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PROGRESS OF SEEDING AT MAY 31, 1956  
BIBLIOTHÈQUE

Winterkilling and Condition of Over-wintered Crops and Rates of Seeding

An estimated 84 per cent of the total acreage expected to be sown to spring wheat, oats, barley, flaxseed and mixed grains in Canada <sup>1/</sup> was seeded by May 31. After a slow start, because of unfavourable weather, seeding of spring-sown grain in the Prairie Provinces proceeded rapidly during the last two weeks in May and by May 31, 87 per cent of the acreage expected to be sown was planted. Eastern Canadian farmers plagued by unseasonably cool backward weather were able to seed only 57 per cent of the intended acreage and reported slow progress during the last two weeks of May. British Columbia experienced good spring weather and by May 31, 96 per cent of the seeding was completed. The percentage seeded by May 31 of the intended acreage for Canada for the five crops, with corresponding figures for 1955 in brackets, is as follows: Spring wheat 97 (87); oats 73 (74); barley 76 (57); flaxseed 72 (53); mixed grains 66 (90) and total for the five grains 84 (77).

Hay and pasture generally came through the winter in good condition although the percentage killed in most provinces was higher than for the previous winter and especially high in Alberta. An estimated 9 per cent of these crops were killed this past winter compared with 5 per cent the previous year. The rate of growth this spring of hay and pasture in Eastern Canada was disappointingly slow up to May 31 and a high percentage of correspondents reported condition of these crops as below average. Fall rye suffered heavy damage especially in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The estimate for all Canada indicates that 29 per cent was killed compared with 4 per cent the year previous. Average rates of seeding show the usual variations between regions in Canada, but within regions vary only slightly from the preceding year.

Estimates of the progress of seeding, as well as those of winterkilling, spring condition and rates of seeding are based on the May 31 survey of the Bureau's crop correspondents conducted in co-operation with provincial departments. This survey was formerly made at April 30 but in 1955 was moved ahead to May 31. The new date makes it possible for crop correspondents to better assess damage caused by winterkilling and if the season is particularly late provides more valuable information on the progress of seeding.

Progress of Seeding at May 31 Throughout Canada 84 per cent of the five spring-sown grains which normally account for at least 95 per cent of the total spring-sown crop acreage was seeded by May 31. This is somewhat ahead of a year earlier when 77 per cent was sown. On a regional basis, however, most progress was made in the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia where seeding was 87 and 96 per cent completed, respectively. The West accounts for about 88 per cent of the intended acreage to be sown to the five crops. With favourable weather, seeding made very rapid

<sup>1/</sup> Excluding Newfoundland for which data are not available.

progress during the last two weeks in May. Wheat seeding in Saskatchewan, for instance, increased from 23 per cent completed on May 15 to 97 per cent completed by May 31. In only a few areas has work been delayed recently because of too much moisture, although some farmers in the Prairie Provinces intentionally delayed seeding to kill a crop of wild oats, which present a serious weed control problem.

Farmers in Eastern Canada, where about 12 per cent of the intended acreage of the five spring-sown crops is located, have experienced continued wet and cool weather which has made work on the land difficult. In Ontario, only 70 per cent of the five crops were sown by May 31 while last year seeding was 99 per cent completed. Nova Scotia, experiencing the most difficulty of all, had completed only 21 per cent compared with 72 per cent a year earlier. For Eastern Canada as a whole seeding was only 57 per cent completed on May 31.

Although farmers in northeastern Saskatchewan and in the northwestern and Inter-lake regions in Manitoba experienced difficulty working the land because of excess moisture until well on in May, progress since then has been rapid. For the Prairie Provinces as a whole seeding of spring wheat was estimated to have been 97 per cent completed by May 31 with each of the three provinces slightly ahead of a year earlier. Seeding of oats was 81 per cent completed, barley 76 per cent, and flaxseed 72 per cent completed. Again, seeding in each province was ahead of a year earlier. In all, Western Canadian farmers were able to make remarkable progress in getting the crop seeded. A high degree of mechanization, along with very few breaks in the weather, made possible long hours of uninterrupted work. In addition, good post-harvest conditions in 1955 permitted farmers to partially prepare the seed bed last fall.

In British Columbia fine spring weather in most districts made it possible to get on the land ahead of any other part of Canada. By May 31, 96 per cent or virtually all the land was seeded.

In Eastern Canada only 42 per cent of the spring wheat, 53 per cent of the oats, 55 per cent of the barley, 41 per cent of the flaxseed, and 66 per cent of the mixed grains had been sown by May 31. In Ontario where progress was better than the average for Eastern Canada, the following percentages had been sown by May 31: spring wheat, 45; oats, 68; barley, 69; mixed grains, 75; and flaxseed, 41. However, many areas in Ontario continue to report slow growth of crops and in many cases seedings in low-lying fields have been drowned out.

As in Ontario, spring seeding in Quebec has proceeded slowly under very adverse conditions. Cool, wet weather has continually delayed field operations and by May 31 only 34 per cent of the spring wheat, 37 per cent of oats, 24 per cent of the barley and 31 per cent of the mixed grains had been seeded.

In the Maritimes, progress of seeding has also been extremely slow. Percentages of the five spring-sown grains for Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick respectively, with the 1955 comparison in brackets, are as follows: 40 (63); 21 (72); 46 (74).

Since May 31 the weather in the Prairie Provinces has favoured rapid completion of seeding. However, in Eastern Canada cool, wet weather has continued over most areas and seeding progress has been disappointing.



Estimated Progress of Seeding at May 31, 1955 and 1956

	Spring Wheat		Oats		Barley		Flaxseed		Mixed Grains		Total Five Grains	
	- percentage completed -											
	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>
P.E.I.	68	41	62	41	54	29	-	-	65	39	63	40
N.S.	60	5	73	23	65	17	-	-	71	12	72	21
N.B.	79	63	74	47	72	43	-	-	71	34	74	46
Que.	74	34	83	37	77	24	-	-	80	31	82	36
Ont.	100	45	99	68	99	69	88	41	99	75	99	70
Man.	90	92	71	72	65	63	44	44	65	32	73	71
Sask.	87	97	55	78	57	77	50	79	55	63	77	89
Alta.	87	98	78	91	66	83	76	89	70	72	79	91
B.C.	91	98	90	95	85	97	88	96	81	81	89	96
Canada	87	97	74	73	57	76	53	72	90	66	77	84

Condition of Winter  
Wheat, Fall Rye,  
Tame Hay and Pasture

At May 31, correspondents were asked to report the condition of winter wheat, fall rye and tame hay in their neighbourhood as being above-average, average and below average for that time of the year. In Ontario, the major winter wheat producing area, only 4 per cent of the correspondents reported conditions as above average, while 47 per cent reported average and 49 per cent reported below-average conditions.

Percentages of correspondents reporting the condition of tame hay, pasture and fall rye in each of the three condition categories as at May 31, 1956 are set out in the accompanying table. A high proportion of the correspondents in all provinces reported conditions as average or below average, with below average condition predominating in Eastern Canada and British Columbia and average conditions prevailing in the Prairie Provinces.

Percentage of Correspondents Reporting Condition of Tame Hay, Pasture and Fall Rye as Above Average, Average and Below Average at May 31, 1956

Province	Tame Hay			Pasture			Fall Rye		
	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Above Average	Average	Below Average
P.E.I.	5	54	41	4	41	55	-	50	50
N.S.	2	33	65	3	23	74	-	43	57
N.B.	4	26	70	3	20	77	-	43	57
Que.	8	44	48	3	31	66	8	40	52
Ont.	3	26	71	2	23	75	3	57	40
Man.	7	60	33	7	54	39	8	62	30
Sask.	11	70	19	11	68	21	2	45	53
Alta.	6	54	40	6	59	35	2	33	65
B.C.	4	38	58	13	30	57	-	13	87



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Winterkilling of  
Winter Wheat, Fall  
Rye and Tame Hay

Relatively severe damage to fall-sown crops and hay by winter-killing was reported by the Bureau's correspondents this year. In Ontario, where most of Canada's winter wheat is grown, it is estimated that 11 per cent of the area seeded in the fall of 1955 was winterkilled compared with an estimated 5 per cent the previous year. Winter-killing of fall-sown rye, especially heavy in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, is estimated as follows, with the previous year's figures in brackets: Canada 29 (4); Quebec 3 (4); Ontario 7 (2); Manitoba 7 (3); Saskatchewan 32 (4); Alberta 46 (4); and British Columbia 47 (3).

During the winter of 1955-56 the following percentages of tame hay acreages are estimated to have been winterkilled with the corresponding figures for the previous winter in brackets: Canada 9 (5); Prince Edward Island 4 (3); Nova Scotia 2 (3); New Brunswick 5 (3); Quebec 6 (4); Ontario 9 (7); Manitoba 3 (3); Saskatchewan 4 (2); Alberta 19 (4); and British Columbia 25 (3).

Average Rates  
of Seeding

Average rates of seeding, as reported by crop correspondents for their own farms this year are set out in the table below.

Seeding rates for the various grains show some variation between regions, with seeding rates generally heaviest in the Maritimes and lightest in the Prairie Provinces.

Average Rates of Seeding Reported by Crop Correspondents, 1956

Province	Spring Wheat	Oats	Barley	Spring Rye	Flax- seed
- bushels per acre -					
Prince Edward Island	2.0	3.6	2.3	-	-
Nova Scotia	1.8	3.2	2.1	-	-
New Brunswick	2.0	3.5	2.2	-	-
Quebec	2.0	2.9	2.0	1.7	-
Ontario	1.7	2.5	1.8	1.5	0.9
Manitoba	1.5	2.3	1.7	1.2	0.6
Saskatchewan	1.4	2.1	1.6	1.2	0.6
Alberta	1.4	2.3	1.7	1.1	0.6
British Columbia	1.6	3.0	2.0	1.4	0.5