

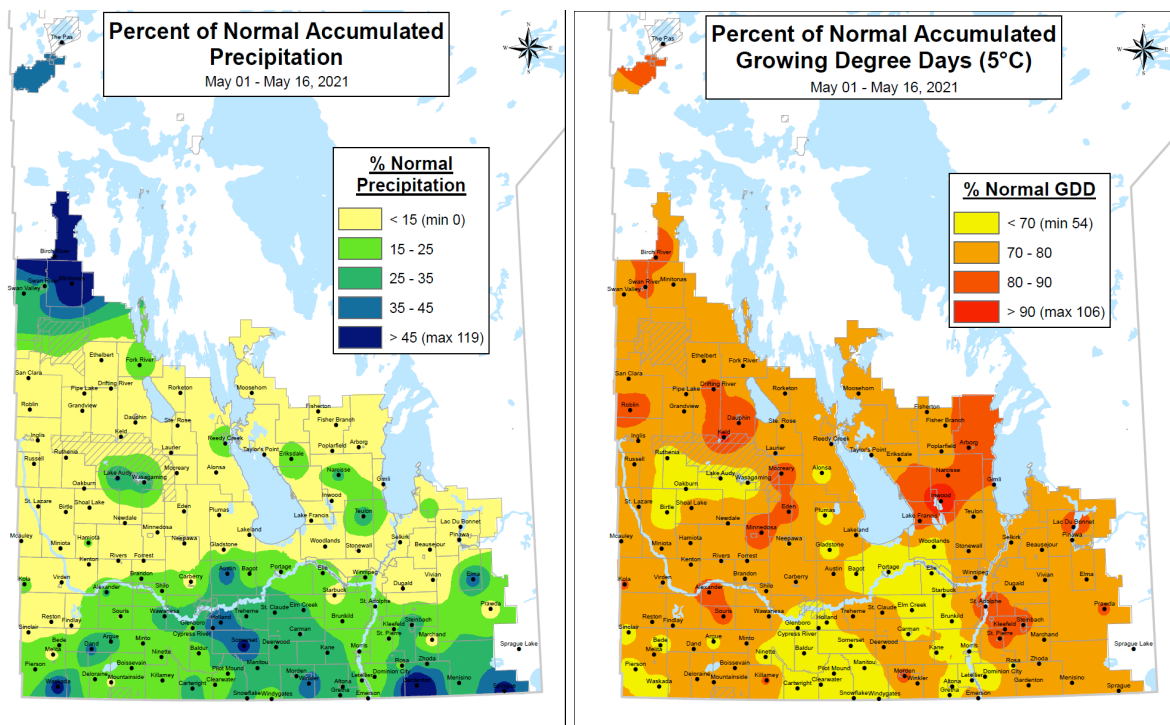
Hay and Pasture Report

By John McGregor, MFGA Extension Support
May 19, 2021

Lack of rain and cool temperatures have slowed growth in hay and pasture fields during April to early May. The low moisture conditions during the fall and winter of 2020-21 have failed to recharge soil moisture levels and left many dugouts and slough with water levels lower than normal.

Scatter showers and thunderstorms the week of May 10-16 saw most of the province receive less than 6mm. Temperatures during that same period have been at or above normal helping promote grass and alfalfa growth.

With the forecast of rain in the coming week and the continuation of close to normal temperatures we should start to see some significant improvement in hay and pasture fields.



Looking at the latest crop report from Mb Ag, most areas are reporting good emergence of cereals. This bodes well if annual crops and straw will be needed to supplement forage supplies this coming winter. These fields will still need rain to sustain good growth if additional forage is required to supplement present/future inventory.

Regional summaries for May 10-16:

South-west reports that alfalfa and grasses are starting to appear but slow due to lack of moisture and warm temperatures. Some pastures are being seeded to annual crops. Cows are being supplemented due to lack of grass and water.

North-west reports good winter survival of alfalfa fields. There is increased growth in forages due to the higher temperatures but moisture is needed. Cows continue to be supplemented due to lack of pasture.

Central reports cows are being moved to sacrifice pastures and continue to be supplemented. Hay and pasture forage growth has improved but needs moisture to continue advancing

Eastern reports that very dry conditions continue, with some scattered thunderstorms throughout the district on the weekend but no significant rainfall amounts. Pasture conditions are slowly improving with the warm weather but are at least two weeks behind. Supplemental feeding is needed in some areas as more and more cattle are moved onto pasture. Hay fields are slow and alfalfa looks to have come thru the winter in good condition. Moisture presently looks to be the biggest limiting factor for hay and pasture fields.

Interlake reports the continued dry conditions are limiting pasture and hay growth. Winter feed supplies are adequate for most, but concern is being raised about delays to cattle going on to pasture. Some producers are buying feed.