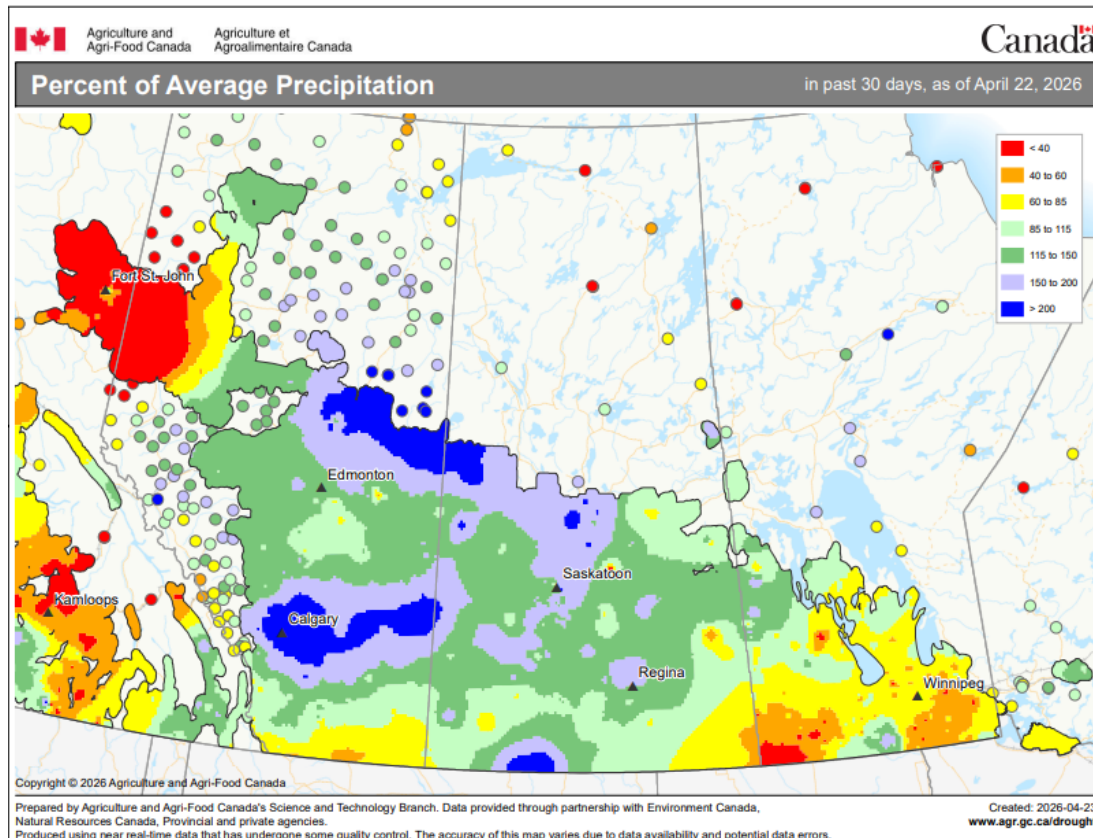


Canada Prairies Snowstorm To Further Delay Fieldwork

By Andrew Owen

Kansas City, April 23 (World Weather Inc.) – *Waves of snow and some rain coupled with colder than normal weather delayed early-season fieldwork for a large section of the Canadian Prairies in recent weeks. While the moisture from the snow will be welcome, there is a pressing need for drier and warmer weather to melt the snow.* A storm system impacting the Prairies today will prevail through the weekend bolstering snowpack in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and portions of Manitoba and northeastern British Columbia. Intense wind speeds will also generate blowing and drifting snow or even blizzard-like conditions. *In addition to the poor fieldwork and travel conditions, temperatures will plummet well below normal for this time of year in a large section of the Prairies.* Drier weather will be possible next week, though there is not a significant amount of heating expected. The lack of significant heating may carry over into the first week of May as well. *The environment will remain less than favorable to poor for early-season fieldwork outside portions of the southwestern Prairies.*

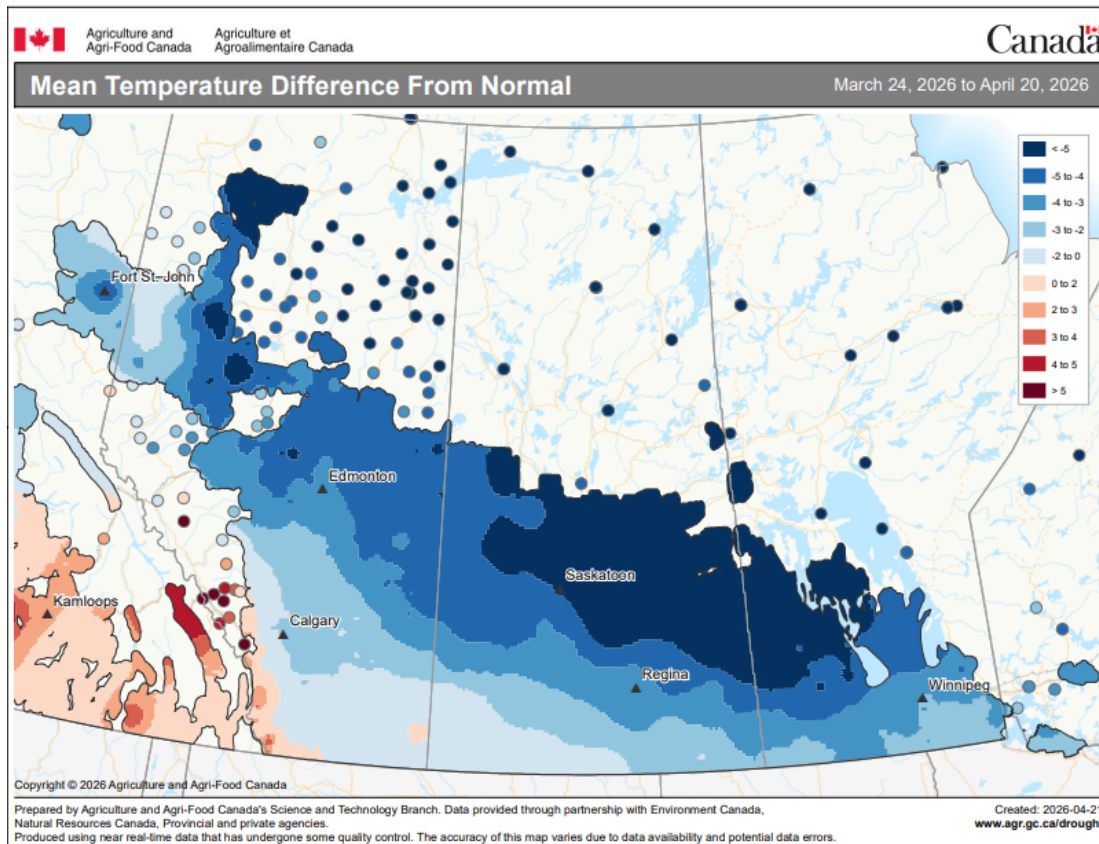
Precipitation during the past month varied significantly across the Canadian Prairies. Several areas in central and southern Manitoba, extreme southeastern Saskatchewan, southern fringes of Alberta, and a large section of Peace River country in northwestern Alberta and northeastern British Columbia were drier than usual for the 30-day period ending April 22. Other production areas received near to above normal precipitation with pockets in Alberta and Saskatchewan receiving more than 200% of normal precipitation.



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Temperatures in recent weeks were also colder or much colder than usual for a large section of the Prairies. Southern fringes of Alberta and extreme southwestern Saskatchewan were the only areas that saw near or slightly below normal temperatures for the 30-day period ending April 20.

Warm weather in recent days helped melt a significant amount of snow in the Prairies. Several of the northern production areas still had snow on the ground as of April 22 while areas farther south were generally snow-free.



Early-season fieldwork is off to a sluggish start in a large section of the Canadian Prairies this month. Waves of snow and cold weather limited aggressive fieldwork outside portions of southern Alberta and immediate neighboring areas. April is normally the first month that producers can get into their fields for some early planting mostly in the southwest. Too much snow has been on the ground in northern and eastern areas for any pre-planting fieldwork and the southwestern parts of the Prairies are still dealing with moisture shortages. Recent cool weather has helped conserve recent precipitation in the southwest where planting moisture has improved, but there is no subsoil moisture to support crops if an extended period of dry and warm weather were to evolve.

The moisture profile should be beneficial for a large section of the Prairies in May and early June once conditions allow producers to get into the fields. However, southern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan were still dealing with drought at the end of March. Precipitation so far this month has not been enough to fix the dryness and these areas will need timely precipitation in the coming weeks.

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Yet another snowstorm will impact portions of the Prairies through the end of the weekend. An upper-level disturbance recently entered the Prairies and U.S. northern Plains. The storm system is going to be locked into the region by a pair of high-pressure systems to the east and west. The blocking pattern will lead to the storm system meandering over the Prairies through Sunday promoting rounds of snow, rain, and/or a wintry mixture of precipitation. Another disturbance tracking around the upper-level system will potentially promote precipitation in Manitoba and southeastern Saskatchewan Sunday into early Tuesday. Drier weather will be possible later Tuesday into Wednesday, though spotty showers cannot be ruled out.

Moisture totals by next Thursday morning will range from 0.40 to 1.50 inches with local amounts over 2.00 inches in a large section of Saskatchewan and northwestern Manitoba while parts of Alberta receive 0.10 to 0.40 inch and a few amounts to 0.70 inch. Other areas in Alberta will receive 0.10 to 0.75 inch of moisture. Snowfall across the Prairies will range from 4 to 10 inches with locally greater amounts in northern Saskatchewan. Several pockets in southeastern and central Manitoba, extreme northwestern Alberta, and northeastern British Columbia will only see a dusting to 4 inches of snow.

The Prairies will continue to see a mix of erratic precipitation and sunshine May 1 – 7. A weak high-pressure ridge could build over western North America for a few days while a weak upper-level trough builds farther to the east. Disturbances will still track near or into the Prairies at times. Accumulating snow cannot be ruled out.

Strong wind speeds will accompany the snow through the end of the weekend. Significant blowing and drifting of snow is expected with blizzard or near-blizzard conditions possible today and Friday. Travel conditions will deteriorate and road closures are likely. Producers that have already begun fieldwork will likely be delayed due to the adverse conditions.

In addition to the precipitation, temperatures will often trend below or well below normal through early next week in the Prairies. Many areas in Manitoba will still warm to the 60s and 70s Fahrenheit today before colder air spreads into the region Friday. Highs Friday into Monday will generally be in the 20s and 30s with portions of Peace River country and Manitoba still warm to the 40s and 50s at times. Slightly warmer air will spread into the region later next week, though many areas in Saskatchewan and Manitoba will remain colder than usual. Temperatures will fluctuate between cool and warm May 1 – 7, though cooler conditions will occur most often, especially for Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Early-season planting and general fieldwork will likely advance slowly through at least the first week of May across the Prairies due to additional snow and lack of significant heating. The moisture profile may improve marginally for southern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan, though not enough precipitation is expected to fix the dryness. Overall, planting will likely be delayed for the Prairies this season.

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