

Moisture Situation Update – August 3, 2016

Synopsis

The month of July and early part of August has been quite wet across most of the province's agricultural areas, particularly for those lands that lie south of Red Deer and north of the Trans-Canada Highway. In fact, between Calgary and Medicine Hat, over the past 30 days, many areas are estimated to be this wet on average less than once in 50-years (**see map-1**), with several weather stations reporting upwards of 180 mm of rain since the start of July (**see map-2**). Similarly, north of Red Deer, there are several isolated but large areas, that have been hit by heavy rains as localized intense thunderstorm activity continues to dominate daily weather patterns. In contrast small dry pockets do exist, across parts of the northwestern Peace Region and through some parts of southern Alberta, bordering the United State, with many of these lands having only seen 20-40 mm over the past month, which is generally just adequate to sustain crops.

Province wide, summer rainfall activity has been convective in nature, with heavy downpours leading to localized flooding, and in some cases damaging hail. In recent days, flooded streets have been reported in parts of Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lloydminster, Edmonton and Calgary, as intense rains have temporarily overwhelmed local drainage systems. In addition, funnel clouds and tornadoes have been reported in a few locations, with one tornado reported to touch down this morning (August 4th), just north of Vermillion. Readers are urged to keep a close eye on the sky and pay close attention to meteorological alerts.

Perspective

During July, a well-established healthy wheat crop is capable of extracting a depth equivalent of between 150 to 200 mm of water out of the soil, per month. Thus, most field areas with adequate drainage and well established crops are likely not experiencing severe moisture excess at this time. However, for some, frequent rains are likely hampering field operations such as haying, cutting and in some cases spraying. Looking out as far as the next 7 to 10 days, AF's fire weather meteorologists are not predicting an end to this pattern of thunderstorm activity, particularly across the southern portions of the Province.

Real Time Radar can be used to track and monitor thunderstorms at:
<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/acis/weather-radar.jsp>

Additional maps can be found at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/maps

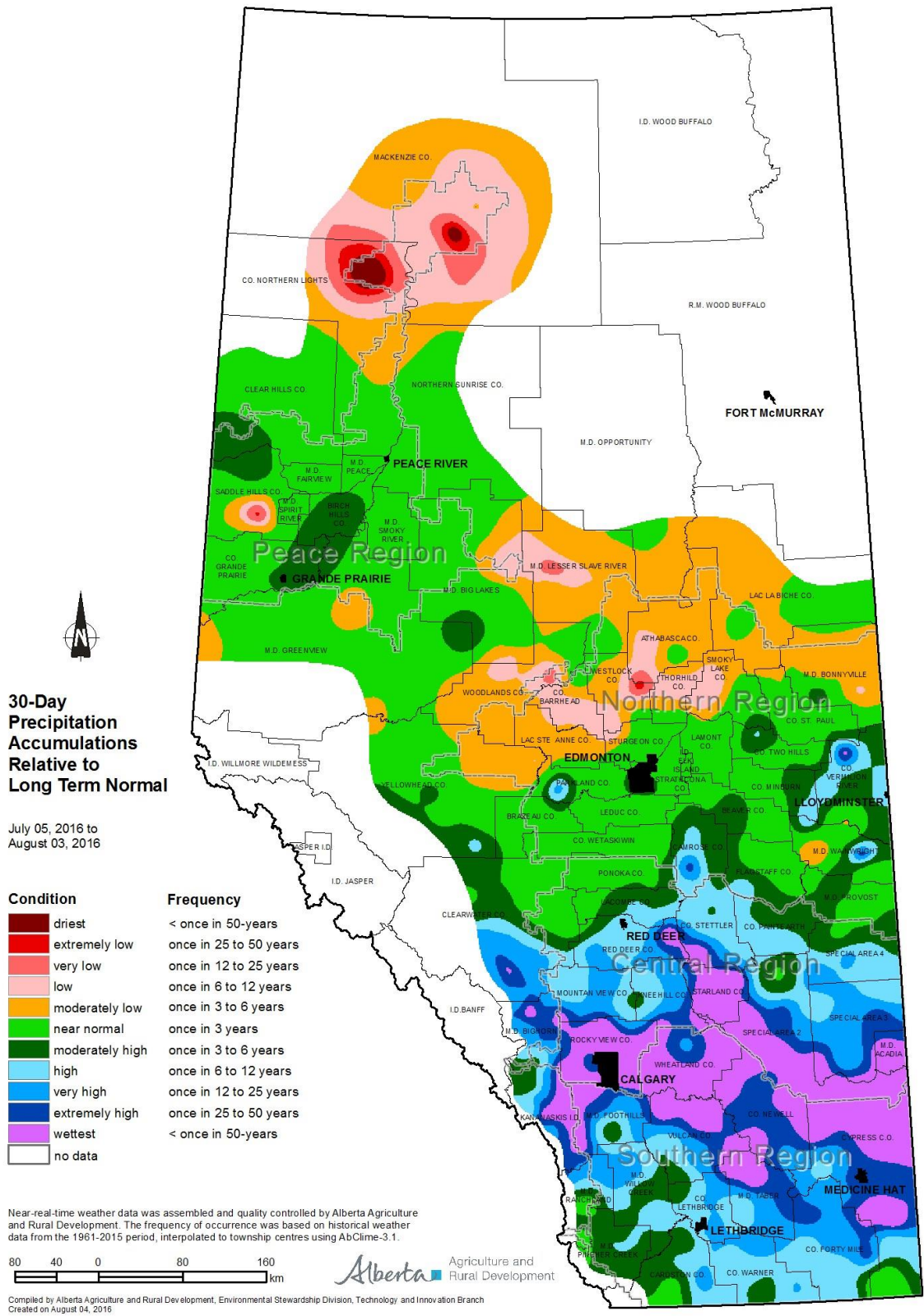
Near-real-time hourly station data can be viewed/downloaded at
www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations

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

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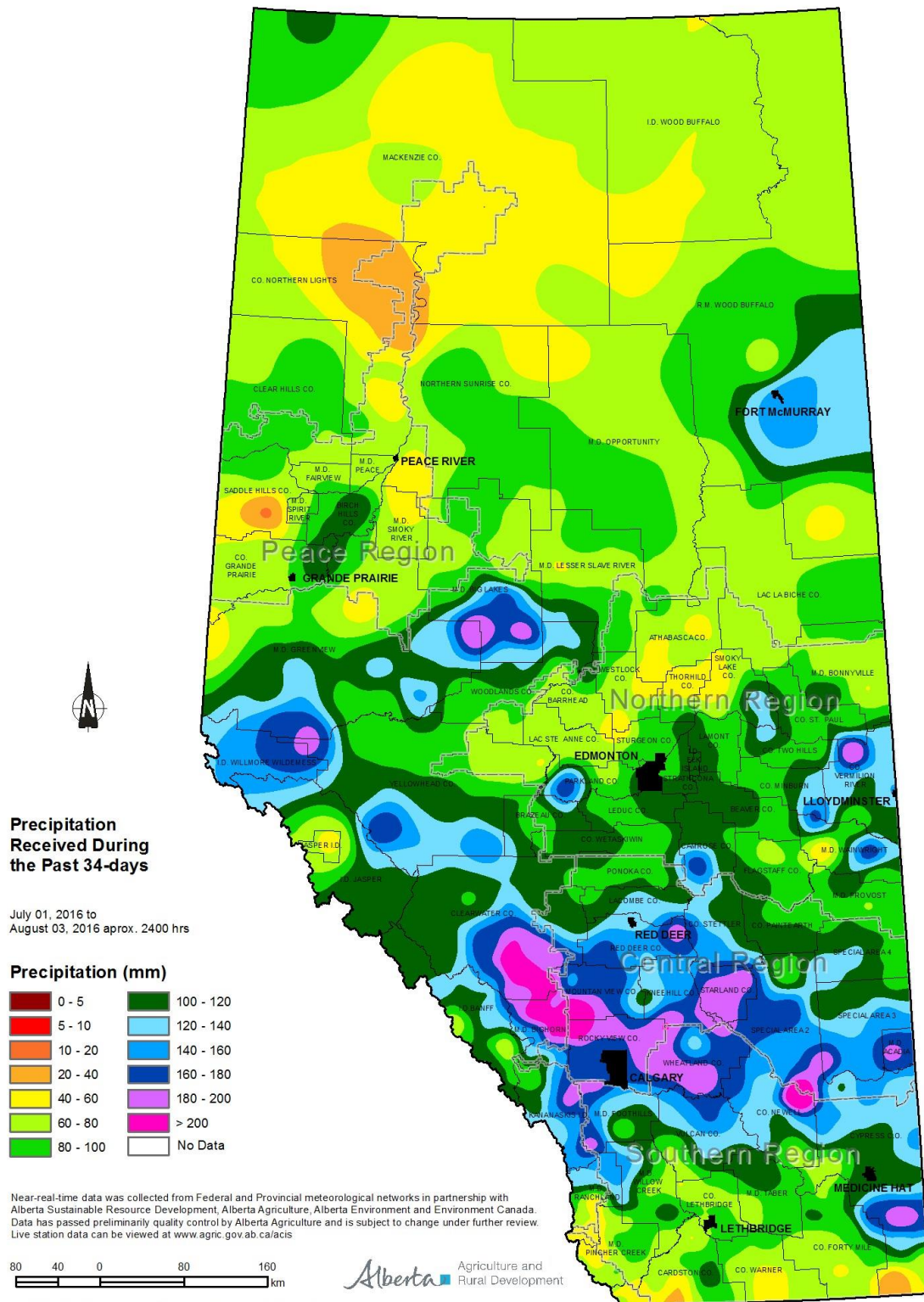
Map 1



Visit weatherdata.ca for additional maps and meteorological data

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Map 2



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