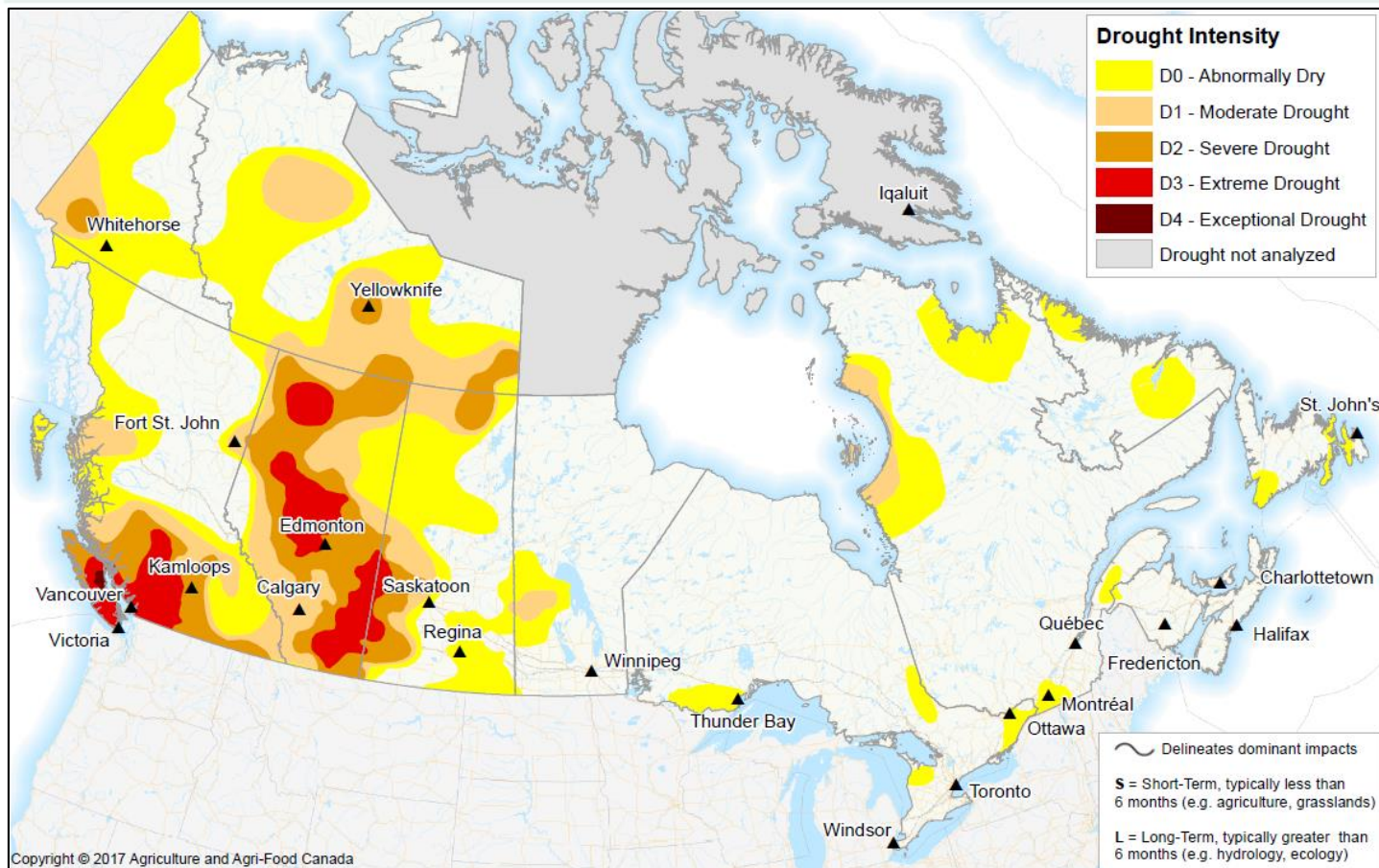


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of July 31, 2015



While recent precipitation across portions of the Prairie region helped reduce drought extent and intensity, significant drought levels remain across western Canada. Since April 1st, 28 per cent of Canada's agriculture region still has received 'very low' to 'record low' precipitation, affecting approximately 21,350 farms and 5.1 million cattle. Southern British Columbia, northern and central Alberta, and western Saskatchewan continue to be affected. Portions of Vancouver Island are under Exceptional Drought Conditions. Other areas of concern include northern portions of Canada, including large areas throughout Yukon and Northwest Territories.

## Pacific Region (BC)



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Following an abnormally dry spring, the first half of summer in British Columbia has been much drier than normal. In BC, as of July 28th, 23% of the agricultural regions, including the lower mainland and parts of Vancouver Island, have received 'Very Low' to 'Record Low' precipitation. This has resulted in dry soil moisture and numerous low stream flow advisories and fishery closures to be put into effect throughout the coastal and southern regions. Parts of the Fraser Valley (southern region) are at the highest level (level 4) of water restrictions, with the exception of the Okanagan, which remained at a Level 3 (very dry). While some regulated streams on Vancouver Island are faring slightly better due to reservoir storage, most streams are less than 50% of median flows and many streams are experiencing record low flows for this time of year. The provincial fire danger rating in the south was very high to extreme. Inadequate precipitation for rangeland, pasture and non-irrigated crops, and the increasing risk of the lack of availability and/or access to water for irrigation are some of the major agricultural impacts. Some significant increases in hay prices have been noted. The province has also received requests from cattle producers about assistance in securing hay. Berry and tree fruit crops in the southern region are well-ahead of normal development. The presence of an abnormally warm pool of water over the northeastern Pacific has resulted in monthly mean temperatures 3 to 4 degrees warmer than normal. High temperatures have caused some reduced yields as well as rapid crop maturity resulting in some losses due to insufficient labour and equipment to harvest and process the crop. Irrigation can help offset the dry and drought conditions, but the longer the dry and drought conditions continue, the greater the concerns for harvest this year, and conditions for next year.

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

Across the Prairies, significant portions of Alberta and western Saskatchewan remain very dry due to well-below normal precipitation since April 1. Earlier this spring and into mid-summer, much of this region went through a prolonged dry spell of more than 30 days without precipitation. The extremely dry conditions have negatively affected agricultural production during a phase when moisture was critical for crops, therefore pasture growth, germination and crop development have all been below-average. In addition, livestock feed shortages are widespread, ranging from severe to localized across Alberta and Saskatchewan, and ranchers are seeking alternative feed supplies. On July 27 and 28, an intense storm system delivered significant precipitation of 25 to 100 mm (more in small, localized areas) from southeast Alberta across southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The precipitation has helped to recharge soil moisture, however; crops remained stressed as the moisture came too late in the flowering stage to significantly improve the situation.

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

Over the last 30 days, Eastern Canada continued to receive average to above-average precipitation. While there are no short-term impacts, portions of southern Ontario and southern Québec continue to be rated Abnormally Dry (D0) due to below-average fall and

winter precipitation. Portions of Newfoundland have received 60 to 85% of average precipitation since April 1, thus classified as Abnormally Dry (D0).

## **Northern Region (YT, NT)**

In the northern areas around Hudson Bay, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, below-average snow packs have led to a significant portion of the area classified in Abnormally Dry (D0) or a Moderate Drought (D1) condition. For much of the area, fire danger continued to be a concern heading into August.