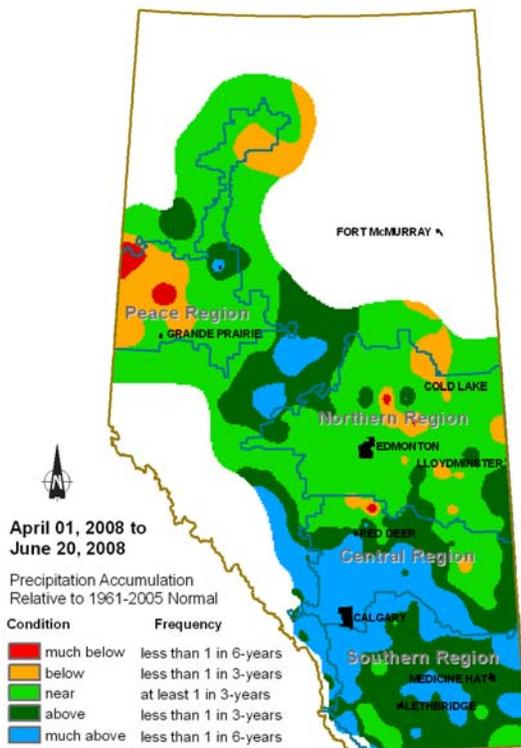


Crop Conditions as of June 19, 2008

The recent cool, wet weather conditions in Alberta have delayed crop development and hampered post-emergence spraying operations. In general, crop development this year is one to two weeks behind normal. Stages of spring cereals mostly range from tillering to early stem elongation, and only 17 percent of the provincial canola crop has reached the rosette stage. Fall-seeded cereals are just beginning to head out, with the development of fall rye being ahead of winter wheat. Warm temperatures are needed across the province to hasten crop development.

Crops are mostly in good to excellent condition, despite the slow growth. Provincially, spring wheat is rated as four percent poor, 18 percent fair, 61 percent good, and 17 percent excellent, with similar ratings for barley and oats. Canola is reported as five percent poor, 17 percent fair, 60 percent good, and 18 percent excellent. The rating of dry peas is two percent poor, 17 percent fair, 64 percent good, and 17 percent excellent. About 75 percent of fall-seeded cereals and the majority of specialty crops are in good to excellent condition. In some areas, crops are turning yellow in low-lying fields due to excessive soil moisture. Hailstorms have caused crop damage in many areas across the province. Additionally, producers are concerned about the delayed herbicide application, which is estimated at 68 percent complete.

Soil moisture reserves are adequate in most areas of the province. However, rain is still needed in some areas of the Peace, North East and North West Regions. Provincially, surface soil moisture is rated as five percent poor, 18 percent fair, 50 percent good, 24 percent excellent, and three percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as seven percent poor, 24 percent fair, 50 percent good, 17 percent excellent, and two percent excessive.



Due to the cool spring temperatures, pasture and tame hay growth has been slow, with hay grasses heading out earlier than in most years. Provincially, pasture is rated as seven percent poor, 29 percent fair, 52 percent good, and 12 percent excellent, with a similar rating reported for tame hay. The first-cut haying operation has just begun in most regions.

Root maggots, flea beetles, gophers, and grasshoppers are problematic in some areas. Also reported are concerns with army cutworms, wireworms, cabbage seedpod weevils and lygus bugs. The persistent cool, wet conditions have producers concerned about development of leaf diseases.

Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, staff of AFSC and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre for their partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2008 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- The recent cool, wet weather conditions have delayed crop development and hindered field operations. Crop development this year is generally one to two weeks behind normal. Despite the slow growth, 90 percent of spring cereals and 85 percent of canola are rated as good to excellent. Similarly, specialty crops are mostly in good condition, although development is behind normal.
- Overall, surface moisture is rated as one percent fair, 56 percent good, 38 percent excellent, and five percent excessive, while the rating of sub-surface moisture is 11 percent fair, 56 percent good, 29 percent excellent, and four excessive.
- The cool, wet weather has caused delays in post-emergence spraying, which is estimated at 50 percent complete. Pasture and tame hay are mostly in good condition, although growth is slower than in most years.

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

- Due to the cool spring temperatures, crop development is late compared to most years, although warm temperatures this week have improved growing conditions. With respect to crop conditions, about 80 percent of spring cereals and 85 percent of canola and dry peas are rated as good to excellent. In some areas, excessive moisture has caused crops to turn yellow.
- The recent precipitation has replenished soil moisture reserves. Overall, surface moisture is rated as two percent poor, nine percent fair, 45 percent good, 41 percent excellent, and three percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as three percent poor, 17 percent fair, 52 percent good, 27 percent excellent, and one percent excessive.
- Post-emergence spraying is estimated at about 55 percent complete. Pasture and tame hay are mostly in good to excellent condition, with hay grasses heading out earlier than normal.

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

- Recent rains have improved soil moisture conditions, although some areas only received scattered showers. Overall, surface moisture is rated as eight percent poor, 31 percent fair, 53 percent good, seven percent excellent, and one percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 13 percent poor, 34 percent fair, 48 percent good, and five percent excellent.
- Over 70 percent of spring cereals, dry peas and canola are in good to excellent condition, but crop development is behind normal due to cool temperatures. Some crop damage from hailstorms has been reported.
- Post-emergence spraying is estimated at about 75 percent complete. Pasture condition is rated as 12 percent poor, 49 percent fair, 37 percent good, and two percent excellent, with a similar rating reported for tame hay.

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

- Rain showers have brought various amounts of precipitation to the region. Overall, surface moisture is rated as four percent poor, 26 percent fair, 55 percent good, 14 percent excellent, and one percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 14 percent poor, 32 percent fair, 49 percent good, and five percent excellent.
- Cool temperatures this spring have resulted in slow crop growth, with most crops being one to two weeks behind normal in development. With respect to crop conditions, about 70 percent of spring cereals and canola, and 75 percent of dry peas are rated as good to excellent.
- Post-emergence spraying is estimated at nearly 80 percent complete. Pasture is reported as 11 percent poor, 32 percent fair, 50 percent good, and seven percent excellent, with a similar rating reported for tame hay.

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

- The amounts of precipitation received during the last two weeks have varied significantly across the region. Most producers have reported adequate soil moisture reserves, although rain is still needed in some areas, particularly along the B.C. border. Also reported is excessive moisture in some low-lying fields. Overall, surface moisture is rated as nine percent poor, 26 percent fair, 42 percent good, 16 percent excellent, and seven percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as nine percent poor, 24 percent fair, 45 percent good, and 18 percent excellent, and four percent excellent.
- Crops are mostly in good to excellent condition, although development is behind normal due to cool spring temperatures. Some canola fields affected by frost two weeks ago are reported to be recovering.
- Post-emergence spraying is estimated at over 80 percent complete. Pasture and tame hay are rated as 11 percent poor, 23 percent fair, 49 percent good, and 17 percent excellent.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Economics and Competitiveness Division
Statistics and Data Development Unit
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Chuanliang Su, Crop Statistician
E-mail chuanliang.su@gov.ab.ca
Phone: 780-422-2887

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