

Moisture Situation Update – October 26, 2011

There are a lot of red areas on these maps!

Average daily temperatures relative to normal during September 2011-see map

- A warmer than normal September helped to mature late crops, speed harvest and delay widespread severe frosts. This was more than welcome, given the cool wet weather that dominated during most of the growing season.
- For most parts of the province, a September this warm occurs, on average, less than once every six years.
- Much of the south-half and eastern-half of the province see Septembers like this, on average less than once in 12 years.

Precipitation relative to normal over the past 90-days as of October 26, 2011 -see map

- Generally August marked the beginning of a drying trend across large parts of the province
- Most areas, with the exception of the extreme south-western portions of the province, have seen well below normal precipitation accumulations over the past 90 days.
- Over the past 90 days, much of the northern region has seen precipitation accumulations estimated to be at least 1 in 25 year lows. This pattern is also seen across much of the western Peace Region and parts of the extreme southeastern portions of the province.

Soil moisture reserves relative to normal as of October 26, 2011 -see map

- As a result of the warm dry weather of late, soil moisture reserves have been depleted across many parts of the province, with large areas north of Calgary, including large parts of the Peace Region, classified as having reserves this low, on average less than once in 25 years. In the absence of near to above normal precipitation accumulations over the coming months, these areas will be more susceptible to moisture stress next growing season.

Perspective

- It is not uncommon for large swings from wet to dry or dry to wet periods to occur in Alberta, as we have seen many times in the recent past.
- As always, the outlook for next year's crop will be partially dependent on over winter snows and largely dependent on timely rains and favorable temperatures during the next growing season.

Additional Maps can be found at <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app116/quick.jsp>.

Near-real-time hourly station data can be viewed/downloaded at <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app116/stationview.jsp>.

Note: Data has about a two hour lag and is displayed in MST (add one hour for daylight savings time)

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