
"A Sustainable, Vibrant, and Diversified Community with Opportunities for All"

COUNTY DECLARES STATE OF AGRICULTURAL DISASTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COUNTY OF VERMILION RIVER, AB (July 28, 2015)

The County of Vermilion River Council has passed a motion at the July 28, 2015 Council Meeting declaring a State of Agricultural Disaster due to the extreme drought conditions that are affecting our farmers.

"The long term impact of this years' drought will be widespread across the County," said Reeve Daryl Watt. "Council is here to support our agricultural community by declaring a state of agricultural disaster, and gaining exposure with other levels of government as to these severe conditions."

Weather stations within the County of Vermilion River indicate substantially lower rainfall to date during the 2015 growing season, particularly in the eastern half of the county. On average the County has seen just 112 mm of precipitation since April (in 2014, from April to September the average was 330 mm).

"We are seeing feed and pasture yields already reduced by well over 50%. This is a serious concern for our livestock producers." said Murray King, Councillor and Agriculture Services Board Chair.

It is anticipated that there will be a herd culling to adjust livestock numbers to the feed supplies available. If agriculture recovery support is available, the County wants its producers to be eligible. As of the 2011 Federal Census, there are 1,029 farms and 1,363,640 acres of farmable and hay land within the County of Vermilion River.

The County of Vermilion River will notify provincial and federal government officials of the State of Agricultural Disaster and request some safety net programs be reviewed.

The four points we are drawing attention to are:

1. The variable amounts of rainfall received in our County ranging from approximately 30% of long term average to near normal.
2. Our recommendation that 2015 crop yields be excluded from the crop insurance long-term average for individual producers.
3. Our recommendation that the yield determination methodology for extremely late emerging annual crops be reviewed to enable these crops to be salvaged for livestock feed while they still have adequate nutritional value.

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4. Our recommendation that the Agri-Recovery Program be reviewed with a view to making it more responsive to drought situations

*In east central Alberta at the Alberta-Saskatchewan border you will find the County of Vermilion River, which is home to 7,905 residents, 7 unincorporated hamlets, 4 villages and 1 town. The many features, amenities and opportunities in our municipality make it **"A sustainable, vibrant and diversified community with opportunities for all"**. Our municipal operations are based out of Kitscoty, Alberta – in the heart of a prosperous agricultural region and thriving energy sector built on an innovative entrepreneurial spirit.*

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