

June, 2006



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The Windssock

2006 Alberta Crop Conditions

Crops and pasture this year are off to a good start in most areas of the province. Favorable growing conditions, including adequate moisture reserves and above normal temperatures, allowed early seeded crops to germinate quite well.

Additionally, pasture and tame hay are showing good growth. Resulting from the recent rains, soil moisture conditions have been improving in the Peace Region. However, warm winds, in conjunction with lack of rainfall, have caused significant depletion of surface moisture in the Southern and Central Regions. Provincially, surface moisture is rated as four per cent poor, 15 per cent fair, 45 per cent good, and 36 per cent excellent, while sub-surface moisture is five per cent poor, 17 per cent fair, 50 per cent good, and 28 per cent excellent.

Alberta producers have now planted 87 per cent of the 2006 crop, in line with seeding progress in most years. The Peace Region is the most advanced with 97 per cent of seeding completed, followed by the Southern and Central Regions at 90 per cent. The Northeast Region lags behind, with only 77 per cent of seeding completed, while in the Northwest Region, it is about 85 per cent complete. Wet fields could delay the completion of seeding to early June in the Northeast Region, while in most other areas, seeding is expected to be wrapped up by the end of May. Estimates of provincial seeding

progress by crop are as follows: dry peas nearly 100 per cent, spring wheat and durum wheat 95 per cent, canola 92 per cent, barley 77 per cent, and oats 70 per cent. Seeding of specialty crops, which are grown primarily in southern Alberta, is virtually complete. Early seeded crops have emerged or are emerging. Spraying for post-emergent weed control has just begun.

With the recent moisture received, pasture and tame hay in the Peace Region are improving, and are rated mostly as fair or good. In most other areas, pasture and tame hay are developing nicely. Provincially, pasture is rated as 5 per cent poor, 20 per cent fair, 55 per cent good, and 20 per cent excellent, while a slightly better rating is reported for tame hay. In terms of soil erosion, most noticeable damage came from strong winds, although spring runoff was also problematic in some areas of the province this spring. Some insect problems/concerns are also reported. In general, Alberta producers have adequate supplies of feed grains and forages.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

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

- Above normal temperatures and warm winds helped wet fields to dry and allowed seeding to progress

rapidly. Overall, seeding of major crops is estimated at 90 per cent complete in the region. The southwestern parts of the region lag behind with only 50-70 per cent of seeding completed. Due to various factors, reseeding occurred in some areas.

- Planting of specialty crops is virtually complete, with the exception of dry beans, which is about three-quarters complete.
- Warm winds, in conjunction with lack of rainfall, depleted much of the surface moisture reserves in many areas. Overall, surface moisture is rated as five per cent poor, 29 per cent fair, 46 per cent good, and 20 per cent excellent, while sub-surface moisture is three per cent poor, 11 per cent fair, 60 per cent good, and 26 per cent excellent. Irrigation is currently being applied in the region.
- About three-quarters of pasture and over 80 per cent of tame hay are rated as good or excellent.

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

- Seeding is estimated at about 90 per cent complete in the region.
- Significant depletion of surface moisture also occurred in this region, due to high temperatures and lack of

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY FRAN DE KOCK

After a mild winter, the trend has continued with an early spring and more warm temperatures. As spring progresses and seeding moves along at a rapid pace with few weather delays, farmers are thankful for last falls moisture, which for much of the province has made seeding conditions ideal. There are some dry areas in the north and south but for the most part the crops have abundant moisture for a good start.

There is cautious optimism in agriculture as commodity prices are showing positive gains and the effects of ethanol and biodiesel have started to affect the commodity prices. If high fuel prices help revive agriculture, the pain may be more bearable.

As the spray season approaches it is time to start thinking about all the things that make for a safe and successful season. It all starts with proper training of pilots, ground crew and office staff.

In the off season, CAIR developed a Company training checklist for pilots to assist companies in their training program. The checklist is available from George at Oldfield Kirby or myself at fran@batairspray.com

The transportation of fuel on public roads in Alberta has become a major part of enforcement agencies policing activities. There is no tolerance for means of transportation that is not certified, all tanks must meet the latest certification standards or the operator will be charged. The efforts of the AAAA and CAAA with regards to changing the standards for approved tanks was not considered an option by Transport Canada and they are proceeding with their schedule to turn perfectly good fuel tanks into water tanks.

With the unbelievable oil field activity in Alberta and parts of Saskatchewan it will be very important for operators to ask their customers about any oilfield or other activity in their fields. Any mistakes by an operator or pilot will have serious effects on all operators and pilots in the future. The best way to handle the oilfield activity is to have a good relationship with the oil companies in your area. I have always asked the customer to give me names and phone numbers of the area managers and project foremen. If you advise them of your intended activity and the precautions to be taken with the product you are spraying they are generally quite cooperative. The oil activity will only become more widespread and it will become more important for us to work together.

Just a Reminder!

Compliance, Laboratory Services and Regional Operations Division (CLSROD) of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is conducting an Aerial Applicators Outreach Program starting in the summer of 2006. This program involves aerial applicators in Alberta, the Peace River area of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario

The objectives of the program are to better understand aerial applicator's work challenges and to develop, in partnership with the Aerial Applicator Associations, innovative ways to encourage and promote compliance and avoid violations of the Pest Control Products Act (PCPA).

PMRA Regional Staff will randomly select aerial applicators to visit and discuss their current challenges and to engage these applicators in discussions on how to better regulate their industry. These visits are expected to be completed in season while aerial applicators are active, i.e. slow periods preferably. Every effort will be made to pre-arrange mutually acceptable and appropriate meeting times.

A short questionnaire will be completed to capture core business information and to record products currently being applied by the aerial applicator. A section will also be included to record the aerial applicators comments/suggestions and innovative ideas.

PMRA's presence and education during these visits is expected to reduce the incidents of pesticide misuse and improve communication between PMRA and the individual aerial applicators. This communication will lead to a greater understanding of the PCPA and may lead to innovative ideas on how both parties can effectively deal with violators. The results of this two year program would be presented to the respective Aerial Applicators Associations and provincial regulatory authorities in 2008.

We look forward to the opportunity of meeting with many of you during the next two years and hope that these meetings will be mutually beneficial. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Julie Sisson, P. Ag., Regional Pesticide Officer, Lethbridge Alberta. (403)382-4794 or sissonj@inspection.gc.ca.

REMEMBER....SAFETY

(Continued from page 1)

precipitation. However, moisture reserves remain adequate in most areas of the region. Overall, surface moisture is rated as four per cent poor, 18 per cent fair, 54 per cent good, and 24 per cent excellent, while sub-surface moisture is reported as three per cent poor, nine per cent fair, 38 per cent good, and 50 per cent excellent.

- Pasture and tame hay are developing nicely and are rated mostly as good or excellent.

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

- Seeding is delayed due to rains, and excessive moisture in some areas. Overall, seeding is estimated at about 77 per cent complete in the region.
- Moisture conditions remain very favorable in the region, but some fields are still too wet for seeding. Overall, surface moisture is rated as five per cent fair, 46 per cent good, and 49 per cent excellent. Sub-surface moisture is reported as five per cent fair, 64 per cent good, and 31 per cent excellent.
- In general, pasture and tame hay are rated as good or excellent.

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

- Recent rains slowed seeding progress in the region, which is estimated at about 85 per cent complete.
- Some areas in the region remain dry. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 11 per cent poor, 15 per cent fair, 37 per cent good, and 37 per cent excellent, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 14 per cent poor, 17 per cent fair, 50 per cent good, and 19 per cent excellent.
- Over 70% of pasture and tame hay are rated as good or excellent.

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

- Timely rain showers brought much needed moisture and significantly improved soil moisture conditions, particularly at the surface level. Overall, surface moisture is rated as four per cent fair, 38 per cent good, and 58 per cent excellent, while sub-surface moisture is five per cent poor, 43 per cent fair, 43 per cent good, and nine per cent excellent.
- Seeding is estimated at 97 per cent complete in the region. Crops still to be seeded are mainly oats, barley and some canola. Some alfalfa winterkill is reported, partly due to lack of snow cover.
- Pasture and tame hay are improving, and are rated mostly as fair or good.

Report provided by Statistics and Data Development Unit, Economics and Competitiveness Division, AAFRD (May 25, 2006)



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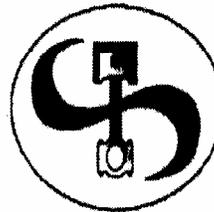
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2006 AGM Scheduled in Red Deer

The 2006 Alberta Aerial Applicators Association Annual General Meeting will be held on November 13 & 14, 2006 at the Red Deer Lodge. Several licence re-certification credits are scheduled along with exhibitors and entertainment. Mark the dates on your calendar and watch for more information and registration forms mailed in early fall.

Calendar of Events

SAAA AGM - 2006

Radisson Hotel
Saskatoon, SK
November 7-9, 2006

AAAA AGM - 2006

Red Deer Lodge
Red Deer, AB
November 13 & 14, 2006

NAAA Conference & Trade Show

Rosen Shingle Creek
Orlando, Florida
December 4 – 6, 2006

CAAA AGM – 2007

The Fairmont Winnipeg
Winnipeg, Manitoba
February 22 – 24, 2007

CAAA AGM – 2008

Halifax, NB

CAIR Safety Seminar

For those unable to attend the CAIR Safety Seminar, a benefit of a lower deductible will still be available by viewing a DVD that will be available through the CAIR office. If you do not participate in the Safety Seminar program your deductible will be increased by an additional 5% of the hull value of the aircraft you are flying. You will have to pass an exam to receive the discount. Please call 780-413-0016 today for your CAIR Safety Seminar information.

Dollars & Sense of Aerial Spraying Brochures

Field trials completed last year in Manitoba illustrated yields with aerial application are as good as or better than ground application on canola, wheat beans, and potatoes. To order brochures outlining the findings of the trials for your customers, contact the CAAA at 780-413-0078.

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