



## SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Date: August 3, 2021  
Time: 9:00 AM  
Location: <https://www.rockyview.ca/>

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Pages

- A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
- B. UPDATES/APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- D. FINANCIAL REPORTS
- E. PUBLIC HEARINGS / APPOINTMENTS
- F. GENERAL BUSINESS
  - 1. All Divisions - Agricultural Disaster Declaration
- G. BYLAWS
- H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
- I. COUNCILLOR REPORTS
- J. MANAGEMENT REPORTS
- K. NOTICES OF MOTION
- L. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
- M. CLOSED SESSION
- N. ADJOURN THE MEETING

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File: N/A



## **AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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<b>TO:</b>	Council	<b>DIVISION:</b>	All
<b>DATE:</b>	August 3, 2021	<b>APPLICATION:</b>	N/A
<b>FILE:</b>	N/A		
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Agricultural Disaster Declaration		

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) developed a guide for declaring municipal agricultural disasters within Alberta. The guide promotes a consistent mechanism for data collecting and monitoring to support municipalities in the decision making process. Administration has been collecting data from the Province, local producers, and crop surveys to inform Administration's recommendation to declare a state of agricultural disaster across the entirety of Rocky View County (the County).

Prolonged drought conditions have resulted in reduced sources of feed and projected low crop yields in the County. Without soil moisture in the spring, producers look to seasonal rainfall to keep crops and pastures healthy. Lack of seasonal rain, combined with the prolonged heat wave in June and July, have amplified the problems farmers and ranchers are now facing. Conditions in the region have continued to deteriorate, and with little rain and continued heat in the forecast, we expect to see further deterioration.

To obtain representative local data, Rocky View County Agricultural Services reached out to producers located in the following regions of the County: southeast, northeast, southwest and northwest. We asked producers to provide information for annual crops (wheat, barley, canola) and perennials including tame hay and pasture.

At least 50% of annual crops were rated as poor across all regions of the County. On average, producers are expecting to see up to a 50% reduction in yield for canola, wheat, and barley.

Perennials including tame hay and pasture saw more variation in rating with 30% rated as poor on the low end, and up to 80% rated as poor on the high end.

As of July 27, 2021, regional data shows that 17.2% of all crops were rated in good to excellent condition as compared to 75.1% with the same condition rating from the 5 year average, and 73.4% for the 10 year average.

Additionally, 22.6% of pastures are rated as poor in condition compared to 11.1% with the same rating for the 5 year average, and 12.4% for the 10 year average. Only 0.2% of pastures were rated as excellent in the region.

### **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

Administration recommends approval in accordance with Option #1.

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#### **Administration Resources**

Kristyn Smigelski, Agricultural and Environmental Services



## BACKGROUND:

Within the RMA guide for declaring municipal agricultural disasters, consideration of five key questions is recommended:

1. Does the state of agricultural disaster cover the entire area or just a region within the municipality?

While certain areas within the County have not been hit quite as hard as others, the general consensus is that all producers in Rocky View County have been impacted by the heat and lack of moisture. East of Symons Valley Rd (Rge. Rd. 21) is experiencing particularly low soil moisture reserves, with most of the area in a “once in 25 – 50 year low” and a small area in a “once and 50 year low”. The remainder of the County falls between very low “once in 12-25 years” to moderately low “once in 3-6 years” soil moisture reserves. A small portion of land on our western border has near normal levels.

2. Does the agriculture disaster cover all agriculture in the municipality or only certain commodity products?

All commodity products are affected and, with the continued forecast of dry and warm weather, it is expected that conditions will continue to deteriorate.

3. Has the municipality used AFSC data for the local area to assess the level of impact being experienced?

The County’s condition statement was developed with regional and local data taken from the July 13<sup>th</sup> Crop Conditions Report (and previous reports) and from information provided by local producers.

4. Has the municipality contacted producer groups and associations to discuss impacts being experienced?

Administration has been in contact with the Farm Members of the Agricultural Service Board, and has gathered data from producers located throughout the County.

5. Does the municipality have data to support this decision (e.g.: completed condition assessment tool(s) and municipal mapping)?

The County participates in and provides data for the Alberta Crop Report, and Administration has reached out to local producers to gather information to complete the condition assessment tool.

Municipal declarations of agricultural disasters help bring awareness to issues in specific areas of the province. They do not automatically trigger a provincial declaration or access to funding to support the issue; rather, they serve as an important indicator that the province may use in its deliberations of a province-wide declaration.

As of Friday, July 30, twenty (20) municipalities have declared an agricultural disaster. By region, those who have declared include:

1. South Region: Cypress County, Foothills County, Special Areas No. 2, Special Areas No. 3, Special Areas No. 4, Vulcan County, MD of Acadia and Wheatland County.
2. Central Region: Paintearth County
3. North East Region: Beaver County, County of Two Hills, MD of Wainwright, County of St Paul and Minburn County.
4. North West Region: Brazeau County, Lac St. Anne County, Sturgeon County and Yellowhead County.
5. Peace Region: County of Grand Prairie and the MD Fairview.



Should Council declare an agricultural disaster, Administration would also support providing additional agricultural exemptions to the Road Use Agreement Bylaw (C-8065-2020). The Bylaw outlines the County's direction, control, and management of all roads, ensuring that County roads are kept in a reasonable state of repair. The Bylaw applies to all persons desiring to conduct Transport Operations using County road infrastructure.

The Bylaw provides exemptions to Family Farms and their use of contracted farm services. The Bylaw also does not require permits when hauling on roads when not in excess of 30 movements in a seven-day period or five movements in a one-hour period. To mitigate potential issues for producers, Administration will be creating a further exemption for agricultural operations.

Under Bylaw C-8065-2020 the following is listed under Application:

7. *The Executive Director of Operations or Designate, in their sole discretion, shall determine the risk any Transport Operation poses to the County roads considering the following:*
  - (1) *The weight and configuration of the proposed transport vehicles;*
  - (2) *The total number of loads, frequency and duration of the Transport Operations;*
  - (3) *The existing condition and surface type of the proposed transport route road(s);*
  - (4) *The proximity of the proposed transport route to residential dwellings; and,*
  - (5) *The time of year.*
8. *Where it is determined that Transport Operations may or will likely cause damage to the County's infrastructure, pursuant to Section 7, the Executive Director of Operations or Designate is authorized to require the Persons responsible to enter into a Road Use Agreement on such terms and conditions as the Executive Director of Operations or Designate deem appropriate.*

It is Administration's position and recommendation that in consideration of risks related to the above points noted in the Road Use Agreement Bylaw, the timing of the year (not road ban season), and the need to provide the farming community with opportunity to remove their crops as necessary, that road use agreements will not be required. It will be Administration's position that the Agricultural Exemption be in place until November 1, 2021.

#### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

No budget implications.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN:**

Communications, in conjunction with Agricultural Services, has been working to develop a media release if an agricultural disaster is declared. Safe and Sound and the Ag Review newsletter will be utilized to inform producers of any applicable exemptions under the Road Use Bylaw (C-8065-2020).

#### **OPTIONS:**

- Option #1: THAT Rocky View County declare a municipal agricultural disaster.
- Option #2: THAT alternative direction be provided.



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Respectfully submitted,

"Byron Riemann"

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Executive Director  
Operations

Concurrence,

"Kent Robinson"

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Acting Chief Administrative Officer

KS/rp

**ATTACHMENTS:**

ATTACHMENT 'A': Alberta Crop Report July 30

ATTACHMENT 'B': Soil Moisture Reserves Relative to Long-Term Normal as of July 22, 2021

# Alberta Crop Report



## Crop Conditions as of July 27, 2021

NOTE – Crop Reports will be released bi-weekly in July and August

Alberta's weather has continued to be warm and dry in many areas. The daytime highs in the last two weeks have ranged between the mid-to-high 20s to the low 30s. This, in combination with the lack of precipitation, has led to continued deterioration of annual and perennial crops. The areas south of Red Deer have received 15 mm or less rain in the past two weeks (green, yellow and pink areas on map). The moisture that fell in the areas north of Red Deer will help fill the heads/pods that are already there, but has come too late for many annual crops.

Annual crop conditions have declined compared to the last report, with now only 20 per cent of the annual crops rating good or excellent. This represents a 17-point drop in the last two weeks and is over 50 points below the five- and 10-year average of 71 per cent (Table 1). The Central region experienced the most significant reduction with a 43-point decline, followed by the South, North East, and North West, which are all experiencing close to a 10-point decline. The Peace region fared the better with less than a five-point decrease. The forecasted high temperatures for the upcoming week are expected to impact these ratings further. Crop staging for spring cereals is mid-way through the milk stage while fall cereals are in the hard dough, as compared to the five-year averages of completed flowering and soft dough respectively. Oilseeds are 79 per cent podding, well ahead of the five-year average of 43 per cent, while dry peas are at 97 per cent podding, well ahead of the five-year average of 77 per cent.

**Table 1: Regional Crop Condition Ratings as of July 27, 2021**

	% Rated in Good to Excellent Condition					
	South	Central	N East	N West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat*	21.5%	17.2%	28.1%	22.3%	13.7%	21.6%
Durum Wheat	22.7%	13.5%	---	---	---	21.5%
Barley*	23.1%	12.6%	17.4%	18.9%	16.0%	17.8%
Oats*	25.2%	14.5%	19.1%	16.7%	27.5%	19.6%
Winter Wheat	42.6%	25.4%	90.0%	46.4%	---	41.8%
Mixed Grain	30.0%	15.1%	34.0%	23.3%	---	18.2%
Canola*	22.1%	17.7%	15.4%	16.4%	13.3%	16.8%
Dry Peas*	19.5%	16.2%	15.9%	16.9%	20.4%	18.2%
Lentils	20.5%	20.0%	---	---	---	20.5%
Chickpeas	11.9%	10.0%	---	---	---	11.8%
Mustard	31.7%	18.7%	---	---	---	27.9%
Flax	31.2%	10.0%	33.7%	---	---	29.7%
Potatoes	51.9%	0.9%	---	87.0%	---	51.8%
All Crops	23.7%	16.1%	20.7%	19.6%	15.0%	19.7%
Major Crops (*)	21.7%	16.2%	20.6%	18.8%	15.0%	18.8%
July 13, 2021	33.4%	59.4%	34.6%	26.9%	18.1%	36.6%
Last Year	87.7%	92.5%	79.7%	35.4%	60.8%	77.5%
5-year (2016-2020) Avg.	59.6%	75.1%	83.3%	62.9%	72.0%	70.8%
10-year (2011-2020 Avg.)	67.9%	73.4%	78.9%	65.1%	66.7%	71.4%

Source: AF/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey

Early dryland estimates are in. Provincially, these estimates are 42 points below the five- and 40 points below the 10-year averages based on the current conditions (Table 2). These estimates are based upon extremely limited information at this time and will be updated bi-weekly. Regionally the estimates range from 30 to 50 per cent below the average of the past five and 10 years.

**Table 2: Dryland Yield Estimates (Major Crops) as of July 27, 2021**

	South	Central	N East	N West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat*	19.9	26.2	32.9	43.5	30.4	29.5
Barley	21.9	48.4	40.0	40.8	24.6	36.3
Oats	23.9	42.1	46.5	59.8	38.1	46.7
Canola	19.1	25.3	24.9	30.2	25.3	24.9
Dry Peas	19.4	20.8	22.9	25.4	26.9	22.4
5-year Index	50.2%	53.4%	58.8%	68.9%	66.4%	57.8%
10-year Index	48.5%	56.5%	64.1%	70.6%	67.5%	59.9%

Source: AF/AFSC Crop Reporting Survey

The warm dry conditions have allowed harvest of the first-cut hay to be close to wrapping up with 97 per cent dryland acres baled, 32 points ahead of the five-year average, and 100 per cent of the irrigated acres have been baled, 6 points ahead of the five-year average.

Reported yields are well below normal with first-cut hay averaging 1.0 tons per acre, compared to the five-year average of 1.5 tons per acre. Irrigated first-cut yields down slightly at 2.1 tons per acre compared to the five-year average of 2.4 tons per acres.

Pasture has also been affected. Provincially, over 50 per cent of the pasture acres are rated as poor. The low hay yields, poor pasture conditions and overall condition of spring-seeded crops has resulted in many reports of grain crops being pastured or cut for silage.

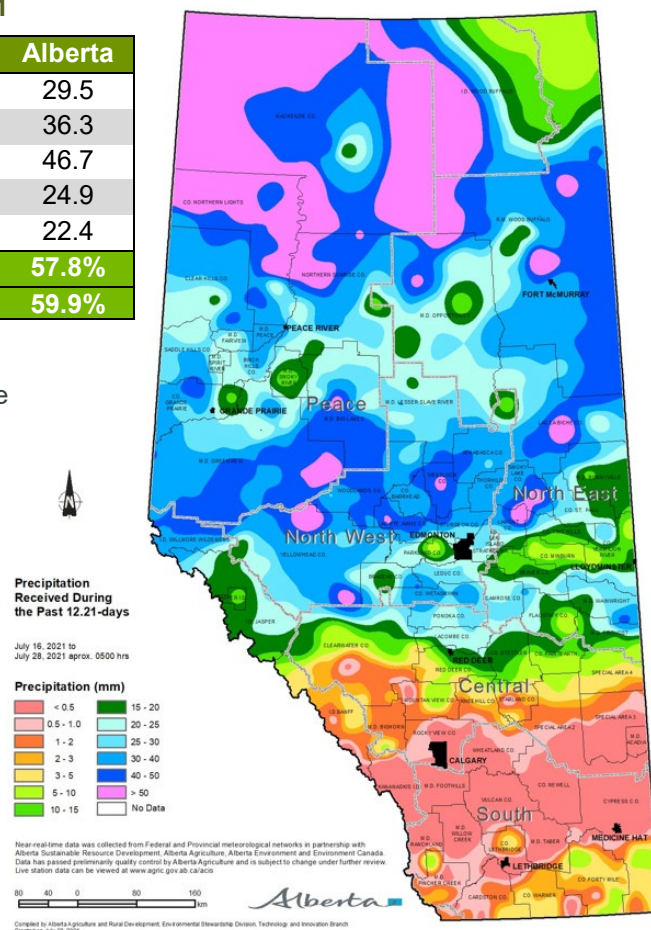
## Regional Assessments:

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

- High temperatures and lack of any notable rainfall in the region this week continue to take a toll on dryland crops.
- Overall, crop conditions are 36 per cent, below the five-year average of 60 per cent good or excellent. Conditions rating for sugar beets are 79 per cent, potatoes 52 per cent, and dry beans at 95 per cent good or excellent.
- Crop stages for spring cereals are mostly in the mid to late milk stage, while fall-seeded cereals are entering the ripening stage. Canola is over 83 per cent podding and pulses are over 95 per cent podding.
- Pasture is currently rated as 51 per cent poor, 32 per cent fair, 16 per cent good, and 1 per cent excellent.
- First-cut dryland hay is reported as 99 per cent completed with estimated yields of 0.8 ton per acre and quality rated as 33 per cent good or excellent. First-cut irrigated hay is 100 per cent complete with estimates of 2.2 ton per acre yields, and 58 per cent rated as good or excellent quality. Second-cut irrigated hay is six per cent complete with 1.9 ton per acre yield estimates and quality ratings are at 54 per cent good or excellent.

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

- Hail, sometimes severe, accompanied rain in the northern and western parts of region. Extreme hot and dry conditions continue in the south and eastern parts of the region.
- Overall, crop conditions are 59 per cent, below the five-year average of 75 per cent good or excellent.



- Crop stages for spring cereals are mostly in the early to mid-milk stage, while fall-seeded cereals are in the soft to hard dough stage. Canola is 75 per cent podding and pulses are at least 90 per cent podding.
- Pasture is currently rated as 39 per cent poor, 36 per cent fair, and 25 per cent good.
- First-cut dryland hay is reported as 96 per cent completed with estimated yields of 1.2 ton per acre and quality rated as 54 per cent good or excellent. First-cut irrigated hay is 100 per cent complete with estimates of 2.0 ton per acre yields, and 70 per cent rated as good or excellent quality. Second-cut irrigated hay has not started.

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

- Scattered rains over parts of the region will help fill the crops. Bonnyville, St. Paul, and Wainwright areas also reported smoke and cool temperatures slowing crop advancement.
- Overall, crop conditions are 63 per cent, below the five-year average of 83 per cent good or excellent.
- Crop stages for spring cereals are mostly in the early to mid-milk stage, while fall-seeded cereals have started to ripen. Canola is 73 per cent podding and dry peas have finished podding.
- Pasture is currently rated as 67 per cent poor, 18 per cent fair, and 15 per cent good.
- First-cut dryland hay is reported as 95 per cent completed with estimated yields of 0.9 ton per acre and quality rated as 78 per cent good or excellent.

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

- Sporadic rain was received throughout the region this week, which will help fill the existing heads and pods.
- Overall, crop conditions are 43 per cent, below the five-year average of 63 per cent good or excellent.
- Crop stages for spring cereals are mostly in the mid to late milk stage, while fall-seeded cereals are in the early to soft dough stage. Canola is 70 per cent podding and dry peas are 94 per cent podding.
- Pasture is currently rated as 44 per cent poor, 44 per cent fair, and 12 per cent good.
- First-cut dryland hay is reported as 99 per cent completed with estimated yields of 1.2 ton per acre and quality rated as 58 per cent good or excellent.

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

- Isolated showers and smoke was common throughout region. The showers are helping to fill out the canola and cereal crops.
- Overall, crop conditions are 57 per cent, below the five-year average of 72 per cent good or excellent.
- Crop stages for spring cereals are mostly in the mid to late milk stage, canola is 93 per cent podding and dry peas have finished podding.
- Pasture is currently rated as 63 per cent poor, 32 per cent fair, and 5 per cent good.
- First-cut dryland hay is reported as 97 per cent completed with estimated yields of 0.8 ton per acre and quality rated as 20 per cent good or excellent.

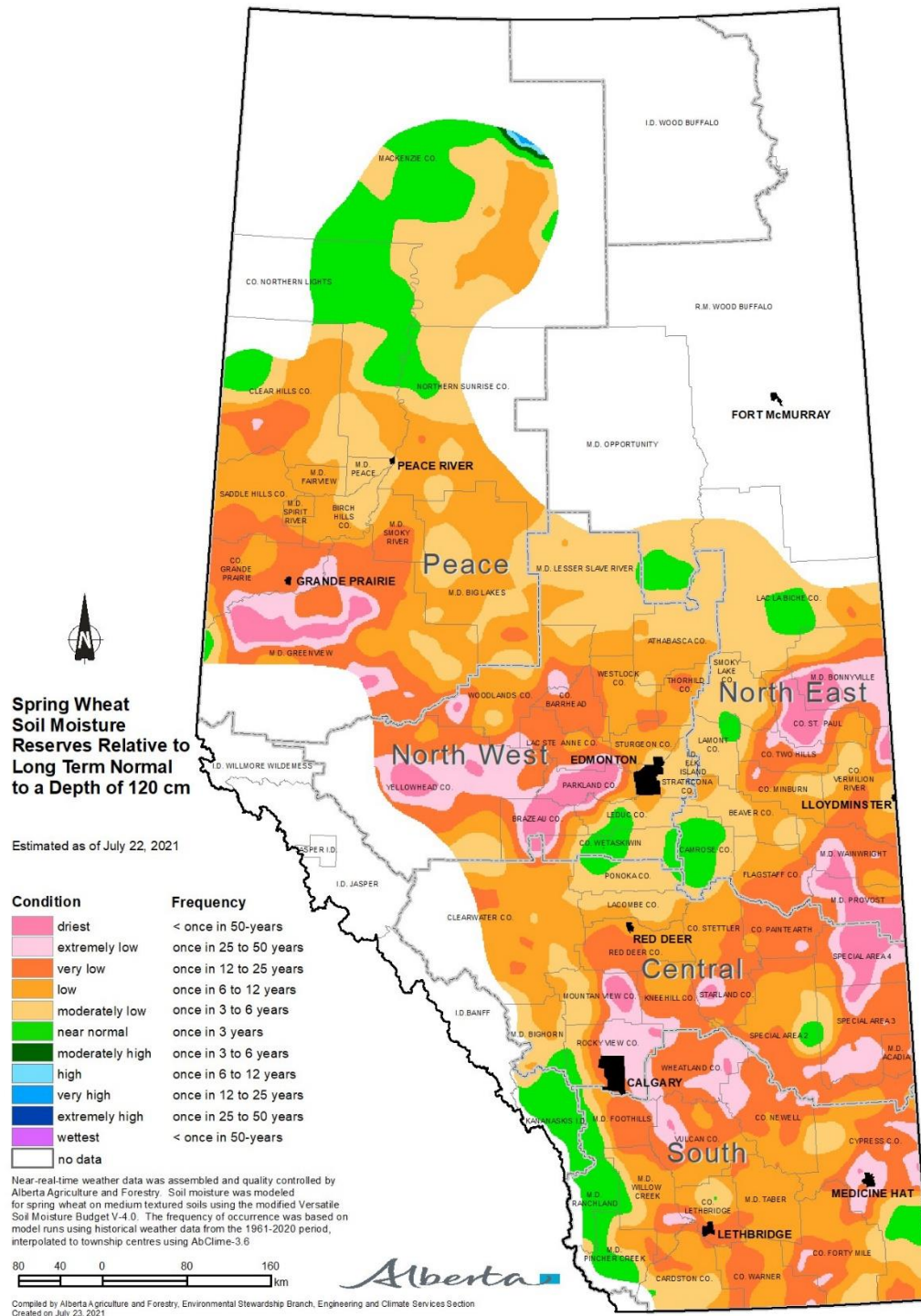
## Contacts

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