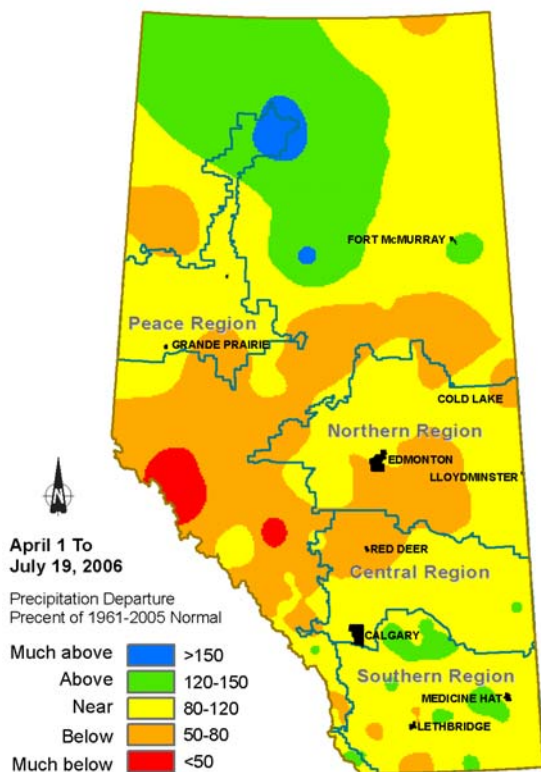


Crop Conditions as of July 20, 2006

Crop growing conditions in Alberta have changed dramatically during the last two weeks. High temperatures, in conjunction with lack of precipitation, have reduced soil moisture reserves and caused crops to abort flowering and podding. As a result, crop conditions and yield potentials have deteriorated significantly, compared to a few weeks ago. The exception is the Southern Region where over 80% of crops remain in good condition, due to better moisture reserves. Provincially, conditions of spring wheat are reported as 7% poor, 29% fair, 51% good, and 13% excellent, with a similar rating for barley. Canola is rated as 10% poor, 32% fair, 46% good, and 12% excellent, while dry peas are 7% poor, 26% fair, 53% good, and 14% excellent. Winter cereals have also suffered from the heat stress, but to a lesser extent, with 85% being rated as good or excellent.

Crop development this year is about two weeks ahead of normal, because of the hot, dry weather. Spring cereals are generally in the flowering stage, while the majority of canola and dry peas are in the podding stage. It is expected that combining of winter cereals will begin in about a week. Additionally, silaging and greenfeed baling, mostly of spring cereals, is well underway.

In most areas of the province, scattered thundershowers have brought only limited amounts of precipitation during the last two weeks, resulting in a substantial reduction in soil moisture reserves. Provincially, surface moisture is rated as 36% poor, 31% fair, 28% good, and 5% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is 24% poor, 35% fair, 33% good, and 8% excellent. Rain is needed across the province.



Producers have taken advantage of the recent hot, dry weather and made good progress in haying operations. Provincially, first cut is 80% complete on dryland, and over 95% complete under irrigation. Overall, hay yields are estimated to be above average, with quality rated mostly as good or excellent. The second cut has just begun for irrigated hay in the Southern Region. Pasture conditions in Alberta are reported as 23% poor, 36% fair, 32% good, and 9% excellent.

Crop damage from hailstorms has occurred in some areas. Also reported are diseases in cereals, and some pest problems with gophers, bertha armyworm moth, lygus bugs, grasshoppers, flea beetles, army cutworms, root maggots, wireworms, and other insects.

Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen and staff of AFSC for the partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.

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)

- Crops are advancing rapidly and remain in good condition, although crops in many areas are showing signs of stress from heat and lack of moisture. Over 80% of spring cereals, 85% of canola and 90% of dry peas are rated as good or excellent. Spring cereals are generally in the flowering stage, while canola and dry peas are mostly podding. Swathing of winter cereals has begun in some areas. Sugar beets, dry beans and potatoes are developing quite well and show promising yield potentials.
- The first cut haying operation is being wrapped up in most areas, with above average yields and quality for both irrigated and dryland hay. The second cut has just begun for irrigated hay.
- Soil moisture conditions vary considerably across the region, ranging from poor to excellent.

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

- The recent hot, dry weather has significantly reduced soil moisture reserves, especially at the surface level. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 44% poor, 19% fair, 30% good, and 7% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is 17% poor, 26% fair, 39% good, and 18% excellent.
- Crop conditions have been deteriorating. Rating of spring cereals in the region is 8% poor, 23% fair, 52% good, and 17% excellent, while canola is 8% poor, 24% fair, 54% good, and 14% excellent. There are also several reports of crop damage from hailstorms.
- The first cut haying operation is estimated at about 70% complete. Additionally, some spring cereals are being taken off for silage or greenfeed production, with good to excellent yields.
- Conditions of pasture and standing hay range from poor to excellent.

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

- With high temperatures and limited amounts of precipitation received during the last two weeks, soil moisture conditions have been deteriorating. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 51% poor, 40% fair, and 9% good, while sub-surface moisture is 28% poor, 41% fair, and 31% good.
- The recent hot, dry weather has caused crops to abort flowering, reducing crop yield potentials. Spring wheat conditions in the region are rated as 9% poor, 36% fair, 50% good, and 5% excellent, while canola is 14% poor, 38% fair, 44% good, and 4% excellent.
- The first cut haying operation is 87% complete. Pasture conditions are rated mostly as poor or fair.

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

- Spotty rain showers have brought little moisture in most areas of the region during the last two weeks. Surface moisture in the region is rated as 32% poor, 39% fair, 28% good, and 1% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is 32% poor, 39% fair, and 29% good.
- Crop conditions in the region have been deteriorating, due to the recent hot, dry weather. Overall, spring wheat is rated as 7% poor, 26% fair, 55% good, and 12% excellent, while canola is 10% poor, 33% fair, 49% good, and 8% excellent.
- The first cut haying operation is 85% complete. Pasture conditions range from poor to good.

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

- Precipitation received during the last two weeks varied considerably across the region, with higher amounts reported in the northern areas. However, high temperatures have depleted soil moisture reserves. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 27% poor, 39% fair, 31% good, and 3% excellent, while sub-surface moisture is 37% poor, 33% fair, 29% good, and 1% excellent.
- Spring wheat in the region is rated as 11% poor, 42% fair, 43% good, and 4% excellent, while canola is 13% poor, 49% fair, 34% good, and 4% excellent.
- The first cut haying operation is 75% complete. Pasture conditions range from poor to good.

**Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Statistics & Data Development Unit
July 31, 2006**

**Chuanliang Su, Crop Statistician
E-mail chuanliang.su@gov.ab.ca
Phone: (780) 422-2887**

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The 2006 Alberta crop reporting series is available on the Internet at: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191)