

Moisture Situation Update – June 26, 2018

Synopsis:

Since the last report (June 17, 2018) widespread thunderstorm activity brought much needed rain to some of the driest parts of southern Alberta, lying between Calgary and Lethbridge (**see map 1**). Unfortunately, this was “hit and miss” type of activity with the previously dry Mossleigh AGCM station (90 km southeast of Calgary) reporting 54 mm of rain and just 35 km further east, the Queenstown station reported only 6 mm. This was a similar story for a wide swath of land from Calgary over to Oyen and along the east half of the province all the way up to Fort McMurray. Simply put, many saw appreciable rain and some did not.

Many dry areas across the northern Peace Region also saw significant rain fall amounts ranging from over 75 mm in the Hawk Hills (just north of Manning), down to only about 5 mm in the La Crete area. Cool and wet conditions are expected to continue across the north over the next few days.

Currently soil moisture reserves are slowly rebounding with recent rains, but still remain below normal across about 70% of the province’s agricultural areas (**see map 2**). Extremely low reserves are found through parts of southern Alberta, and along a wide corridor, roughly following Highway 2 from Lethbridge to Red Deer. This does not necessarily mean there is presently an acute moisture shortage, given the recent rains, but it does mean that these areas have a diminished capacity to resist hot and dry weather unless significant moisture is received in the coming days.

Chronic moisture deficits are well represented by the 365-day accumulation map that depicts year over year deficits across a wide area, generally lying south of the Yellowhead Highway, extending all the way to the USA border (**see map 3**). Additionally, long term deficits are found through the central and northern Peace Region.

Forecast from AF’s Fire Weather Meteorologists;

Looking out over the next two weeks, there does not appear to be any indication that Alberta will see hot, dry weather develop. On the contrary, an upper cold low is expected to situate in Montana next Monday or Tuesday and it is forecast to bring wide spread rain (not spotty thunderstorms) to most of the province in the following days, at least south of Slave Lake. This is very good news for southern Alberta, as July 3rd historically marks an abrupt end to their wet season, which has been a looming concern given the dry conditions that have persisted since July 2017.

By the middle of next week (July 3 to 9), expect to see most areas across the south getting upwards of 20 mm or rain, with higher amounts towards the foot hills. It’s a bit early to tell yet, but if conditions set up right, there could be even greater accumulations. Stay tuned, the weather does appear to be co-operating and more moisture is on the way, with the earliest break from the cool wet conditions not expected until very late into next week.

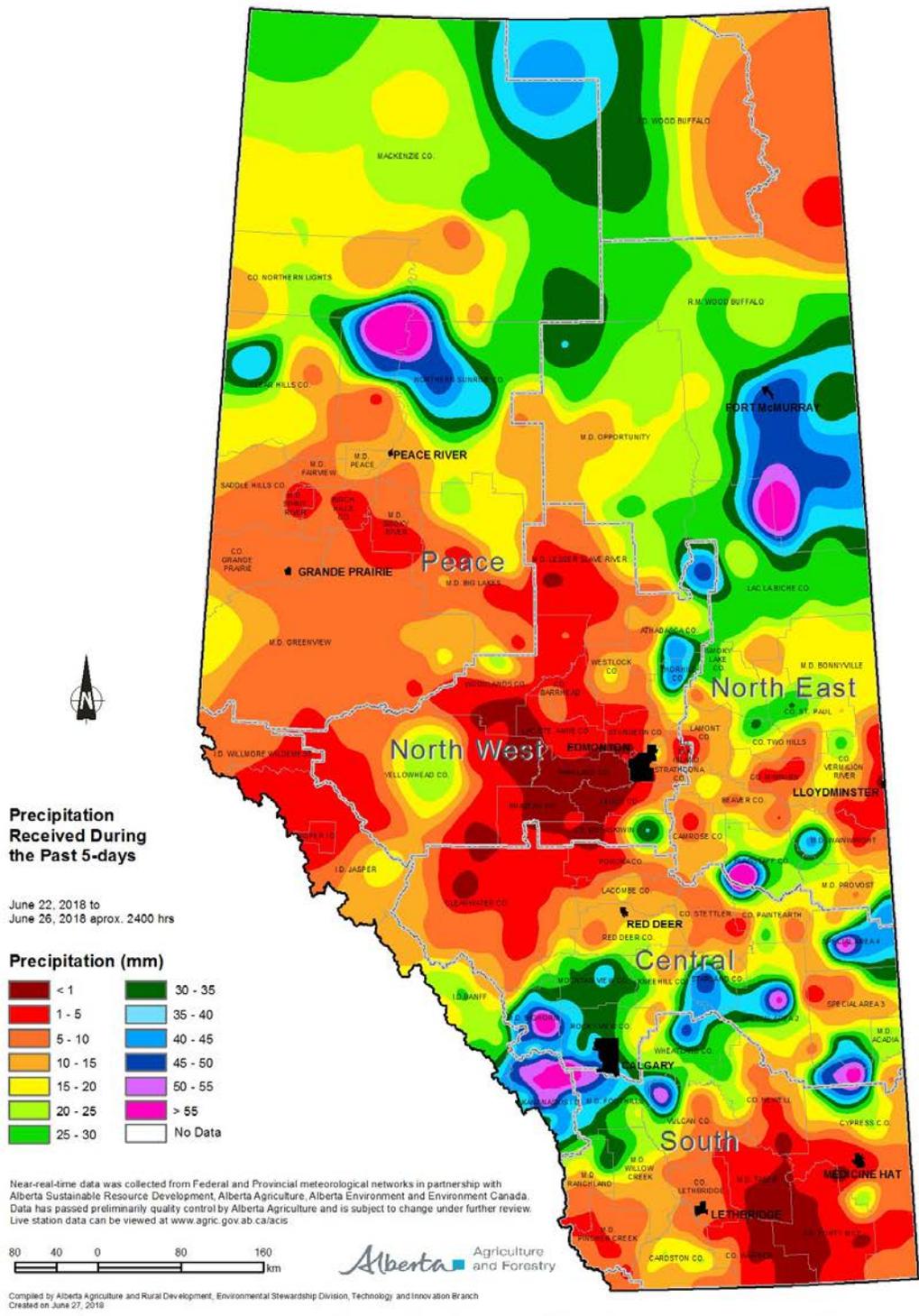
Near-real-time hourly station data can be viewed/downloaded at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations

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

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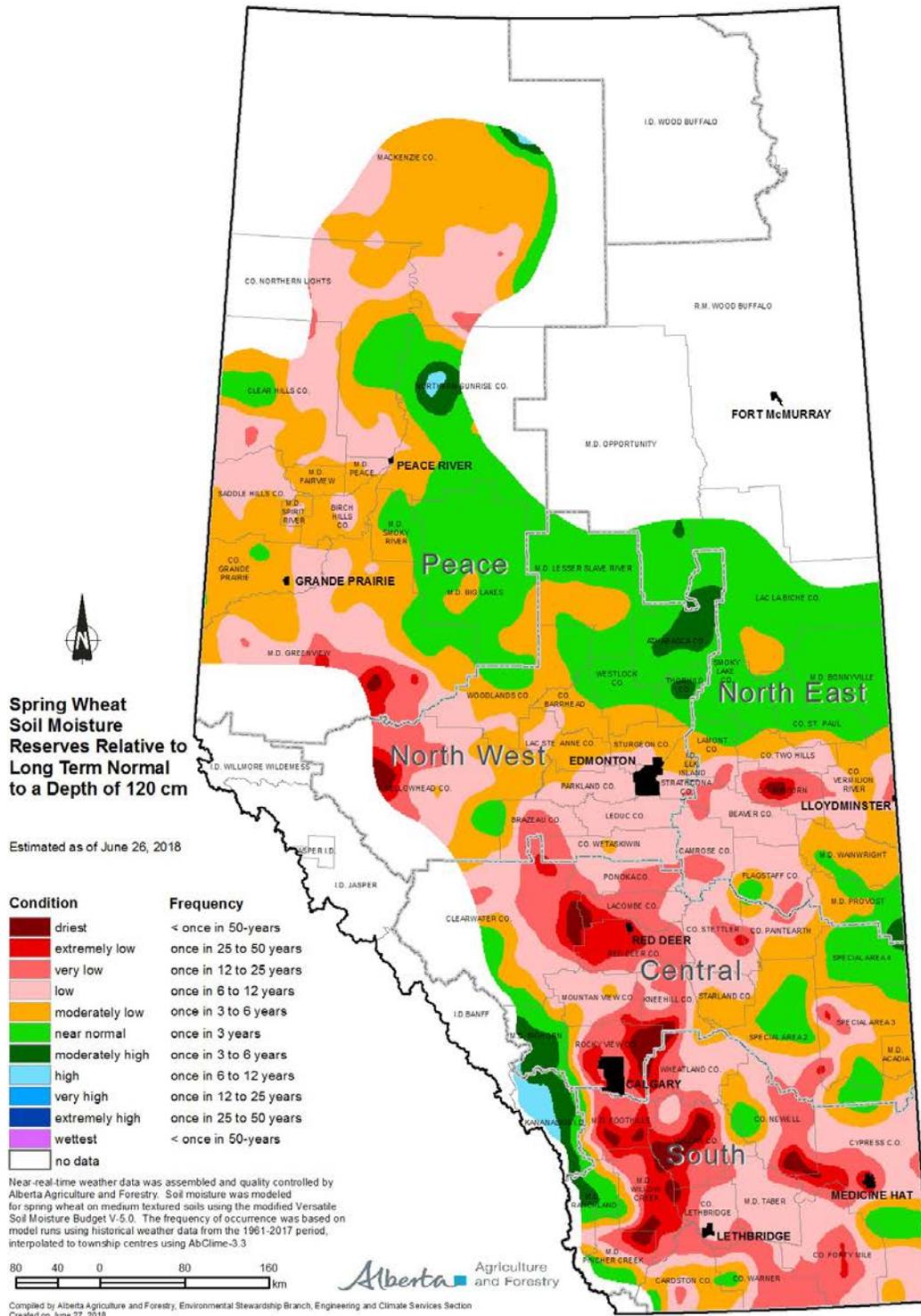
Map 1



Visit weatherdata.ca for additional maps and meteorological data

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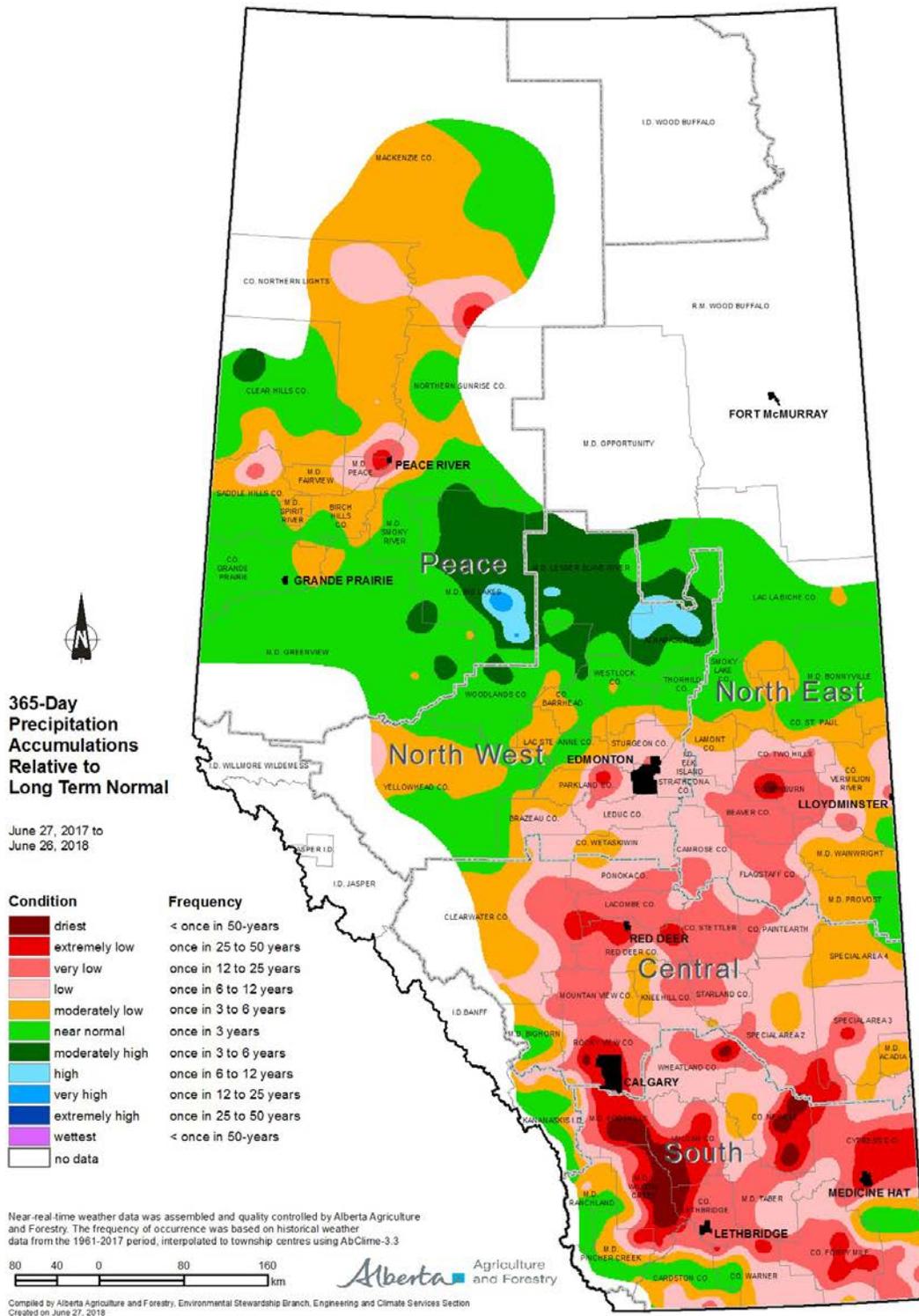
Map 2



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Map 3



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