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# Québec Crop Report

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## Highlights

- The winter survival rate for perennial crops was good, despite some localized winter frost in legumes and berries;
  - There was generalized loss in beehives in most regions this winter;
  - Spring was conducive to the seeding of annual crops;
  - The percentages of seeding progress per crop were 73% for cereals, 88% for grain corn, 64% for soybeans and 61% for potatoes;
  - Hay growth was slow due to dry weather in certain regions;
  - Crop emergence is good overall;
  - A total of 327 notices of damage were reported, compared to 466 last year at the same date.
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### Meteorological Conditions in the Winter of 2006-2007 and Spring of 2007

*Winter period (from November 2006 to March 2007)*

After a fall marked by mean temperatures that were milder than usual, especially in November (from 2 to 3.5 °C), the start of the winter season followed the same trend with above average temperatures in December (from 2.5 to 5.5 °C) and in January (from 1.4 to 3.4 °C). Monthly precipitation was near or below average, with the exception of the southern regions that received near or above average amounts in December. Less snow fell than usual throughout Québec in December, while in January the mild weather made for higher than average amounts of rainfall.

Winter conditions took hold toward the end of January. February had several days of intense cold accompanied by high wind and the passage of several storms left major snow accumulations. February was colder than usual (from - 1.7 to - 3.6 °C), while precipitation was near or below average, except in the Sherbrooke and Mont-Joli areas. The month of March was characterized by contrasting conditions: snow storms, intense cold, freezing rain, heavy rain and localized storms in places.

The month's temperatures were near or below normal (from - 0.2 to - 1.8 °C), while precipitation was near or above average. The southern and eastern regions experienced a very snowy month of March.

*Spring period (from the start of April to May 20).*

The first part of the month of April saw quite winter-like conditions: very cold temperatures and precipitation in the form of ice pellets, sleet or snow, sometimes heavy in places (Estrie). Spring conditions took hold in mid-April. Temperatures exceeded seasonal norms and conditions were sunnier. The end of the month was marked by periods of warmer temperatures in the daytime and frost at night. On April 23 and 24, the first thunder storms of the season were reported. Overall, mean temperatures for April were from near to above normal (from 0.2 to 1.5 °C), with the exception of the more southern regions (from - 1 °C). Precipitation was generally near or above average (80 to 140 mm), with the exception of the more eastern regions, where it was below average (50 to 80 mm).

The week of April 30 to May 6 was marked by generally sunny conditions and cool temperatures. Mean temperatures (4.5 to 9 °C depending on the region) were below seasonal

norms (from – 0.8 to – 2.9 °C). Precipitation was non-existent in the western part of the territory, while it ranged from 5 to 15 mm in the east (spread over a period of from 1 to 3 days). Normal precipitation for this period is from 17 to 23 mm. The fine weather helped fields to dry, but the cold temperatures did nothing to warm them up (there was still snow on the ground in the more northern and mountainous regions). The seeding of annual crops began during the week.

The week of May 7 to 13 was characterized by sunny conditions and very mild temperatures. Mean temperatures (11 to 16 °C depending on the region) were above seasonal norms (from – 2 to – 3.5 °C). Precipitation was almost non-existent in the western part of the territory, while very slight in the east (between 2 and 10 mm spread over a period of from 1 to 3 days). Normal precipitation for this period is from 17 to 23 mm. The sun and heat were great for fields, helping them to dry and warm up. Bud break was accelerated under maximum temperatures ranging from 22 to 31 °C during the period from May 8 to 10. Seeding and planting work intensified accordingly.

Variable conditions characterized the week of May 14 to 20. Temperatures were cool at the beginning of the week, accompanied by windy dry weather. Then conditions varied, with slight to moderate precipitation. Starting on May 16, a major depression brought heavy rain to southern Québec, especially to the Beauce and Estrie regions. The colder temperatures caused ground frost and precipitation was in the form of melting snow or sleet in places. The weekend was mainly sunny. In all, mean temperatures (from 6.1 to 9.8 °C depending on the region) were below seasonal norms (from - 2 to – 4.5 °C). Precipitation was slight in the Amos and Alma areas (between 10 and 15 mm spread over a two-day period), and totalled between 25 and 50 mm, spread over a period of from 3 to 5 days, in other regions. Rainfall amounts nevertheless reached between 60 and 85 mm, spread over a five-day period in the Drummondville, Granby, Sherbrooke and Sainte-Marie–Saint-Georges areas. As much as from 70 to 110 mm were recorded in certain localities. Normal precipitation for this period is from 15 to 25 mm. Seeding and planting work was slowed down by the rain in some places.

## Seeding Progress as of May 22

Overall, the seeding of cereal, high-protein and grain corn crops was carried out under good conditions. The work was done in the usual period (end of April to mid-May) and is ahead by several days to a week. As of May 22, close to 80% of seeding was complete for those crops. The percentages for seeding progress per crop were: 73% for cereals (i.e. 69% for **oats**, 87% for **wheat** and 70% for **barley**), 88% for **grain corn**, 64% for **soybeans** and 66% for **canola**. Seeding of **dry beans** got underway in the Saint-Hyacinthe and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu areas (50 to 65%). **Potato** planting, which started during the first half of May (except in Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean where it started on May 21), is also making good progress. It is now from 60 to 85% complete. In the Bas-Saint-Laurent, Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean regions, planting is between 15 and 20% complete. It is fully complete in the Saint-Hyacinthe area. For details per region and per crop, see the *Table of the Average Percentage of Seeding and Planting Progress* at the end of this bulletin.

The seeding of **silage corn**, which began between early and mid-May, is from 70 to 100% complete in most regions. Seeding is complete in the Lanaudière and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean regions. Seeding of peas for **vegetables for processing** got underway toward the end of April or beginning of May in producing regions. Seeding of beans and sweet corn got underway from May 1 to 20, which is the usual period. Seeding is from 5 to 40% complete, depending on the crop and the region. The seeding of **market garden crops** started in most regions between the end of April and mid-May for the different crop categories. Work is being carried out at the usual periods, except in certain cases, notably for lettuce, where a delay of from a few days to two weeks has been noted in the Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu sector. For all crops, seeding and planting has been carried out under good conditions and at the usual periods or ahead by several days or a week.

## Crop Conditions

In general, the survival rate for perennial plants was quite good. It would appear that **strawberries**, **raspberries** and **blueberries** survived winter well, as did **apple trees**. There were however reports of damage by winter frost, due to insufficient snow cover in January in certain regions for **forage crops** and, in some

places, for **berries**. Certain hay fields had to be reworked and renovation of pastureland and prairies was needed in certain sectors.

Winter loss in **beehives** was generalized in all regions. The loss can be explained by several factors including varroa, a cold spring and disease.

As of May 22, soil moisture conditions varied according to the frequency and amount of precipitation recorded this spring. Soils are considered normal in the southwestern regions<sup>1</sup> and from dry to normal overall in the central regions<sup>2</sup>, except in Gatineau where they are from dry to very dry. They are also from dry to very dry in the more northern and more eastern regions<sup>3</sup>, except in the Côte-Nord region (where soil moisture is normal).

Development conditions for **hay** were good in most regions, and its development stage matches that usually seen in this period. The dry weather at the start of May and the lack of heat nevertheless delayed growth in certain fields of gramineae, notably in the Estrie, Bas-Saint-Laurent and Mauricie regions.

Generally speaking, the rain from May 15 to 17 was beneficial for re-establishing the soil moisture needed for germination. The emergence of annual crops is good. However, lack of water in the soil (Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Lac-Saint-Jean) and the cool weather (Lac-Saint-Jean) made emergence more difficult. Heavy rain (May 16 and 17) caused flooding in places (Bas-Saint-Laurent and Estrie) and localized damage in fields.

Overall, the weather conditions this spring were good for the development of all crops in most regions. Variable conditions were nevertheless reported for fruit crops in the Bas-Saint-Laurent,

Laurentides, Lanaudière and Montérégie (Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu) regions, and for vegetable crops in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (late snow in April delayed the planting of vegetables). Growth conditions for potatoes in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean were qualified as difficult.

### Notices of Damage

As of May 22, 2007, 327 notices of damage were reported, compared to 466 for the same period in 2006. Of these notices of damage, 24 were reported to date for cereal, grain corn and high-protein crops and for crops under the collective program (hay, oats, barley, wheat, silage corn and grain corn), 5 for market garden crops 61 for honey (winter period) and 12 for berries (blueberries: 4, strawberries: 6, raspberries: 2). The number of notices of damage for waterfowl damage stood at 224 notices, compared with 293 at the same date last year.

Payments made to date come to \$305,400 for the winter period in honey coverage.

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<sup>1</sup> "Southwestern" regions refer to those of Montérégie (Granby, Saint-Hyacinthe, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and La Prairie-Salaberry-de-Valleyfield sectors) and Estrie (Sherbrooke).

<sup>2</sup> "Central" regions refer to those of the Capitale-Nationale, (Québec) Centre-du-Québec (Drummondville and Nicolet-Victoriaville sectors), Chaudière-Appalaches (Lévis and Sainte-Marie-Saint-Georges sectors), Laurentides-Laval (Saint-Eustache), Lanaudière (L'Assomption), Mauricie (Trois-Rivières) and Outaouais (Gatineau).

<sup>3</sup> More northern and more eastern regions refer to those of Côte-Nord, Bas-Saint-Laurent (Rimouski-Rivière-du-Loup), Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Caplan), Abitibi-Témiscamingue (Amos-Rouyn-Noranda) and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean (Alma).

**TABLE OF THE AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF SEEDING  
AND PLANTING PROGRESS AS OF MAY 22, 2007**

<b>Region monitored for a crop report at Financière agricole</b>	<b>Spring cereals</b>	<b>Grain corn</b>	<b>Soybeans</b>	<b>Potatoes</b>	<b>Dry beans</b>	<b>Canola</b>
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	70	75	100	65	---	55
Bas-Saint-Laurent	45-53	90	45	18	---	45
Capitale-Nationale	83	95	65	85	---	80
Centre-du-Québec Drummondville sector	98	93	83	---	0	---
Centre-du-Québec Nicolet-Victoriaville sectors	98	93	83	63	0	0
Chaudière-Appalaches Lévis sector	58	58	58	75	---	58
Chaudière-Appalaches Sainte-Marie-Saint-Georges sectors	45	58	38	---	---	45
Côte-North	45-50	---	---	---	---	---
Estrie	95-98	85	60	---	---	---
Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	20-30	---	---	15	---	---
Launaudière	100	100	80	80	0	---
Laurentides-Laval	95-100	100	70	80	---	---
Mauricie	40-93	63	55	70	0	55
Montérégie Granby sector	97	90	50	80	---	---
Montérégie Saint-Hyacinthe sector	90-100	80	65	100	50	---
Montérégie Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu sector	99-100	99	70	65	65	---
Montérégie La Prairie-Salaberry-de-Valleyfield sectors	95-100	95	40	85	0	---
Outaouais	85-100	50	10	60	---	---
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	65-85	100	15	20	---	85
Total*:	<b>73</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>66</b>

\* Weighted by area.

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Spring cereals: oats, barley and wheat.

Côte-Nord: for cereals, the average is that of oats and barley.

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References: Application of the report "Gérer le suivi de l'état des cultures (SUEC)": État des cultures et pourcentage moyen des semis et des plantations réalisés au 22 mai 2007, La Financière agricole du Québec;  
Statistics from the Système d'information de gestion organisationnelle, La Financière agricole du Québec (SIGO);  
Bulletins and press releases from the Réseau d'avertissements phytosanitaires (RAP-MAPAQ);  
Weekly summaries and reports on climatic conditions, Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs;  
Monthly and seasonal reports, Centre de ressources en impacts et adaptation au climat et à ses changements, Environnement Canada;  
Real-time meteorological conditions, Centre Météo UQUAM-Montréal.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: This is a report of the weather conditions brought to our attention and the actual impact that results. Under no circumstances should it be interpreted as an analysis or a final position of La Financière agricole, notably concerning indemnity.**

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