

## Moisture Situation Update – April 28, 2016

### Synopsis:

In the wake of the above normal temperatures which prevailed throughout the month of April, spring is early this year and appears to be fully underway. In fact, it is estimated that most of the west-half of the province experiences an April this warm, on average less than once in 50 years (**see Map 1**). Thus, with the early retreat of snow packs, and subsequent warmer than normal temperatures, many are looking out over a seemingly dry landscape, which corresponds to well below normal soil moisture reserves across many areas (**see Map 2**). This is due in part to below normal snow fall accumulations, early melt and a longer than normal snow free period, ahead of “green up”. However many areas experienced above average to average rainfall accumulations last fall (**see Map 3**) which should help, at least in the short term. Also it’s important to note that typically April is a relatively dry month with most areas north of Calgary getting on average less than 25 mm of precipitation over the entire month (**See Map 4**). While farther south, April marks a transition into the wet season, with average accumulations ranging from 25 mm around Medicine Hat, to upwards of 70 mm across the plains, southwest of Lethbridge. It’s generally not until the latter half of May that Alberta’s wet season starts, which is delayed even longer as one moves from south to north, with the northern Peace Region not starting their wet season until about the first week in June. Given that it’s late April, there is still ample time to receive adequate moisture ahead of this year’s growing season.

### 60-day precipitation accumulations relative to normal as of April 28, 2016 (see map 5)

Across most of the east-half of the province March and April have had at least near normal precipitation accumulations, marking an end to the relatively dry winter. In contrast, the west-half of the province has been dry, with areas in and around the Calgary region estimated to be near 1 in 50 year lows. However, typically as one approaches the foothills, all along the west side of the province, average precipitation accumulations tend to be higher (**see Map 3**), and with the wet season still a few weeks away, there is still ample time to see much needed moisture here.

**Additional maps can be found at** [www.agriculture.alberta.ca/maps](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/maps)

**Near-real-time hourly station** data can be viewed/downloaded at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations)

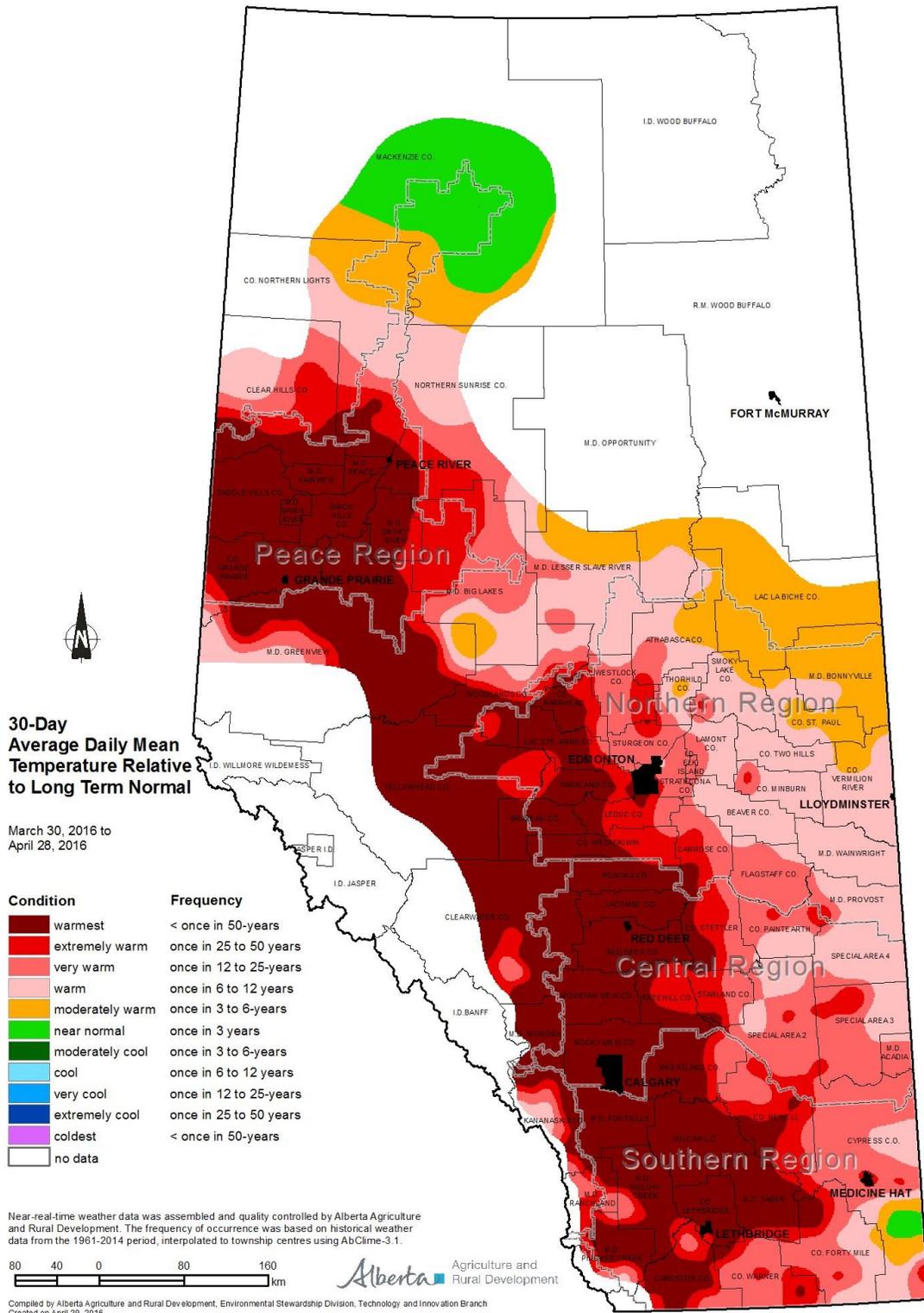
For frost probabilities in your area log on to <http://agriculture.alberta.ca/acis/alberta-weather-data-viewer.jsp> and, select the “normals” tab.

**Note:** Data has about a two hour lag and is displayed in MST.

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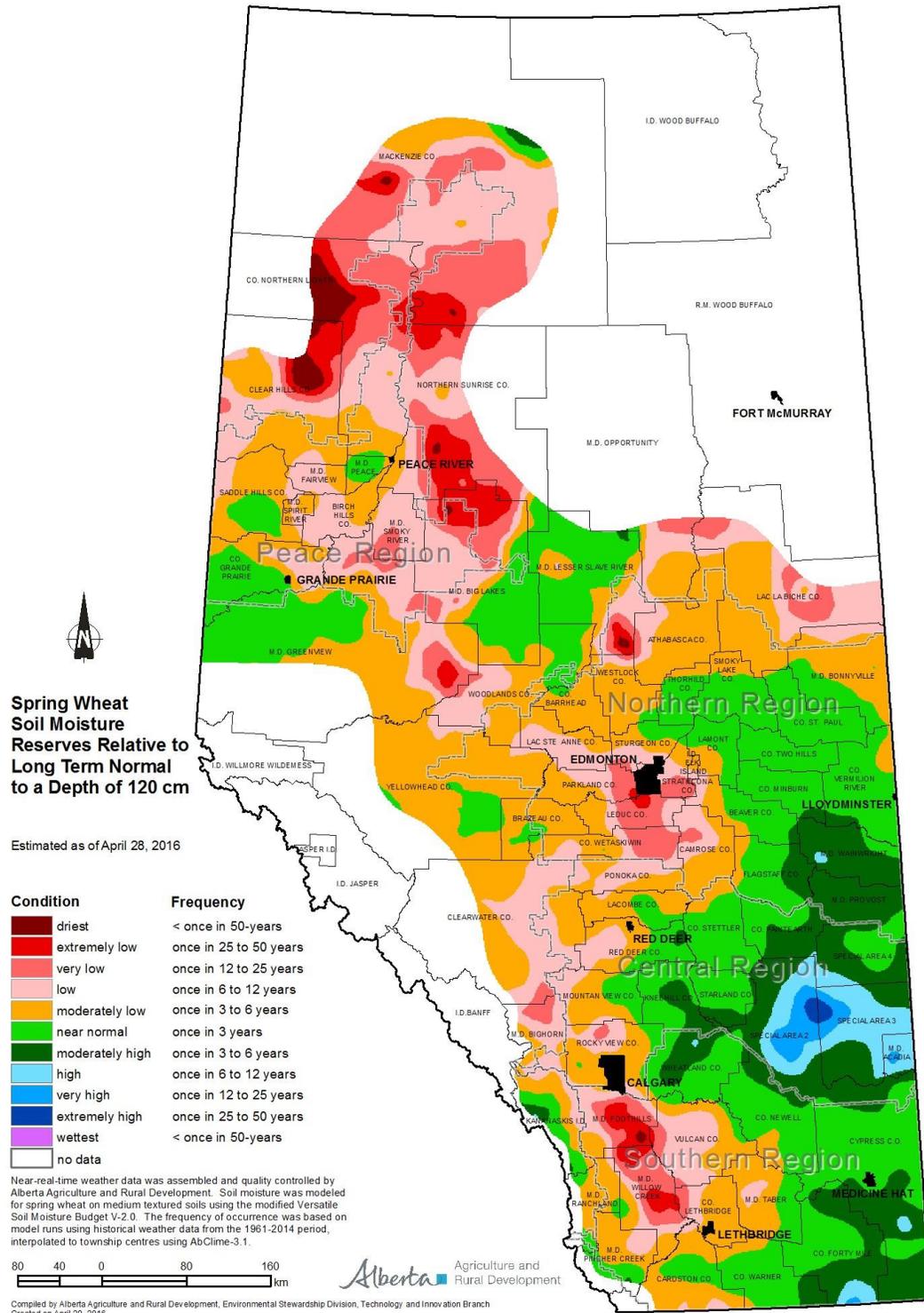
## Map 1



Visit [weatherdata.ca](http://weatherdata.ca) for additional maps and meteorological data

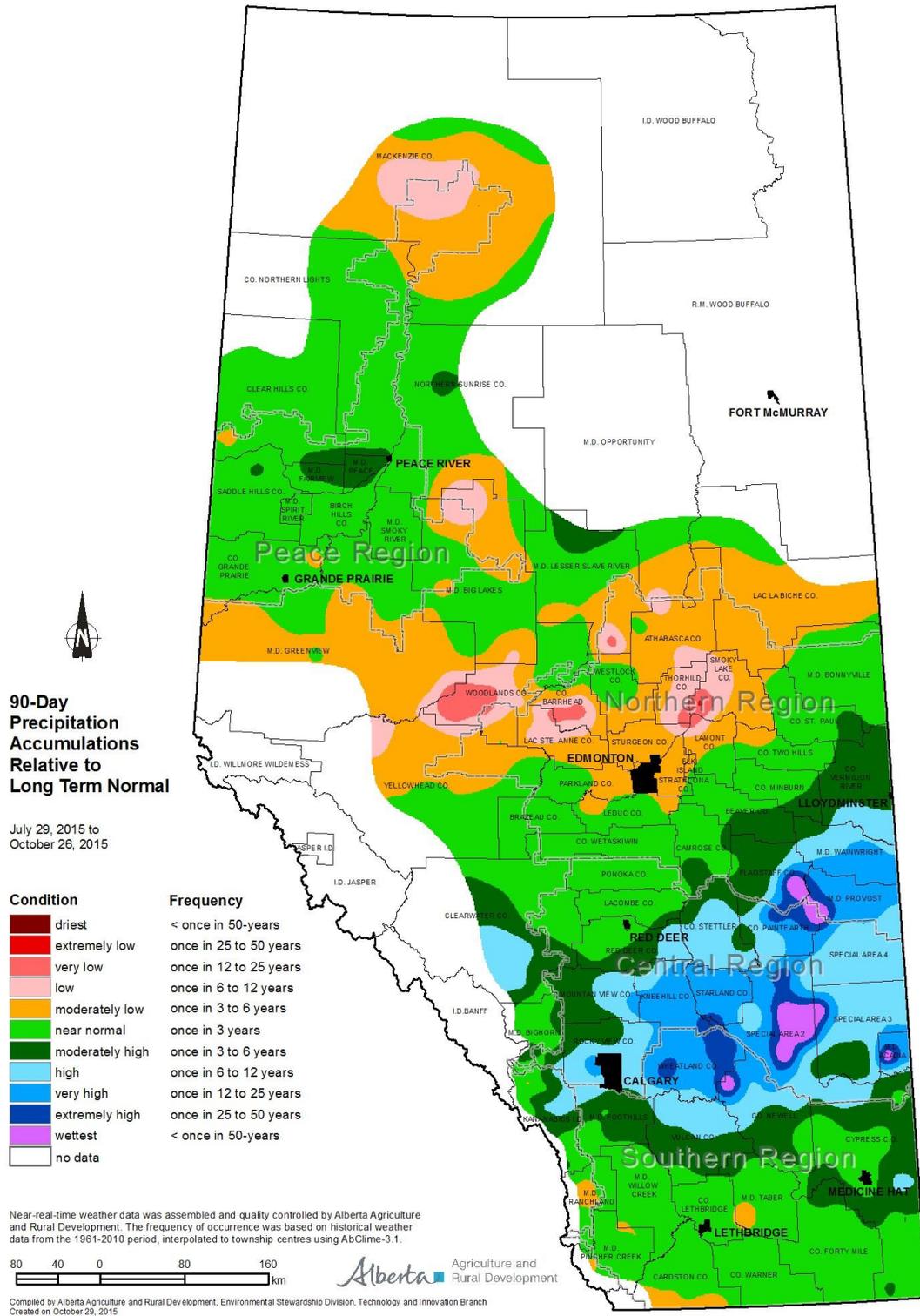
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## Map 2



Visit [weatherdata.ca](http://weatherdata.ca) for additional maps and meteorological data

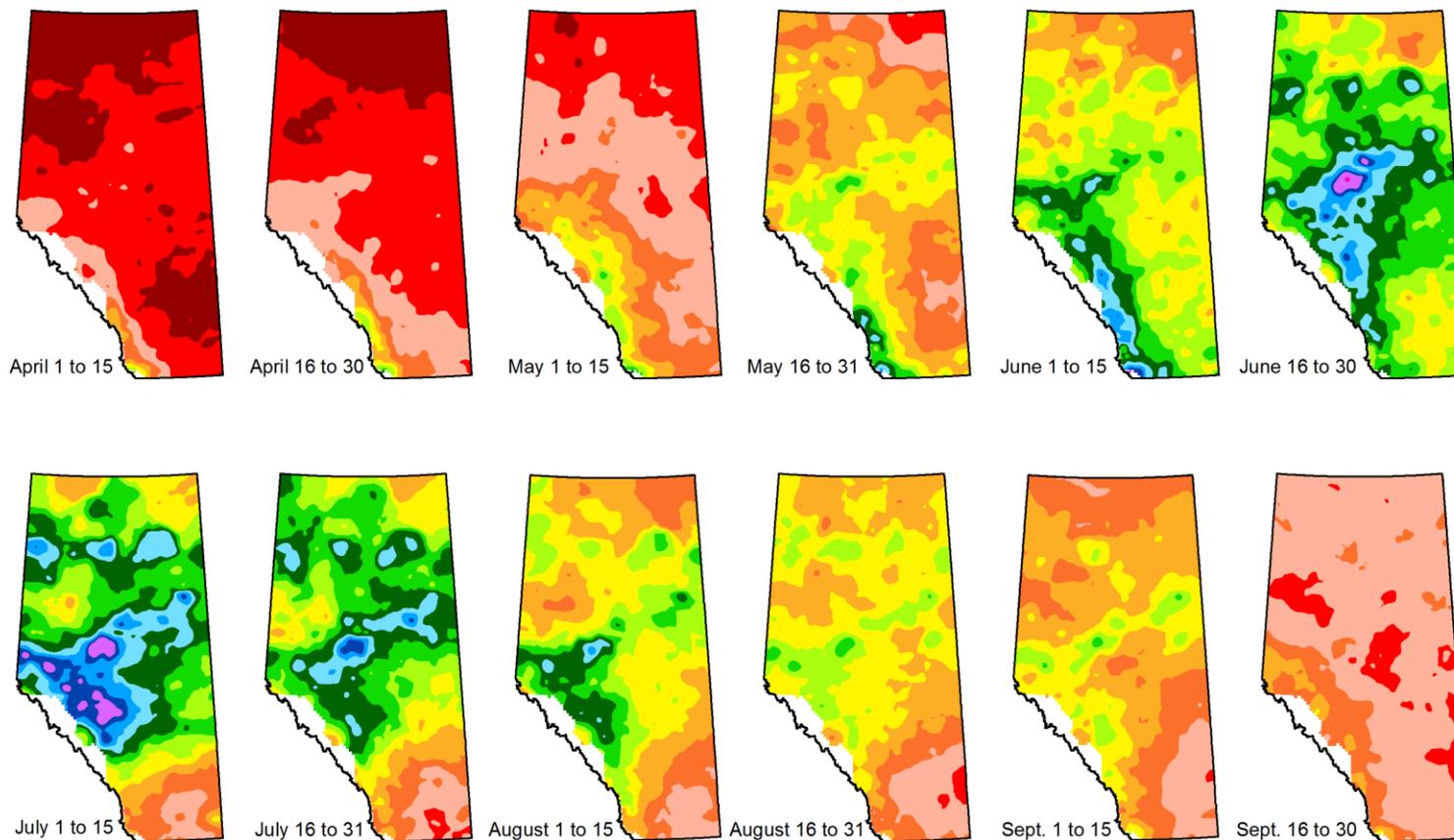
Map 3



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## Map 4



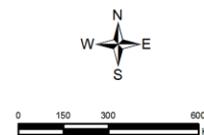
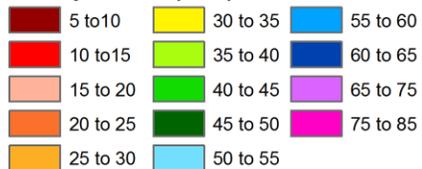
### Average Semi-Monthly Growing Season Precipitation in Alberta

for the period 1961-2010

Average based on historical weather data from the 1961-2010 period, interpolated to township centers using AbClim-3.1.

Compiled by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Environmental Stewardship Division, Technology and Innovation Branch  
Created on December 09, 2011

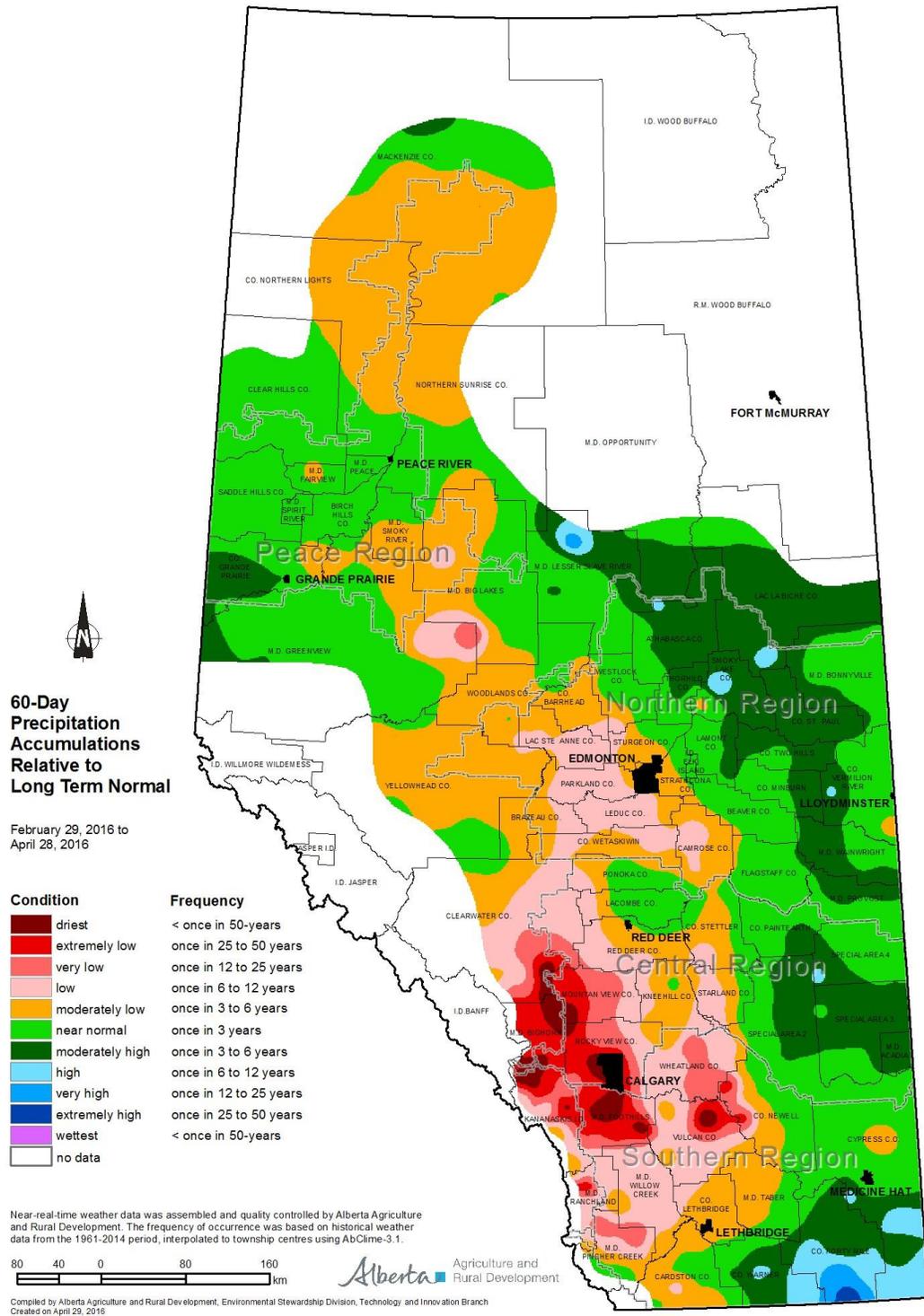
### Precipitation (mm)



Government of Alberta  
Agriculture and Rural Development

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## Map 5



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