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PROGRESS OF SEEDING AT MAY 31, 1957

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

An estimated 94 per cent of the total acreage expected to be sown to spring wheat, oats, barley, flaxseed and mixed grains in Canada 1/ was seeded by May 31 as compared with 84 per cent a year earlier. In sharp contrast to a year earlier, when most of the seeding was done in the last two weeks in May, farmers this year were able to take advantage of good weather during most of May to prepare seed beds and carry out seeding operations. Warm weather early in the season caused weed seeds to germinate and many farmers, especially in the Prairie Provinces, were able by delaying seeding to obtain a good weed kill before planting crops. Despite these intentional delays, some 94 per cent of the spring-sown grain in the Prairie Provinces, was in the ground by May 31 as compared with 87 per cent a year ago. Seeding progressed rapidly in eastern Canada as well, especially in Ontario where 85 per cent of the seeding was completed by May 15. By May 31, some 91 per cent had been seeded in eastern Canada. British Columbia also experienced good spring weather and, by the end of May, 92 per cent of the seeding was completed. The percentages seeded by May 31 of the intended acreage for Canada for the five crops, with corresponding figures for 1956 in brackets, are as follows: Spring wheat, 99 (97); oats, 92 (73); barley, 88 (76); flaxseed, 88 (72); mixed grains, 89 (66); and total for the five grains, 94 (84).

Hay and pasture lands generally came through the winter in good condition although the percentage killed in the Maritime Provinces was higher than for the previous winter. Across Canada, an estimated 6 per cent of these crops were killed this past winter compared with 9 per cent the previous year. Aided by early warm weather the growth this spring of hay and pasture was generally good. Winterkilling of fall rye was light and the estimates for all Canada indicates that 8 per cent was killed, in sharp contrast to a year earlier when some 29 per cent of the crop was killed.

Average rates of seeding of spring grains show the usual variations between regions in Canada, but within regions vary but 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 winter-killing and if the season is particularly late provides more valuable information on the progress of seeding.

1/ Excluding Newfoundland for which data are not available.

Prepared in the Crops Section, Agriculture Division.

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Progress of Seeding at May 31

Throughout Canada 94 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 considerably ahead of a year earlier when 84 per cent was sown and two years ago when only 77 per cent was sown. On a regional basis, in the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia seeding was 94 and 92 per cent completed, respectively. The west accounts for some 89 per cent of the intended acreage to be sown to the five crops. Seeding was well spaced throughout most of May. Wheat seeding in Saskatchewan, for instance, progressed from 57 per cent completed on May 15 to 99 per cent completed by May 31, in contrast to a year ago when the comparable proportions were 23 and 97 per cent.

In eastern Canada, where about 11 per cent of the intended acreage of the five spring-sown grains is located, seeding progress is considerably ahead of a year ago. In Ontario, spring came early and seeding conditions were ideal. Although progress has been slower in the Maritimes and eastern Quebec, good progress had been made by May 31. For eastern Canada as a whole seeding was 91 per cent complete on May 31 compared with 57 per cent a year earlier.

Seeding proceeded throughout most of May across the Prairies and weather conditions caused few delays with the exception of some areas in northeastern Saskatchewan and northwestern Manitoba where early spring moisture was excessive. However, by May 31, seeding was nearing completion in these areas. Because of the long planting season, in contrast to recent years, many farmers intentionally delayed planting and were able to obtain a kill of wild oats before seeding grains. There has been a tendency in some of the drier areas to await good rains before seeding late crops. For the Prairie Provinces as a whole seeding of spring wheat was estimated to have been 99 per cent completed by May 31 with each of the three provinces slightly ahead of a year earlier. Seeding of oats was 93 per cent completed, barley 88 per cent and flaxseed 88 per cent completed, in all cases considerably ahead of a year earlier. In British Columbia, by May 31, seeding was virtually completed, with the exception of some barley still to be sown in the Peace River district.

In eastern Canada some 87 per cent of the spring wheat, 91 per cent of the oats, 91 per cent of the barley, 84 per cent of the flaxseed, and 92 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 were sown by May 31: spring wheat, 99; oats, 97; barley, 96; flaxseed, 84; and mixed grains, 97. In Quebec by May 31, in contrast to the late season a year ago, some 80 per cent of the spring wheat, 89 per cent of the oats, 82 per cent of the barley, and 86 per cent of the mixed grains had been seeded.

In the Maritimes seeding has also progressed much faster than a year earlier. Combined percentages of spring wheat, oats, barley, and mixed grains for Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick respectively, with 1956 comparisons in brackets, are as follows: 43 (40); 67 (21); 83 (46).

Since May 31 the weather across Canada has favoured rapid completion of seeding.

Estimated Progress of Seeding at May 31, 1956 and 1957

	Spring Wheat		Oats		Barley		Flaxseed		Mixed Grains		Total Five Grains	
	- percentage completed -											
	1956	1957	1956	1957	1956	1957	1956	1957	1956	1957	1956	1957
P.E.I.	41	55	41	43	29	38	-	-	39	43	40	43
N.S.	5	63	23	67	17	62	-	-	12	68	21	67
N.B.	63	82	47	83	43	82	-	-	34	79	46	83
Que.	34	80	37	89	24	82	-	-	31	86	36	88
Ont.	45	99	68	97	69	96	41	84	75	97	70	97
Man.	92	98	72	89	63	84	44	74	32	67	71	88
Sask.	97	99	78	94	77	91	79	92	63	94	89	96
Alta.	98	99	91	94	83	88	89	93	72	79	91	94
B.C.	98	97	95	95	97	86	96	92	81	77	96	92
Canada	97	99	73	92	76	88	72	88	66	89	84	94

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 year. In Ontario, the major winter wheat producing area, 30 per cent of the correspondents reported the winter wheat condition as above average, while 61 per cent reported average and 9 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, 1957 are set out in the accompanying table. A high proportion of the correspondents in all provinces, with the exception of British Columbia, reported conditions as average or below average with average condition predominating. In British Columbia above average conditions were reported most frequently for tame hay and pasture.

Percentage of Correspondents Reporting Condition of Tame Hay, Pasture and Fall Rye as Above Average, Average and Below Average at May 31, 1957

Province	Tame Hay			Pasture			Fall Rye		
	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Above Average	Average	Below Average
P.E.I.	6	55	39	5	35	60	14	57	29
N.S.	8	62	30	5	55	40	5	90	5
N.B.	8	69	23	8	67	25	25	25	50
Que.	14	66	20	15	64	21	26	64	10
Ont.	37	55	8	40	51	9	27	65	8
Man.	8	71	21	10	67	23	12	66	22
Sask.	4	59	37	5	60	35	5	57	38
Alta.	9	58	33	1	57	32	12	61	27
B.C.	49	47	4	54	38	8	33	65	2

Winterkilling of Winter Wheat, Fall Rye and Tame Hay

Relatively light damage to fall-sown crops and hay by winterkilling was reported by the Bureau's correspondents this year. In Ontario, where most of Canada's winter wheat is grown, it is estimated that 4 per cent of the area seeded in the fall of 1956 was winterkilled compared with 11 per cent the previous year. Winterkilling of fall-sown rye is estimated as follows, with the previous year's figures in brackets: Canada, 8 (29); Quebec, 5 (3); Ontario, 4 (7); Manitoba, 8 (7); Saskatchewan, 10 (32); Alberta, 6 (46); and British Columbia, 3 (47).

During the winter of 1956-57 the following percentages of tame hay acreages are estimated to have been winterkilled with the corresponding figures for the previous winter in brackets: Canada, 6 (9); Prince Edward Island, 10 (4); Nova Scotia, 5 (2); New Brunswick, 8 (5); Quebec, 7 (6); Ontario, 5 (9); Manitoba, 5 (3); Saskatchewan, 5 (4); Alberta, 6 (19); and British Columbia, 4 (25).

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 rates generally heaviest in the Maritimes and lightest in the Prairie Provinces.

Average Rates of Seeding Reported by Crop Correspondents, 1957

Province	Spring Wheat	Oats	Barley	Spring Rye	Flax-seed
			- bushels per acre -		
Prince Edward Island	1.9	3.7	2.2	-	-
Nova Scotia	2.2	3.4	2.3	-	-
New Brunswick	1.9	3.6	2.3	-	-
Quebec	2.0	3.0	2.0	1.7	-
Ontario	1.8	2.5	1.9	1.7	0.6
Manitoba	1.6	2.4	1.6	1.2	0.6
Saskatchewan	1.4	2.1	1.6	1.1	0.6
Alberta	1.4	2.3	1.7	1.1	0.6
British Columbia	1.6	2.9	1.9	1.4	0.5