



POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

## Canadian Potato Crop Report August 15, 2019

**Prince Edward Island** PEI's potato crop got off to a good start and most fields have achieved full canopy. Unfortunately, weather in the past month has been hot and dry. There have been sporadic rainfalls across the Island that have maintained the crop, but generally amounts have been insufficient. Some fields and certain varieties are now showing stress during the tuber bulking phase. A good rain is needed as soon as possible to finish the crop with decent yield and quality. Still too early to make an accurate yield prediction but it will likely be tough to get an average crop unless conditions improve real soon.

To date there has been limited harvest for fresh markets locally, in the Maritimes and a few loads for export. Crop yield for these early digs has been light.

**New Brunswick** Has been a decent growing season but rainfall in the past two weeks has been scattered and erratic. The southern region of the Potato Belt was very dry having received significantly less than the 5-year average of normal seasonal precipitation to date. The northern regions have received approximately 93% of normal precipitation. Fortunately, on August 8-9, both Carleton and Victoria county received 1-2 inches of rain, scattered across the counties.

Tuber development, set and size, is good for this time of year, slightly behind, but catching up. After the rain, some fields of early superiors are now ready for top kill. In the south eastern part of the province, round whites are being harvested now.

**Quebec** Since planting, the province of Quebec, has experienced a lot of heat and very little rain. The irrigated fields and areas that received more rain are in great condition, but the tubers didn't quite bulk as expected. On the other hand, rainfall and the lowering temperatures in the last two weeks have greatly benefited the plant canopies. The Saguenay region saw adequate rainfall and the crops are in

great condition. They are, however, noting a 1-2 week delay in development. Harvest in this region will not begin before the 15th of September.

The southern-central part of Quebec began harvest with small volumes of fresh white potatoes in July. The main harvest started 3 weeks ago, and this week for colors. The Russet harvest is slated to begin in a month's time. The harvest of processing potatoes will start around the 20th of August. Demand is good; last Friday the board set the price of 10lb whites at \$3.85 and 10lb colors at \$4.00. It is too soon to predict yields, but at this time, it appears to be an average to below-average year.

**Ontario** The early chip harvest began on August 1<sup>st</sup> with average yields and slightly higher solids. As is common in most dry years, scab is more aggressive with a little bit showing up on tubers.

The early fresh harvest in southern Ontario is going well thanks to some cooler night temperatures. Demand is excellent and whites, reds, and yellows are all being dug.

The Alliston area remains dry without significant rainfall events during the summer season. Some areas have received sporadic rains but for most, it has meant long days of irrigation applications to get the crop into the bulking stage.

**Manitoba Processing** For the processing sector, plant growth is in very good condition. The set is good and should provide for a uniform crop. The plants still need to bulk as they are a few days behind in development. Moisture has been sparse in most areas, but irrigation has been applied to compensate for that shortfall. River levels remain low but there was some opportunity to refill reservoirs and stretch out water supply.

Harvest started early to supply plants on Aug 6th and 7th, with a profile that included a high percentage of undersize, prior to shutting down for transition into the new season. Harvest of new crop begins August 14th for Portage McCain with the remaining two plants coming online over the next few days. The province is anticipating good quality and average yield.

**Manitoba Table** In the southern region, the table crop has been negatively affected by the dry season. The Winkler area received some much-needed rains at the beginning of July, but then nothing for the last month. One inch of rain fell a few days ago, but more is needed to finish the crop. Without it, the crop will be below average. Top killing has started for storage, so in some cases the yield is locked in. Harvest will begin next week on a limited basis.

**Alberta** The crop is growing well in Alberta, although development is still about a week behind last year. The south has had good growing conditions while the seed area in the north has had excellent to excessive moisture with a need for some heat and sunshine. August 6<sup>th</sup> saw a massive hailstorm roll through the Taber area and into neighboring Montana. It took out about 100,000 acres of crops including 3,000 acres of potatoes. It appears that some hailed fields will be written off by processors, with the balance on a wait and see basis. Current yield prospects are average at best. New crop harvest will start in 7-10 days. So far quality looks good.

**British Columbia** There has been little rain recently, but the crop is bulking well in temperatures of 20-24 degrees. Current quality and size is excellent. In field sprout nipping is now being carried out to prevent oversizing of the tubers. Yield is expected to exceed last year. Demand is good, with good pricing, and as a result shipping is moving at a fast pace.

Thank you to the provincial directors of UPGC for their input on this report.

For more information please contact:

Kevin MacIsaac

[Kevin@unitedpotatocanada.com](mailto:Kevin@unitedpotatocanada.com)



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