



July 5, 2023

CYPRESS COUNTY DECLARES AGRICULTURAL STATE OF DISASTER

Despite a promising start to the growing season, Cypress County has declared a local state of agricultural disaster for the third year in a row.

Not enough rain, plus extended hot weather, have resulted in poor soil conditions. In addition, a proliferation of grasshoppers in the county have made matters worse for producers.

“We have a situation where the native grasses didn’t even really wake up,” said Ward 9 councillor Keith Ritz of farms in his area. “They’re still dormant. It has not sustained growth in the crops.”

The [Alberta Crop Report](#) showed either poor (32.1 %) or fair (42.7 %) soil moisture ratings as of June 27 for the south part of the province. Estimated soil moisture in Cypress County compared to the long term normal is rated anywhere from moderately low to as low as it’s been in 50-plus years.

The county issued a fire ban June 29 in response to the situation, and the Agricultural Services Board meeting June 27 recommended declaring the state of disaster.

Many municipalities in Alberta have already declared an agricultural state of disaster this year, including Stettler, Paintearth, Foothills, and Vulcan.

Aside from awareness, the decision to declare the state of agricultural disaster aims to make provincial and federal governments aware so that they might be able to offer relief or other funding for producers. Agricultural businesses could be forced to shut down without assistance which would compound food chain problems in the future.

“It is unreal the amount of grasshoppers I have,” added Ward 8 councillor Shane Hok. “It gets depressing. If we start selling our cows, it’s going to have a ripple effect.”

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For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact communications assistant Sean Rooney at sean.rooney@cypress.ab.ca or 403-526-2888 ext. 312.