

October 17, 2006

Crop Conditions as of October 12, 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

Harvest in Alberta is virtually complete for the 2006 crop season, although cool, damp weather conditions continue to hamper field operations. Provincially, about 96 per cent of the crop is in the bin, compared to 88 per cent two weeks ago. In most years, harvest in Alberta is usually completed by the Thanksgiving weekend.

The majority of crops still in the field are in the northeast and northwest regions of the province. Additionally, there is still significant crop acreage to be harvested in the Fort Vermilion, Lacombe/Ponoka, and Strathmore areas. Harvest of specialty crops is near complete, with the exception of sugar beets. Estimates of regional/provincial harvest progress for major crops are presented in Table 1.

The heat in July and hailstorms in August are the main factors responsible for reduced crop yields this year, compared to 2005. Overall, provincial average yields in 2006 are estimated to be similar to their 10-year averages for spring wheat, barley, oats and dry peas, but above 10-year averages for durum wheat and canola. For winter wheat and fall rye, yields are above average. With respect to quality, favorable grades are reported for grains being taken off the field. Provincially, preliminary results of early samples indicate that about 85 per cent of hard red spring wheat and durum wheat could make the top two grades. Nearly 19 per cent of barley could be of malt quality, while about 85 per cent of canola could be graded as No.1 Canada.

However, the recent cool, damp conditions have caused significant deterioration in the quality of crops still in the field. There are reports of cereals sprouting and molding in the swath. Some of these cereals will likely be baled for feed or used for grazing. As well, some grains are being taken off damp and tough and need to be dried.

Overall, hay yields and quality this year are better than in most years. The quality of third cut hay under irrigation has deteriorated, due to damage from rain showers. Provincially, pasture conditions are reported as 32 per cent poor, 35 per cent fair, 29 per cent good, and 4 per cent excellent. Three-quarters of fall-seeded crops are rated as good or excellent. Nearly 50 per cent of survey respondents have reported sub-surface moisture conditions to be good to excellent. There are also reports of weed infestations in some areas.

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)

- Harvest is virtually complete across the region. The exception is the Strathmore area, where 12 to 15 per cent of the crop is still in the field. Overall, combining of major crops is estimated at 98 per cent complete.
- Yields of major cereals and oilseeds are estimated to be above average. Regarding crop quality, preliminary results of early samples indicate that more than 85 per cent of hard red spring wheat and durum wheat could make the top two grades.
- Harvest of sugar beets is well underway and is estimated at about 60 per cent complete. For potatoes and dry beans, harvesting is near completion, and yields are above average.
- Overall, hay yields and quality this year are better than in most years, although the quality of third cut hay under irrigation has deteriorated due to damage from rain showers.
- Fertilizer application and other fall field operations are underway.

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

- Harvesting has been progressing slowly, due to cool, wet weather conditions. Overall, combining is estimated at 96 per cent complete in the region. Some cereals still in the field could end up being grazed.
- Crop yields have been negatively impacted by the heat in July and hailstorms in August, and are estimated to be average or near average. With respect to quality, lower grades are reported for grains being taken off the field recently, compared to crops harvested earlier. However, crop quality this year is still estimated to be better than in most years.
- Hay yields and quality this year are above average.

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

- Due to cool, wet conditions, harvest has been progressing slowly and is about 93 per cent complete. Across the region, the Wainwright area lags behind, with only 85 per cent of the crop in the bin.
- Some grains are being taken off damp and tough and need to be dried. There are reports of cereals sprouting in the swath, resulting in some being baled for feed.
- Crop yields in the region are average for spring cereals, but above average for canola. Overall, the quality of major crops is estimated to be above average.
- Hay yields and quality this year are above average.

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

- Rain showers continue to hamper harvesting operation in the region, which is estimated at 95 per cent complete. There are reports of molding and sprouting for cereals in the swath, due to cool, wet conditions.
- Overall, estimated yields range from below average for cereals to average for canola. Regarding crop quality, preliminary results of early samples indicate that about 80 per cent of hard red spring wheat could make the top two grades.
- Fertilizer application and other fall field operations are underway. There are also reports of weed infestations in some areas.

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

- Combining is estimated at about 97 per cent complete in the region. Crops still in the field are mostly in the northern parts of the region. Due to poor weather conditions, harvest has been progressing slowly in the Fort Vermilion area where 50 per cent of canola and 15 per cent of barley and oats remain to be harvested.
- Overall, yields are estimated to be below average to average for cereals, but above average for canola.
- With respect to quality, preliminary results of early samples indicate that over 80 per cent of hard red spring wheat could make the top two grades.
- In general, the region remains very dry with the exception of northern areas.

Table 1: Estimates of Regional/Provincial Crop Harvest Progress

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	98%	97%	95%	96%	100%	97%
Durum Wheat	99%	98%	98%	96%	100%	99%
Oats	98%	94%	88%	93%	97%	93%
Barley	98%	96%	90%	95%	97%	95%
Canola	98%	94%	94%	97%	94%	95%
Dry Peas	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total	98%	96%	93%	95%	97%	96%

Source: Statistics and Data Development Unit, AAFRD

Note to Users: The contents of this document may not be used or reproduced without properly accrediting the Statistics and Data Development Unit, Economics and Competitiveness Division, AAFRD.

The 2006 Alberta crop reporting series is available on Ropin' the Web at www.agric.gov.ab.ca

For further information contact:

Chuanliang Su, Crop Statistician
 Statistics & Data Development Unit
 Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
 E-mail chuanliang.su@gov.ab.ca
 Phone: (780) 422-2887

Dial 310-0000 for toll-free access outside Edmonton

