



Special Council

Agenda

Council Chamber, Leduc County Centre, Nisku, AB

Thursday, July 23, 2020

1. Order - 9:45 a.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

3. Business

a) Local State of Agricultural Disaster

v

A. Van Beers

4. Adjournment

v Attachment Provided

Leduc County is dedicated to serving its citizens and will create an enhanced quality of life through effective leadership, committed partnerships and open, transparent communication.



Recommendation to County Council

REPORT NAME

Local State of Agricultural Disaster

RECOMMENDATION

That Leduc County Council consider declaring a municipal state of agricultural disaster

IMPLICATIONS

Reason: At Leduc County's July 20, 2020 Agricultural Service Board Meeting, the Board made the recommendation that administration refer consideration of declaration of a State of Agricultural Disaster to Leduc County Council.

Authority (MGA/Bylaw/Policy): Agricultural Service Board Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000 and Bylaw 31-08 Agricultural Service Board

A Guide to Declaring Municipal Agricultural Disasters in Alberta – prepared by Rural Municipalities of Alberta

Funding Required: n/a

Funding Source: n/a

BACKGROUND

- At the July 20, 2020 Leduc County Agricultural Service Board meeting, the Board made the following recommendation:

030-2020 Board Member Kushinski – that administration prepare a recommendation for Leduc County Council consideration with reference to a declaration of agricultural disaster for Leduc County. Carried Unanimously

- The report to the Agricultural Service Board dated July 14, 2020 is attached for information

ATTACHMENTS

1. Local State of Agricultural Disaster Report dated July 14, 2020 – presented to Agricultural Service Board July 20, 2020

Submitted by: Aaron Van Beers, Manager of Agricultural Services

Date: July 20, 2020

REPORT NAME

Local State of Agricultural Disaster

RECOMMENDATION

That the Agricultural Service Board instruct administration to prepare a recommendation for Council with reference to consideration of a declaration of agricultural disaster for Leduc County

Options:

That the Agricultural Service Board receive the Local State of Agricultural Disaster report as information

IMPLICATIONS

Reason: Raise awareness and encourage proactive action by provincial and federal government agencies

Authority (MGA/Bylaw/Policy): -Agricultural Service Board Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000 and Bylaw 31-08 Agricultural Service Board

-A Guide to Declaring Municipal Agricultural Disasters in Alberta
– prepared by Rural Municipalities of Alberta

Funding Required: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

BACKGROUND

- The 2020 growing season so far has been another extremely difficult one for farmers within Leduc County. 2019's wet fall around the Capital Region meant that the area had moderately high to extremely high soil moisture reserves compared to the long-term normal. Coming out of spring thaw, Leduc County saw a high level of precipitation on already saturated soils.
- For 2020, the precipitation recorded at four weather stations within the municipality indicated that rainfall from May 1 through July 9 has been between 244mm (Edmonton International Airport) and 343mm (St Francis). At each of the four stations, this is approximately 100mm more than the long-term average for the time period.
- The precipitation in May alone was more than twice the long-term average within the municipality. This led to extremely wet fields that were difficult, if not impossible to seed. To date, there are 222 quarter sections that have been identified as unseeded within Leduc County, the majority being located west of Calmar. This is approximately 6% of the total number of quarter sections. There is a portion of the County that has not been thoroughly surveyed for

crop type, so the number of unseeded quarters will likely be higher than what has been identified. This number also does not take into account individual fields that were partially seeded due to areas too wet or muddy to seed through.

- Administration has been using the Rural Municipalities of Alberta’s Guide for Declaring Municipal Agricultural Disasters in Alberta to gather information with respect to the possibility of declaring an agricultural disaster. This guide was created to assist municipalities in the difficult decision on whether or not to declare an Agricultural Disaster.
- On July 9, administration assessed the current crop conditions throughout the municipality. The Guide does not give a definition for what is considered a “poor” crop, so the Poor crop condition statements that is used for the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Crop Report Survey was used to determine the quality of crops as of July 9:
 - *Poor – Less than 60% of plants are healthy and crop emergence, growth/development could be two weeks or more behind normal. Crop yield potential is less than 60% of normal*
- Administration estimates that on July 9, approximately 65% of the barley crop would be considered poor, while 35% of the wheat would also fall into that category. The canola crop would be considered 50% poor. Very few pea crops were observed. It appears that the earliest seeded crops are handling the excessive moisture much better than later seeded crops. Crops west of the Fifth Meridian and south of Glen Park Road seem to be in worse condition.
- Hay and pasture conditions are quite good. However, there has been little to no opportunity for farmers to get the hay crop off, whether dry baling or silaging. The delay in baling will cause a decrease in quality of the hay, if farmers will be able to get any of the crop off at all. This is especially true for dairy operations that rely on high quality feed. As July progresses, the hay conditions can be re-assessed, likely downward.
- Approximately 32% of the annual crops were rated poor. Using the Condition Statement Tool of the Guide, this would indicate a pending disaster. If 50% or more of the crops are considered poor, the Guide rates the situation as a definite disaster. Administration did not take into account the hay and pasture conditions for this rating.
- As of July 9, five municipalities have already declared an Agricultural Disaster in 2020. Athabasca, Lac la Biche, Lamont, Smoky Lake, and Thorhild have all declared Agricultural Disasters in June (Smoky Lake declared on July 2).
- A declaration of agricultural disaster brings awareness to the issues that local farmers are dealing with. Although it does not release additional funding for farmers affected in the area, it can open up access to provincial and federal assistance programs, such as the Federal Tax Deferral Provision and AFSC’s Early Crop Assessments.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map 1 60-Day Precipitation Accumulations Relative to Long term Normal May 10 to July 8, 2020
2. Spring Wheat Soil Moisture Reserves Relative to Long Term Normal May 23, 2020 (seeding) and July 8 (current growing conditions)
3. RMA Guide for Declaring Municipal Agricultural Disasters in Alberta

Submitted by: Aaron Van Beers, Manager of Agricultural Services

Date: July 14, 2020

60-Day Precipitation Accumulations Relative to Long Term Normal

May 10, 2020 to
July 08, 2020

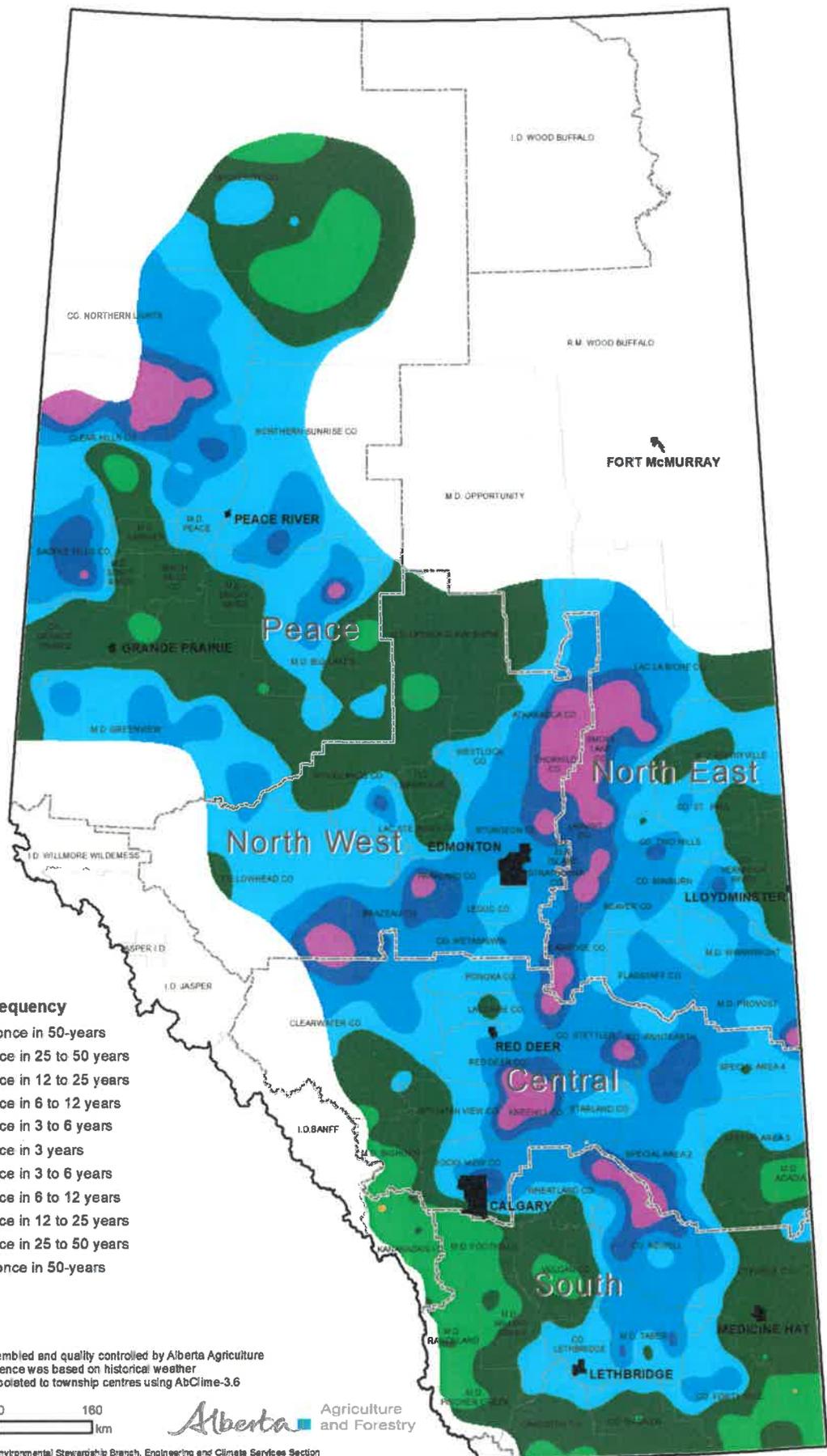
Condition	Frequency
 driest	< once in 50-years
 extremely low	once in 25 to 50 years
 very low	once in 12 to 25 years
 low	once in 6 to 12 years
 moderately low	once in 3 to 6 years
 near normal	once in 3 years
 moderately high	once in 3 to 6 years
 high	once in 6 to 12 years
 very high	once in 12 to 25 years
 extremely high	once in 25 to 50 years
 wettest	< once in 50-years
 no data	

Near-real-time weather data was assembled and quality controlled by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. The frequency of occurrence was based on historical weather data from the 1961-2019 period, interpolated to township centres using AbClimate-3.6



Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Compiled by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Environmental Stewardship Branch, Engineering and Climate Services Section
Created on July 06, 2020



Visit weatherdata.ca for additional maps and meteorological data

Spring Wheat Soil Moisture Reserves Relative to Long Term Normal to a Depth of 120 cm

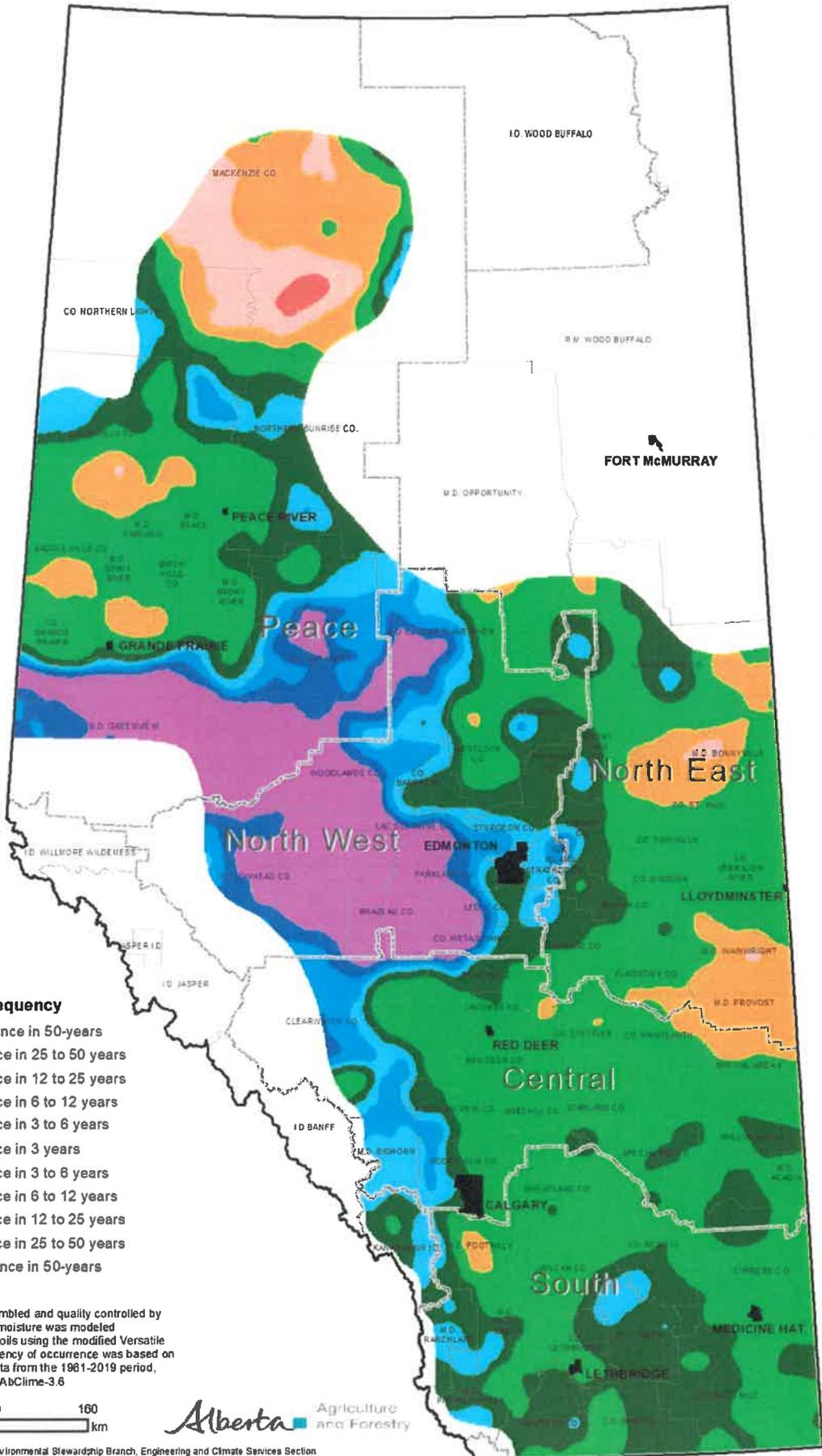
Estimated as of May 23, 2020

Condition	Frequency
driest	< once in 50-years
extremely low	once in 25 to 50 years
very low	once in 12 to 25 years
low	once in 6 to 12 years
moderately low	once in 3 to 6 years
near normal	once in 3 years
moderately high	once in 3 to 6 years
high	once in 6 to 12 years
very high	once in 12 to 25 years
extremely high	once in 25 to 50 years
wettest	< once in 50-years
no data	

Near-real-time weather data was assembled and quality controlled by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. Soil moisture was modeled for spring wheat on medium textured soils using the modified Versatile Soil Moisture Budget V-4.0. The frequency of occurrence was based on model runs using historical weather data from the 1961-2019 period, interpolated to township centres using AbClimate-3.6



Compiled by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Environmental Stewardship Branch, Engineering and Climate Services Section
Created on May 25, 2020



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Spring Wheat Soil Moisture Reserves Relative to Long Term Normal to a Depth of 120 cm

Estimated as of July 08, 2020

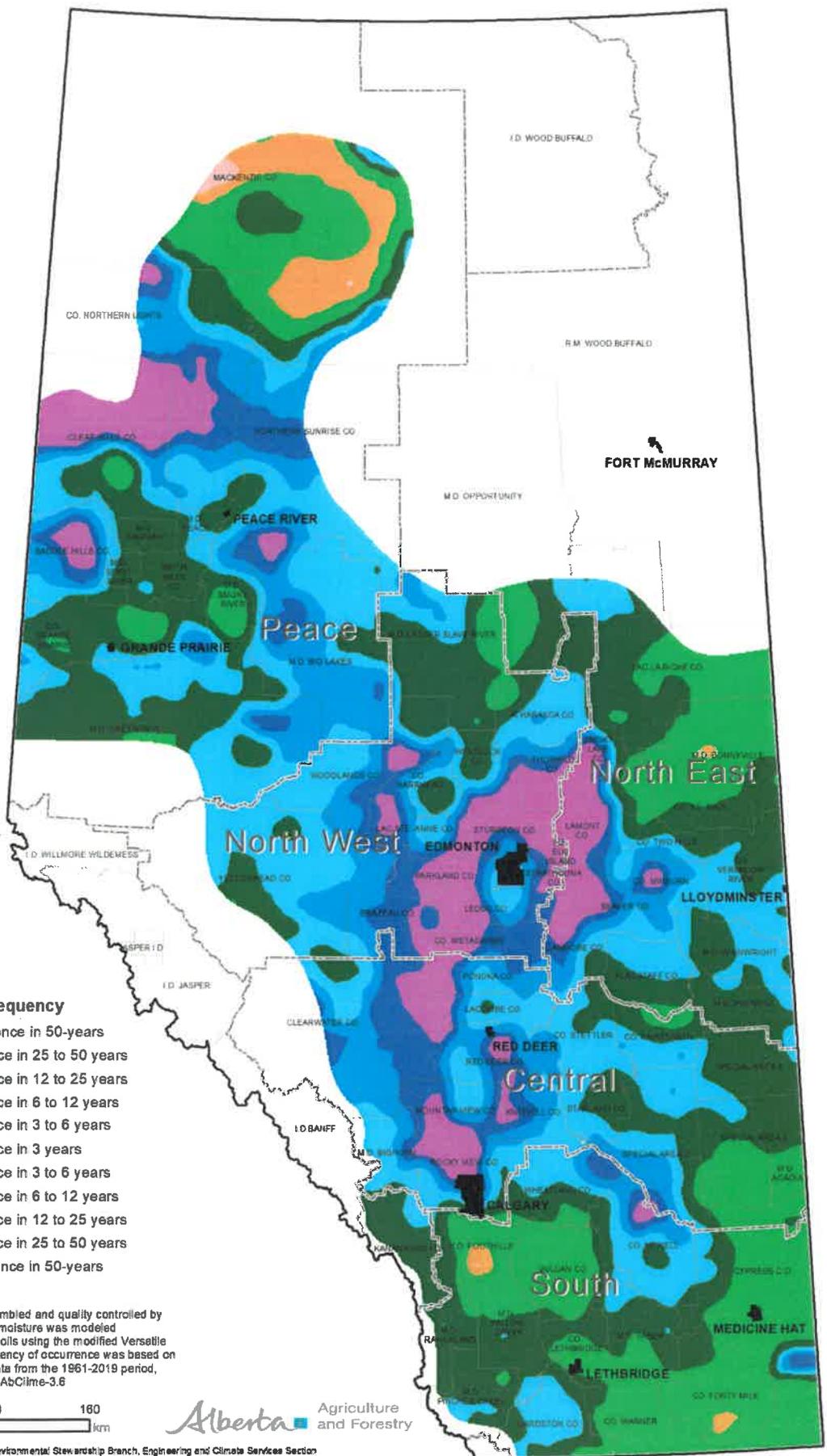
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Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Compiled by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Environmental Stewardship Branch, Engineering and Climate Services Section
Created on July 09, 2020



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