

Alberta Crop Report



Crop Conditions as of May 3, 2022

Spring moisture accumulations have been variable throughout the province. The map on page two shows a large part of southern Alberta has received low (brown on map) amounts of precipitation in the last 30 days. Central and Northern regions have received normal (green on map) precipitation while many parts of the Peace region have received above normal (blue on map) accumulations. The moisture conditions are reflected in the planting progress. Provincially, 12 per cent of the spring crop is in the ground (Table 1), two points ahead of the previous five-year average. Regionally, the South Region has 37 per cent of the crop in the ground, Central Region has planted six per cent of acres; while the North West, North East, and Peace Regions all have less than one per cent of the crop in the ground.

Table 1: Alberta Seeding Progress as of May 3, 2022

	% Seeded					
	South	Central	N East	N West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	38.7%	9.9%	1.1%	0.2%	0.8%	12.4%
Durum Wheat	60.7%	5.0%	---	---	---	52.9%
Barley	38.4%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	13.0%
Oats	16.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
Canola	12.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
Dry Peas	47.9%	24.0%	1.6%	0.6%	0.4%	21.8%
Mustard	24.8%	0.0%	---	---	---	17.7%
Flax	19.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	---	11.7%
Potatoes	50.0%	0.0%	---	0.0%	---	44.8%
Dry Beans	0.0%	---	---	---	---	0.0%
Chickpeas	34.9%	25.0%	---	---	---	34.4%
Lentils	42.6%	21.4%	---	---	---	39.3%
Mixed Grain	---	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	---	0.5%
Average	36.5%	5.9%	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%	12.2%
Last Year (May 4, 2021)	45.5%	11.9%	6.5%	3.9%	0.8%	17.4%
5-year Average (2017-2021)	27.7%	4.3%	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%	9.6%

Source: AFRED/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey

Spring precipitation has impacted surface soil moisture levels (Table 2). Observers estimate 49 per cent of the province as having good or excellent surface moisture, 20 points below the previous five-year average. The Peace Region is reporting seven per cent of acres impacted by excessive moisture.

Table 2: Surface Soil Moisture Ratings as of May 3, 2022

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Excessive
South	31.2%	28.1%	40.3%	0.4%	0.0%
Central	18.8%	31.0%	40.8%	9.4%	0.0%
North East	24.3%	24.1%	39.0%	12.0%	0.6%
North West	17.2%	49.3%	30.5%	3.0%	0.0%
Peace	0.4%	7.5%	27.5%	57.2%	7.4%
Alberta	21.7%	28.2%	37.8%	11.4%	0.9%
5-year Average (2017-2021)	4.4%	18.1%	43.0%	26.3%	8.2%

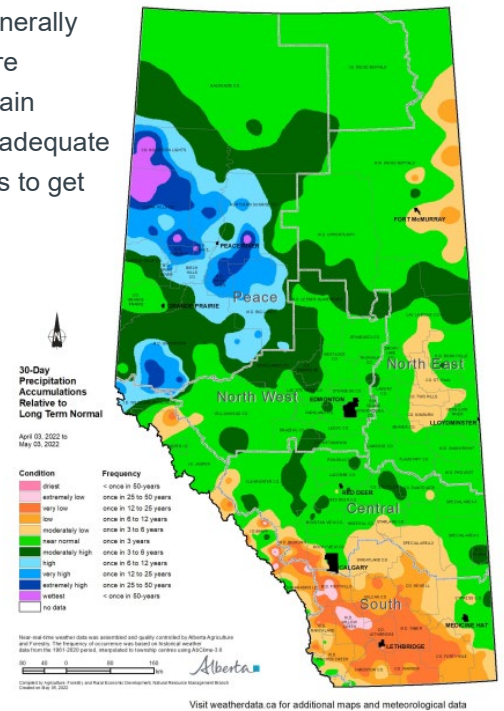
Source: AFRED/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey

The lack of moisture and accompanying cool temperatures have resulted in generally poor pasture (Table 3) and tame hay growth. Provincially, 27 per cent of pasture (29 per cent of hay) is being reported as good or excellent. Forage and feed grain reserves feedback indicates that approximately 52 per cent of producers have adequate or surplus forage and 60 per cent have adequate or surplus feed grain reserves to get them through until grazing begins.

Table 3: Pasture Growth as of May 4, 2022

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
South	20.7%	66.3%	12.3%	0.7%
Central	33.2%	12.8%	48.4%	5.6%
North East	51.7%	43.6%	4.7%	0.0%
North West	44.7%	40.2%	15.1%	0.0%
Peace	22.9%	38.3%	38.2%	0.6%
Alberta	32.0%	40.8%	25.1%	2.1%
5-year Average (2017-2021)	24.5%	26.7%	44.5%	4.3%

Source: AFRED/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey



Regional Assessments:

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

- Seeding is well on its way and ahead of the five-year regional average with dry soil, moderate winds, and little-to-no remaining spring runoff. Cereals and pulses are generally making significant seeding progress, with canola and flax trailing substantially and much slower than this time last year.
- Fall-seeded crops are rated 68 per cent in good to excellent condition, a marginal decrease year-over-year.
- Drought worries continue to dominate the conversation. Surface soil moisture ratings are 41 per cent good or excellent, a reduction since this time last year (56 per cent). Dry, windy conditions are also raising some soil erosion commentary amongst crop reporters. Irrigation is now being applied and generally earlier than normal.
- Tame hay and pasture are showing the stress of persistent drought. Current condition ratings are showing 19 per cent good or excellent for hay (down from 59 per cent last year) and only 13 per cent good or excellent for pasture (down from 57 percent last year).
- Roughly 50 per cent of both forage and feed grain reserves are reported as shortfall or deficit.

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

- Seeding is substantially slower than last year, largely due to cooler weather and modest, localized moisture in April. Peas, lentils and chickpeas are 24, 21 and 25 per cent seeded respectively, with all other crops single digit or not yet started.
- Fall-seeded crops are healthy with 80 per cent in good to excellent condition, relatively unchanged from last year.
- Both surface and sub-surface soil moisture are above 50 per cent good to excellent. Crop reporter conversations are referencing adequate soil moisture to start a crop, but a significant need for timely and consistent in-season precipitation.
- Tame hay is rated at 58 per cent (pasture at 54 per cent) good or excellent, an improvement from this time last year.
- It is estimated that both forage and feed grain reserves are 70 per cent adequate or surplus. The central region is reported to be in the best feed and forage inventory position of the province.

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

- Cold weather and lingering melting snow means seeding has barely started. Snow banks and treelines are still melting. A cold April has delayed snowmelt and the ground is still too cold and soft for any seeding to take place.
- Fall-seeded crops are rated 76 per cent good - unchanged from this time last year.
- Surface soil moisture ratings are down substantially from last year. For 0-6 inch surface moisture, 24 per cent is rated fair (46 per cent last year) and 39 per cent good (48 per cent last year). Sub-surface moisture is 55 per cent rated good to excellent, down from 75 per cent at this time last year.
- Pasture and hay crops are just breaking from dormancy but are already being reported in improved conditions from this time last year. Fifty-three percent of tame hay is reported as fair to good (32 percent last year) and 48 percent of pasture is fair to good (25 per cent this time last year).
- Forage and feed grain reserve deficiencies are being widely reported in this region with 54 per cent reporting a forage reserve shortfall or deficit and 33 per cent reporting a feed grain reserve shortfall or deficit. Pasture growth is needed now as some producers are forced to turn cattle out due to feed shortfalls after a hard winter.

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

- There is virtually no seeding yet as spring rains and remaining snow cover keep farmers off fields.
- Fall-seeded crops are improved year-over-year, now rated 100 per cent fair or good.
- Poorer spring soil moisture is reported compared to last year and is now rated 66 per cent poor to fair. Sub-surface soil moisture is also rated 87 per cent poor to fair with spring runoff not penetrating deeper soil levels.
- Perennials are slow to start. Both tame hay and pasture conditions are rated at 85 per cent poor to fair, with lasting damage from last summer's drought and heat. Winterkill is also being reported from heavy grazing in 2021 coupled with extreme cold and lower winter snow cover.
- Feed reserves are extremely poor and largely reported as shortfall or deficit. Only 29 per cent of forage reserves are rated as adequate and 34 per cent of feed grain reserves as adequate. This is the only region where there is no indication of any forage or feed grain surplus inventories.

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

- Like elsewhere in the province, spring is being reported as very cold and with delayed snowmelt. Next to zero seeding and very little spring field work has taken place as many fields are still melting and reporting runoff.
- Soil moisture is the most favourable of the province with 85 per cent rated as good to excellent. Sub-surface levels are also rated the highest of the province. With seven per cent reported, this is the only region reporting any meaningful amount of excess moisture.
- Perennial crops are moderately improved since this time last spring, with 34 per cent of hay and 38 per cent of pasture growth rated as good. However, some pastures are still reported under snow.
- Estimated forage reserves have dropped significantly year-over-year with 58 per cent of forage reserves rated adequate (72 per cent last spring) and 61 per cent of feed grain reserves rated adequate (73 per cent last spring).

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