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Humboldt SK

Immediate Release

Saskatchewan Hay Yield Outlook 2009-10

Beef cow-calf producers in the region stretching from Regina to Kindersley should start planning alternative winter feed sources according to Dr. Paul Jefferson, Vice-President of the Western Beef Development Centre.

“Saskatchewan producers who are starting to cut their hay crops will be disappointed with yields this year, especially in this region,” says Jefferson. “Hay yields depend on spring weather conditions, and this year’s cold and dry April through June weather will result in low hay yields.”

Jefferson has been using historical weather and hay yield data to examine long-term trends in hay production for Saskatchewan. By plugging the last three months of weather from 16 sites into a statistical model, he has developed the following hay yield predictions for 2009.

<u>Site</u>	<u>% of long term hay yield</u>	<u>Yield Classification</u>
Yorkton	101	Average
Lloydminster	105	Average
Meadow Lake	102	Average
Prince Albert	108	Average
Saskatoon	85	Below average
Swift Current	72	Below average
Estevan	72	Below average
North Battleford	89	Below average
Maple Creek	88	Below average
Broadview	86	Below average
Wynyard	76	Below average
Regina	51	Well below average
Moose Jaw	40	Well below average
Rosetown	66	Well below average
Kindersley	54	Well below average
Nipawin	51	Well below average

The hay yield predictions are generally consistent with the rainfall tracking by Agriculture and AgriFood Canada's Drought Watch. There is one difference at the Moose Jaw location which AAFC lists as mid-range for rainfall, but the WBDC model predicts to be well below average in hay yield. The difference results from the weighting of precipitation in the WBDC model, while the AAFC is based on accumulated rainfall from April 1 to June 30.

Hay supplies for the winter of 2009-10 will be tight across Saskatchewan. Last winter was long and cold, resulting in the depletion of hay and winter feed reserves for many beef cow/calf producers. This means that regions with low hay yields in 2009 will need to source additional feed for the winter of 2009-10. Adjacent regions may have limited hay supplies for sale based on the model results. Trucking costs from regions with surplus hay will be a deterrent to movement of hay over a large distance

Beef producers in the affected regions are strongly encouraged to plan for winter feeding alternatives such as crop residues, greenfeed from annual crops, early weaning of calves, and heavy culling of the cow herd this fall. Producers using crop residues for winter cow feeding are reminded to contact a beef nutritionist for ration advice to ensure adequate nutrition of their herd. Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's regional beef specialists can provide this service.

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