

September 19, 2006

Crop Conditions as of September 14, 2006

Welcome to the 2006 Alberta crop reporting series. The delivery of the Alberta Crop Reporting Program is again being done in partnership with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) and a number of Agricultural Fieldmen. The release schedule of 2006 Alberta crop reports is available on the Ropin' the Web at www.agric.gov.ab.ca

Warm, dry weather conditions allowed harvesting to progress rapidly in Alberta until September 12, when rain showers halted field operations in many areas. Provincially, it is estimated that 83 per cent of the crop is in the bin, compared to an average progress of about 50 per cent at this time in most years. In addition, 11 per cent of the crop is in the swath and 6 per cent remains standing. Most producers will likely need seven to ten days of good weather to wrap up harvest this year. Estimates of regional/provincial crop harvest progress are presented in Table 1.

In many areas, yields are lower than expected, as the heat in July caused more crop damage than previously thought. Overall, provincial average yields are estimated to be similar to the 10-year averages for spring wheat, barley, oats, and dry peas but above 10-year averages for durum wheat and canola. Durum wheat is primarily grown in the Southern Region, where soil moisture reserves in July were relatively better, compared to the rest of province. For canola, higher productivity from improved varieties could be the major factor behind the above average yields.

With respect to crop quality, survey respondents have provided favorable estimates for grains being taken off the field. Preliminary results of early samples indicate that more than 50 per cent of hard red spring wheat could be graded as No.1 CWRS, while about 60 per cent of durum wheat is likely to make No.1 CWAD. Nearly 20 per cent of barley could be of malt quality. For canola, 85 per cent could be graded as No.1 Canada. However, light bushel weights are reported for cereal crops in some areas. Additionally, for crops still in the field, quality could be negatively impacted by cool, wet weather conditions.

Rain showers this week have impeded haying operations. Provincially, the second cut is estimated to be 80 per cent complete, with yields similar to 10-year averages for hay under irrigation, but below average for dryland. Pasture conditions in Alberta are reported as 42 per cent poor, 37 per cent fair, 19 per cent good, and two per cent excellent. In addition, there are reports of grain storage concerns, including high grain temperatures and insect infestations in the bin.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2006 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- Favorable weather conditions have allowed harvest to progress rapidly in the region, with 83 per cent of the crop being taken off the field. Overall, yields of major cereals and oilseeds are estimated to be above their 10-year averages. With respect to crop quality, preliminary results of early samples indicate that nearly 70 per cent of hard red spring wheat could be graded as No.1 CWRS, while over 60 per cent of durum wheat is likely to make No.1 CWAD.
- Harvest progress is estimated at 95 per cent complete for dry beans, 50 per cent for potatoes, and less than 5 per cent for sugar beets. Estimated yields of these specialty crops are above average.
- The second cut haying operation has been completed, and hay quality is rated as good or excellent. The third cut has started for hay under irrigation.

- Many producers are indicating more straw baling this year than in most years. Also, seeding of winter cereals is underway.
- Soil moisture reserves remain low in most areas of the region.

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- Combining is estimated at 82 per cent complete in the region. The rain showers this week have brought field operations to a standstill. In general, crop yields are lower than expected, as the heat in July caused more crop damage than previously thought. As well, hailstorms in August have resulted in losses in crop yields. Overall, yields are estimated to be average or near average for major crops, with light bushel weights reported for cereals in some areas.
- The second cut haying operation is over 80 per cent complete, and hay quality ranges from fair to excellent.
- Soil moisture reserves have begun to improve, due to the precipitation received this week.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- Harvest has been progressing quite well until this week when rain showers halted field operations. Combining is about 82 per cent complete in the region. It is estimated that 81 per cent of the canola crop is in the bin, 17 per cent in the swath, and 2 per cent standing. Overall, estimated yields range from average for spring cereals to above average for canola. For grains being taken off the field, quality is estimated to be above average.
- Yields are below average for second cut hay, while hay quality ranges from fair to excellent.
- Rain showers this week have improved soil moisture reserves.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- Harvest is estimated to be 82 per cent complete in the region. The rain showers this week have brought significant amounts of precipitation, but also halted harvesting operations. Overall, estimated yields for major crops range from below average to average. Estimates of quality are favorable for grains being taken off the field. However, for crops in the field, quality could be negatively impacted by the cool, wet weather conditions this week.
- Yields and quality vary across the region for second cut hay, which is estimated to be 80 per cent complete.
- Due to the precipitation received this week, soil moisture conditions have been improving.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- Combining is about 85 per cent complete in the region. It is estimated that 78 per cent of the canola crop is in the bin, 20 per cent in the swath, and two per cent standing. Overall, yields are estimated to be below average to average for cereals, but above average for canola. There are also some reports of light bushel weights for cereal crops.
- In the northern parts of the region, second growth for some crops has delayed maturity.
- The second cut haying operation is estimated to be nearly 90 per cent complete.
- In general, the region remains very dry.

Table 1: Estimates of Regional/Provincial Crop Harvest Progress

| | South | Central | N. East | N. West | Peace | Alberta |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Spring Wheat | 83% | 86% | 84% | 84% | 88% | 85% |
| Durum Wheat | 83% | 92% | 93% | 84% | 88% | 84% |
| Oats | 79% | 70% | 73% | 74% | 84% | 75% |
| Barley | 82% | 83% | 82% | 84% | 89% | 83% |
| Canola | 81% | 72% | 81% | 82% | 78% | 79% |
| Dry Peas | 99% | 100% | 99% | 96% | 94% | 98% |
| Total | 83% | 82% | 82% | 82% | 85% | 83% |

Source: Statistics and Data Development Unit, AAFRD

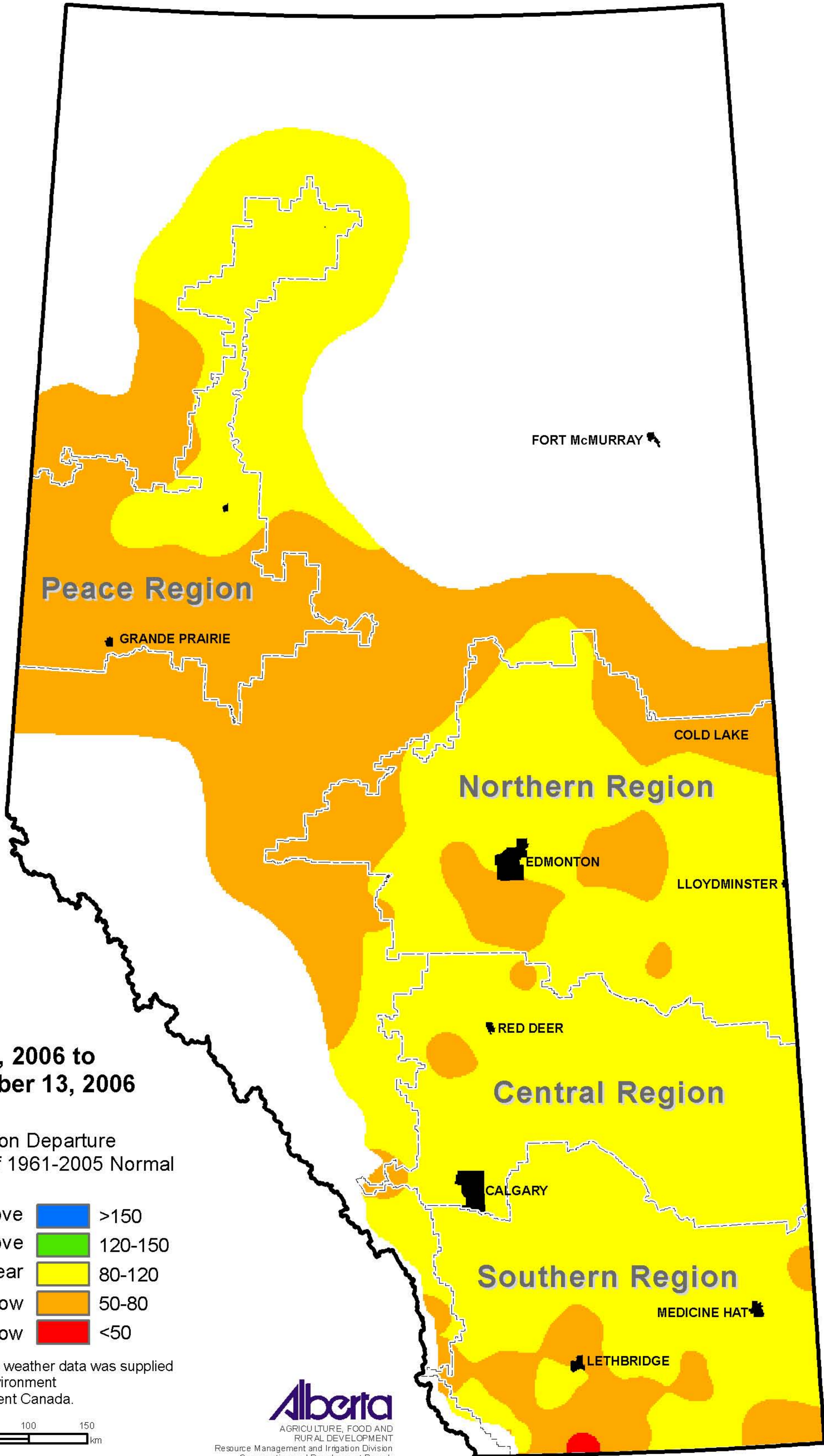
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**April 01, 2006 to
September 13, 2006**

Precipitation Departure
Percent of 1961-2005 Normal

- Much above >150
- Above 120-150
- Near 80-120
- Below 50-80
- Much below <50

Near-real-time weather data was supplied
by Alberta Environment
and Environment Canada.

