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DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS - CANADA
AGRICULTURAL BRANCH

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Ottawa, June 8, 1934, 4 p.m. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics issues to-day a report on the numerical condition of field crops in Canada at the end of May as compiled from the returns of the Bureau's corps of crop correspondents.

CONDITION OF FIELD CROPS, MAY 31, 1934.

For the principal spring grains, fall wheat and fall rye, alfalfa and pastures, the numerical condition figures for Canada at May 31, 1934 were the lowest on record at that date - the records of the Bureau covering 26 years back to 1909. The poor crop prospects are largely the result of severe drought in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan and parts of Quebec and Alberta. Winter injury was also a principal factor in lowering the condition of hay and pasture fields in Eastern Canada, where these crops are such an important part of the farming system.

While the season is backward in the Maritime Provinces, the condition of all crops at the end of May was close to average. Since moisture supplies are adequate, except in certain counties of New Brunswick, the crops will make a rapid response to higher temperatures. In Quebec, the season is also late and growth has been very slow on account of the cold weather and lack of soil moisture. Generally, crop prospects are better than at this date last year, but condition figures are all below average. Higher temperatures and more rain are needed to promote growth. Ontario has the poorest crop prospects on record as a result of the severe winter and extremely dry spring. The winter wheat crop and hay and pasture lands have suffered most, with spring crops holding up well considering the adverse conditions. Heavy and immediate rains are necessary to prevent a very serious farm situation.

The Prairie Provinces have also experienced unfavourable weather conditions for crop growth. Only the disastrous spring of 1931 can be compared to the present in its effect on crop prospects. In Manitoba, the condition figures at May 31 for the principal grains, wheat, oats and barley and for hay and pasture are the lowest on record. The situation is worst in the southern and west-central districts, where the grasshopper infestation is also most serious. Northern districts had more ample reserves of moisture and crop prospects are consequently much higher. In Saskatchewan, the old drought area has returned. The southern, central and west-central areas have suffered from drought, soil-drifting, and grasshoppers. East-central and northern districts have much better prospects. The condition of the principal grains at May 31, 1934 is the lowest in the records covering 26 years, not excepting the disastrous seasons of 1917 and 1931. Only heavy rains and determined grasshopper-poisoning efforts will assure a near-average crop. Alberta has better crop prospects, principally due to higher moisture reserves. However, the southern and east-central areas were drought-stricken during the latter part of May, with grasshopper activities just beginning. The west-central and northern districts report conditions ranging from good to ideal. The Peace River country has significantly better prospects than in 1933.

British Columbia has been favoured with exceptionally good weather conditions for the growth of all crops and most of the condition figures at May 31 are equal to or above average. Hay and pasture prospects are especially good.

Numerical Condition of Field Crops.

Expressed in percentages of the long-time average yields per acre, the condition of the principal field crops on May 31, 1934, for all Canada was as follows, with the condition figures for the same date last year within brackets: Fall wheat 45 (95); spring wheat 79 (99); all wheat 78 (99); oats 85 (95); barley 83 (95); fall rye 59 (93); spring rye 75 (97); all rye 63 (94); peas 91 (95); mixed grains 89 (97); hay and clover 83 (93); alfalfa 66 (98); pasture 81 (93).

In the Prairie Provinces, the condition of the principal cereal crops on May 31, 1934, was as follows, with last year's figures in brackets: Manitoba - Wheat 82 (99); oats 83 (97); barley 83 (96); rye 83 (96). Saskatchewan - Wheat 73 (99); oats 73 (96); barley 74 (94); rye 53 (92). Alberta - Wheat 88 (98); oats 89 (95); barley 91 (94); rye 74 (98).

Weather Conditions Since June 1.

Since the reports of the crop correspondents were filed, there has been an improvement in crop conditions in the Maritimes, a distinct betterment in the Prairie Provinces, further deterioration in Ontario and western Quebec and little change in eastern Quebec and British Columbia.

Warmer weather in the interior and some rain in New Brunswick have helped the crops in the Maritime Provinces, but growth is still somewhat backward. Dry and hot weather continued in Quebec and Ontario for the first 5 or 6 days of June, aggravating the already serious crop situation in western Quebec and in most of Ontario. The weather has recently turned cooler, but there has been little rain to relieve the drought. Summer pastures and winter feed are essential to maintain the large numbers of live stock in these provinces and the present situation is causing great concern.

The month of June started very auspiciously for grain growers in the Prairie Provinces with fairly heavy and well-distributed rains and a change to cooler weather. Alberta received the heaviest precipitation and since the end of May, many points have recorded between 2 and 3 inches of rain, with lower temperatures making the moisture very effective. Many districts of Saskatchewan also received temporary relief from the prevailing drought in the first few days of the month and again on the 6th and 7th. Telegraphic advices, however, confirm the need of further rains to relieve the grasshopper situation and to promote the growth of spring grains and pasture. Welcome rains have fallen over most of Manitoba; these were ample in the north and east, but more moisture is needed in the south, particularly the south-west. Showers were received over the southern districts of the three provinces yesterday. The feed situation is still causing anxiety in southern districts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The weather has continued to favour crop growth in British Columbia, and the high prospects have been well maintained.

Chart Showing Condition of Spring Wheat by Crop Districts.

The accompanying chart showing the condition of spring wheat by crop districts at May 31, 1934 reveals a wide variation in crop prospects in the Prairie Provinces. In this respect, the situation bears little resemblance to conditions at this time last year but is somewhat similar to the 1931 chart, although the poor districts this year are worse than in 1931 and the good districts generally better. Lack of rainfall and high winds led to serious soil-drifting and the southern prairie districts suffered the most. The northern districts had better moisture reserves and withstood the May drought much better.

Crop District 1, in the south-western corner of Manitoba bore the brunt of adverse conditions and recorded the lowest condition figure (41) in the west. Prospects improve to the east and north, but are well below average in Crop Districts 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Only Crop District 13, with an almost negligible wheat acreage, shows a condition figure equal to the long-time average.

In Saskatchewan, the lowest condition figures are found in the southern and west-central districts. Every Crop District except No. 8 shows lower prospects than at May 31, 1933, the greatest declines in condition being in Crop Districts 3, 4, 2, 1 and 6 in that order. Crop District 3 is divided for the first time into two sub-districts, A and B. This district was becoming too large for proper statistical treatment as a whole. The crops in Districts 5, 7, 8 and 9 are holding up well, being only 4 to 11 points below average.

Apart from the districts south and east of Calgary, wheat prospects in Alberta were very close to average. In contrast to the other two provinces, Alberta conditions are slightly better than at May 31, 1931. Crop Districts 1 to 7 have lower prospects than at this time last year, the greatest declines being in Crop Districts 3, 1, 2, 5, and 4 in that order. The remaining central and northern districts generally show higher condition figures than at May 31, 1933. The Peace River country has decidedly better prospects than at the end of May last year.

GENERAL CONDITIONS AT THE END OF MAY.

Summarized from the Reports of Crop Correspondents.

Prince Edward Island.

The weather was very cold and backward until the last week of May, then there was a decided change. Seeding and growth are late, but meadows were not damaged during the winter and should respond to the warmer weather. Prospects are exceptionally good, really better than indicated by condition figures.

Nova Scotia.

The season is very late, with seeding of spring grains barely started at the month-end. April and May were mostly cold and wet, but there was some betterment in the last days of May. Hay and pastures are very promising. Winter injury to fruit trees and to raspberries and strawberries was fairly general and, in some localities, quite severe. Baldwins seem to have suffered most.

New Brunswick.

The soil in many districts of this province is much drier than in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, but the season is similarly backward because of the cold weather. Reports of drought come from the counties of Charlotte, Northumberland, Gloucester, Fredericton and Restigouche. In other counties, the land is quite wet and spring floods caused some damage in the river valleys.

Quebec.

The season is late and seeding is barely finished in the western part of the province. It is proceeding in the eastern sections under favourable conditions. The growth of plants has been very slow on account of the low temperatures and the lack of moisture. General crop conditions are better than in 1933 at the same date but are below normal because of the lateness of the season. The weather is very dry and it is hoped that beneficial rains will fall to ameliorate conditions and prevent a crop failure.

Ontario.

The spring season has been particularly unfavourable for crop growth and, following a winter of severe damage to pasture and hay, fall wheat and fruit trees, create a rather serious situation. All hay crops will be unusually light and farmers are quite disturbed over the winter feed problem as most hay crops are being used for pasture. Fall wheat is very poor, in fact, the second poorest crop on record. In eastern Ontario, the spring drought has been less severe, but the feed situation is more acute because of the large amount of winter-killing. Milk flow has fallen off considerably. Spring grains have withstood the drought much better than expected and early rains would bring them back to normal. Generally, a threatening situation prevails and the outcome depends entirely upon immediate rains.

Manitoba.

Spring work on the land and seeding of wheat were finished quite early and the lack of moisture became an immediate problem. The unseasonably hot weather, followed by high winds, caused serious soil-drifting over wide areas. Later, grasshoppers began to hatch and aggravated the situation. The drought was most severe in the south-western corner of the province, with conditions ameliorating slightly to the north and east. While the spring grains suffered severely, the growth on pasture and hay lands was extremely sparse and the feed situation became acute in the southern districts. Further north, where reserve moisture was more ample, the spring grains and hay lands were better able to withstand the adverse spring weather and crop prospects are correspondingly better. Over most of the farming area, rains were urgently needed at the end of May to prevent further decline in crop prospects.

Saskatchewan.

This province experienced a similar spring to that of 1931, when high temperatures, lack of rain and soil-drifting combining to place the crops in a critical situation much earlier than usual. The condition of all crops at May 31, 1934 was below or near the lowest figures previously recorded at that date. All the grain crops established record lows as far as condition was concerned, while the condition of pasture was only 3 points higher than the condition of 63 shown at May 31, 1931. The southern districts of the province reported the most severe crop damage. Many newly-seeded fields were a total loss due to soil-drifting and grasshoppers before the end of May. Then, farmers were very uncertain whether they should drill in new seed or wait for rain. The latter course was commonly dictated by the shortage of seed. The reductions in acreage suggested by the Intentions Reports filed a month ago seem to be fully substantiated by subsequent conditions. In Crop District 5 (east-centre) and in the two northern Crop Districts, 8 and 9, the spring season was more favourable and crop prospects were about 50 per cent above those of the southern districts. With favourable weather in June and July, these three districts could still harvest average crops.

Alberta.

The spring grain crops in Alberta were low in condition at May 31, being greatly affected by the drought and heat in southern and eastern districts. Only twice in the previous record (1910 and 1931) have lower condition figures been shown than at May 31, 1934. The month of May was featured by high temperatures, limited rains in the south and east, and strong winds over most of the province. Seeding was completed early and germination and early growth were fairly strong and even, except in some southern and central localities. Soil-blowing did considerable damage in the south and some re-seeding was necessary. The sugar beet crop in the southern irrigated areas secured a very promising start, with no indications of any appreciable change in acreage. Along the foothills and in the districts north and east of Edmonton, crop prospects were regarded as very close to average with good stands of grain able to respond to better weather.

British Columbia.

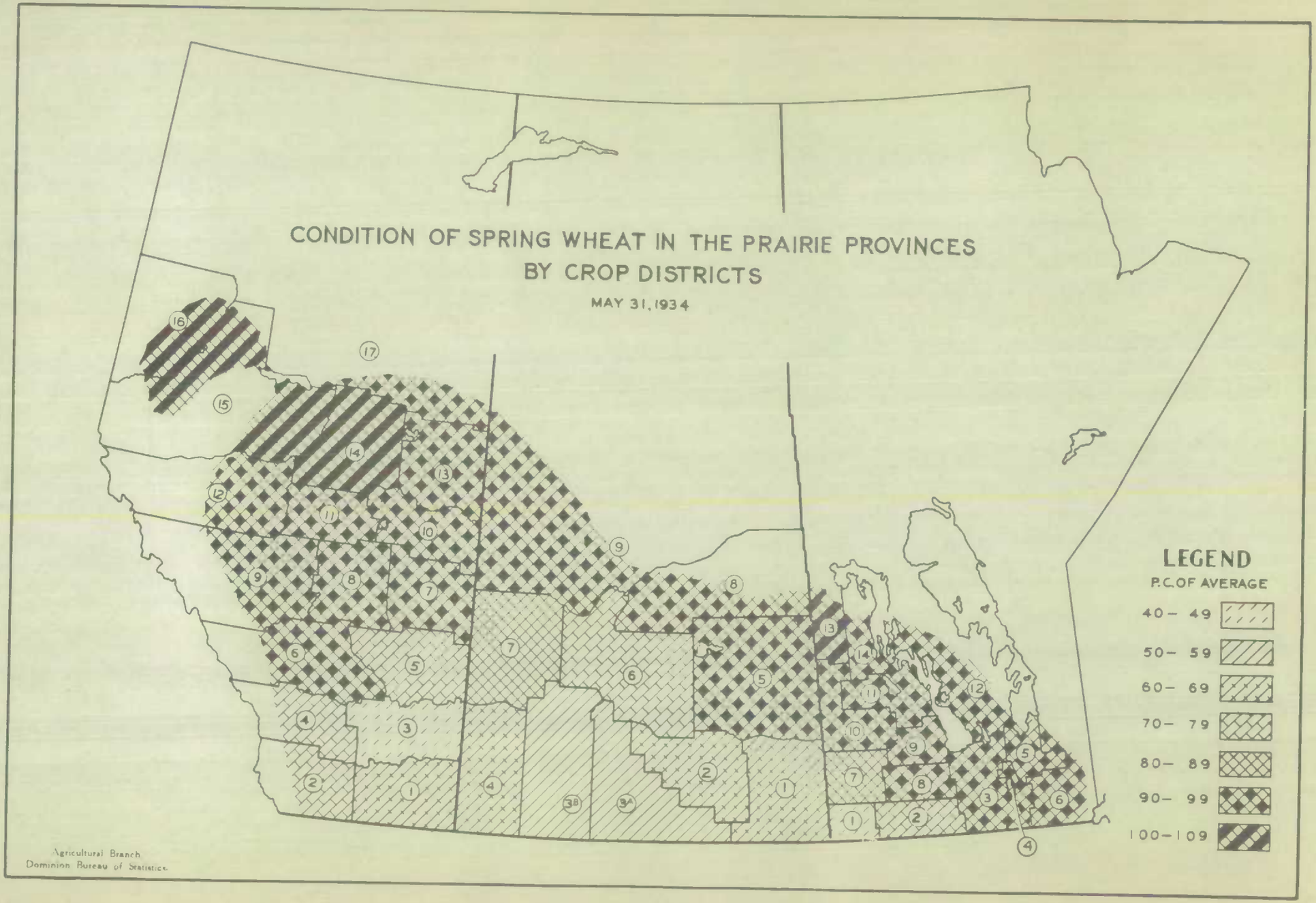
The season continues to be well advanced and considerably ahead of previous early records. The weather has been very favourable to promotion of crop growth during both April and May and soil moisture conditions are very good at this time. Fruit trees generally are looking well. Pests are rather more serious than usual, particularly codling moth. These are, however, being well controlled. It is generally conceded that the crop of tree fruits will be less than last year's. Vegetables are looking very promising at present. Small fruits are promising and the yields will greatly exceed those of the previous year. Field crops are, on the whole, looking very well.

Condition of Field Crops, May 31, 1930 - 34.

Note: 100 = the long-time average yield per acre.

Field Crops	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Canada	P.C.	P.C.	P.C.	P.C.	P.C.
Fall wheat	91	97	100	95	45
Spring wheat	97	80	96	99	79
All wheat	97	81	96	99	78
Oats	95	88	95	95	85
Barley	97	85	93	95	83
Fall rye	95	72	86	93	59
Spring rye	93	86	95	97	75
All rye	95	76	88	94	63
Peas	102	98	96	95	91
Mixed grains	102	99	95	97	89
Hay and clover	98	98	91	93	83
Alfalfa	99	100	97	98	66
Pasture	99	97	91	93	81
P.E. Island					
Spring wheat	97	102	100	96	99
Oats	98	101	100	97	98
Barley	97	101	100	99	98
Mixed grains	95	102	100	98	98
Hay and clover	94	108	100	94	95
Pasture	99	104	98	91	96
Nova Scotia					
Spring wheat	94	102	99	98	98
Oats	99	103	100	97	97
Barley	95	101	98	98	96
Mixed grains	98	102	98	96	97
Hay and clover	90	105	97	95	96
Pasture	93	101	93	91	95
New Brunswick					
Spring wheat	97	100	98	96	99
Oats	101	102	98	97	97
Barley	97	101	97	98	99
Mixed grains	96	102	98	98	99
Hay and clover	94	106	94	93	99
Pasture	98	103	91	89	94
Quebec					
Spring wheat	100	99	95	91	97
Oats	100	101	96	92	98
Barley	100	100	96	92	98
Spring rye	98	99	91	91	97
Peas	99	98	94	89	96
Mixed grains	100	100	96	93	98
Hay and clover	102	103	87	88	96
Alfalfa	97	102	86	88	94
Pasture	102	101	85	87	93
Ontario					
Fall wheat	90	99	100	95	45
Spring wheat	96	99	95	96	87
All wheat	92	99	99	95	54
Oats	102	100	95	96	89
Barley	102	99	95	96	88
Fall rye	95	97	96	94	66
Peas	105	98	97	97	89
Mixed grains	103	100	95	97	88
Hay and clover	96	98	93	97	63
Alfalfa	99	102	97	99	59
Pasture	100	97	95	97	66

Field Crops	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Manitoba	P.C.	P.C.	P.C.	P.C.	P.C.
Spring wheat	93	89	98	99	82
Oats	89	87	94	97	83
Barley	95	86	93	96	83
Fall rye	96	87	95	96	83
Spring rye	94	88	91	96	84
All rye	95	87	94	96	83
Peas	101	94	95	100	97
Mixed grains	93	92	88	97	82
Hay and clover	105	80	89	97	80
Alfalfa	96	88	95	98	87
Pasture	99	76	91	96	78
Saskatchewan					
Spring wheat	97	77	92	99	73
Oats	92	76	90	96	73
Barley	97	77	90	94	74
Fall rye	95	67	81	91	48
Spring rye	95	83	91	96	68
All rye	95	70	83	92	53
Peas	96	80	95	94	70
Mixed grains	92	79	92	98	70
Hay and clover	91	68	88	96	73
Alfalfa	103	79	93	95	72
Pasture	92	63	89	98	66
Alberta					
Spring wheat	99	84	102	98	88
Oats	90	85	101	95	89
Barley	96	87	99	94	91
Fall rye	94	80	98	97	72
Spring rye	96	87	101	99	78
All rye	95	83	99	98	74
Peas	103	89	100	96	96
Mixed grains	95	89	100	94	87
Hay and clover	94	77	103	100	84
Alfalfa	95	84	98	98	87
Pasture	94	75	106	101	81
British Columbia					
Spring wheat	96	97	99	95	101
Oats	91	98	98	95	101
Barley	96	96	99	94	99
Spring rye	93	97	99	97	100
Peas	94	98	98	96	100
Mixed grains	96	99	97	97	101
Hay and clover	97	98	98	92	104
Alfalfa	97	98	100	95	105
Pasture	98	98	99	93	104


CONDITION OF SPRING WHEAT IN THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES
BY CROP DISTRICTS
MAY 31, 1934
LEGEND
P.C. OF AVERAGE
40 – 49
50 – 59
60 – 69
70 – 79
80 – 89
90 – 99
100 – 109
Agricultural Branch
Dominion Bureau of Statistics.