



POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

Crop Update July 22, 2021

Growing conditions across the country seem to have reversed regionally from a year ago. This year the four main growing provinces in eastern and central Canada have received good moisture levels to date, while the four western provinces have been extremely hot and dry. Here is a summary of crop growth across the country:

Prince Edward Island:

The Island crop looks excellent with canopies looking as good as many can remember. Last year's crop was very short of water starting in June, however this crop is seeing good levels of moisture for rapid growth. Rows are reaching full closure with some fields undergoing tuber initiation and some fields even sizing. The season is a long one yet, but the crop does have great potential.

New Brunswick:

The crop also looks excellent and has experienced lots of rain to date, with more in the forecast. The crop is coming along about two weeks ahead of schedule with harvest underway for the early fresh market in the southern zone of the province. Canopies have filled in nicely and more rain is in the immediate forecast.

Quebec:

The potato crop in Quebec looks great after experiencing ideal growing conditions with warm temperatures and frequent showers. Early planting has allowed full row closure on most fields. The region north of Montreal is a bit drier but some supplemental irrigation is taking care of replenishing moisture. The table harvest began on July 5th with good yields and quality reported.

Ontario:

The potato crop in Ontario looks great at this time with lots of moisture put down for the crop. A few isolated pockets received some excessive water creating some flooded out areas and damage in fields. Irrigators are thankful for the water to take some pressure off their very busy jobs these days. Growers are also working diligently to keep their crop healthy with ideal conditions present for disease. New technology has allowed industry to identify blight spores present in the air, and to date have not identified any in in-field infections. New crop harvest is just getting started and next week should provide some good volume into the table market.

Manitoba:

Fresh potato growing areas of the province are experiencing the most severe drought in the province, with very hot and dry conditions. Many reservoirs in the Carmen and Winkler areas are now empty and yield is being substantially affected at this time. With current conditions, half a crop could be the outcome and with some rain, the expectation could move to three quarters of a crop at best. **Processing** potatoes in the main growing area are looking better, but overall, the province has been dry and hot. Acreage has increased by 10% this year, mostly on the processing side. Manitoba will need to continue importing potatoes into the province to meet the increasing demand of French fry plants until new crop is available in mid-August.

Saskatchewan:

It has been hot and dry for this year's potato crop. The excessive heat has dropped the set under plant canopies and could potentially reduce yields to three quarters of a crop. Smoke from wildfires in recent days has at least lowered nighttime temperatures to 20 degrees Celsius, providing a bit of relief.

Alberta:

The seed growing area in the northern part of the province started out with excellent moisture reserves from last fall. However, many farms have not seen rain since June, and plants are beginning to wilt and show signs of stress. It is also unusual to see such high temperatures in the northern region, with this season now experiencing 14 days above 30 degrees Celsius. The central region of the province is in better shape, benefitting from more rainfall. The southern area of the province where most of the processing potatoes are grown has been extremely hot and dry and extreme heat is forecast for yet another two weeks. Reservoirs in the area have not been this low since 2002. Potato vines are stressed and 80-90% of the crop has dropped its first set of tubers. The province will need all the additional 7,000 acres planted this spring to meet its needs.

British Columbia:

The potato crop got off to a great start in BC, with early planting and good moisture. However, the first half of June was cool and wet and as a result many fields didn't get the jump, they got last year. It has been very hot and dry since June 15th. Temperatures in the seed growing area have been extremely high with Pemberton reaching more than, 40 degrees Celsius on a couple of days. Those with irrigation were concerned with shocking the hot plants with cold water. Early harvest in the Chilliwack area began on May 20th.

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