

2018: THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



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The dog days of summer were named long ago by the Greeks and Romans after they noticed that the Dog Star, Sirius, began to rise with the sun not long after the summer solstice.

The Farmer's

Almanac places the dog days of summer between July 3 and August 11 each year. For those of you that have endured unbearable temperatures of 36 to 39°C during July, I'm sure you have had better descriptions of the heat than dog days. I don't remember a July where I have watched the radar formations more than I have this year. In 2002, I gave up long before July. In 2015, a massive July 1 rain event saved Western Canada from another 2002 type drought. There have been rain saving events again this year, however, there are areas that have witnessed drought-like conditions since last fall. As July winds down, there are production estimates surfacing for both peas and lentils. Western Canadian farmers have amazing tools at their disposal to not only judge how their area's crops are growing, but how their areas rates against other areas in Western Canada.

Years ago, Statistics Canada (StatCan) realized that technologies such as satellite remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) could reduce costs and provide valuable information in support of its operations, without imposing additional response burden on farmers. The Crop Condition Assessment Program (CCAP), developed and maintained by the Remote Sensing and Geospatial Analysis (RSGA) section within StatCan's Agriculture Division, is a prime example of such an application. The CCAP combines remote sensing, GIS, and the Internet to provide reliable, objective, and timely information on crop conditions using a mapping application for the whole Canadian agricultural area and the northern portion of the United States.

Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) and climatic data have been used to

replace the existing September production model that used farmer input. It is refined each year and the data available to the general public continues to grow. For anyone following the NDVI results this year within the CCAP, both the thematic and satellite derived images indicate an above-average yield versus the five-year averages. The bottom line for farmers through all of this is that if more weight is going to be placed on NDVI, they will have to pay closer attention to the weekly updates on the CCAP website. The data is now available to chart the index to local rural municipalities.

The graph that is included in this Pulse Market Report is for the Census Consolidated Subdivision (CSS) and Rural Municipality #128 of Lajord, SK. You can facilitate a report for any rural municipality. Based on the NDVI index, it indicates that 2018 has better vegetative growth than normal and even better than the index indicated in 2013 during the same timeframe. When breaking down the NDVI index to the seven census regions in Saskatchewan (included in graph), indications are that every one of the seven districts in Saskatchewan is above the five-year average from 3.5% to 22.3%. This does not mean that it will translate to higher yields at harvest, however it is a phenomenal tool to utilize in your weekly marketing decisions, especially if you are looking at contracting new crop in summer for fall delivery. As summer turns to fall, the CCAP index will be a better tool to gauge yield. The more indicators you have in your toolbox, the better marketing decisions you should be able to employ. The unfortunate part of this new technology that I see from my desk is that the trade and other countries are using the NDVI data more than farmers. That needs to change. We often complain about transparency and the lack thereof. There is a wealth of NDVI websites available on the Internet through StatCan and the United States Department of Agriculture. NDVI and CCAP are the first precursor to disasters or bumper crops, and like any other information you have access to, it still involves some time commitment.

My first estimates for pea and lentil production in Western Canada are 3.6 and 2.38 million (M) tonnes. If realized, it will

not have much of an effect on reducing the carry-out in lentils at July 31, 2019, but could see carry drop 40% for peas (see charts). Some of the issues you need to have on your radar screen over the next month include pulse seeding in India. To date, kharif pulses have been seeded on nearly 18% less area than last year. Some meteorologists have now dialed in a 70% chance of an El Niño weather event beginning this fall. Those odds climb to 80 to 90% for the March through May period in 2019. Strong El Niño events can have a dramatic effect on monsoon rainfall from June through September. If those two issues are not enough, the regular diet of trade issues emanating from importing countries should keep you sleeping with at least one light on. Trade is the most essential part of farming in Western Canada. Without it, the dog days of summer become irrelevant. Harvest is less than a month away, please slow down and be safe.

Larry Weber operates Weber Commodities Ltd.
More information can be found at
www.webercommodities.com



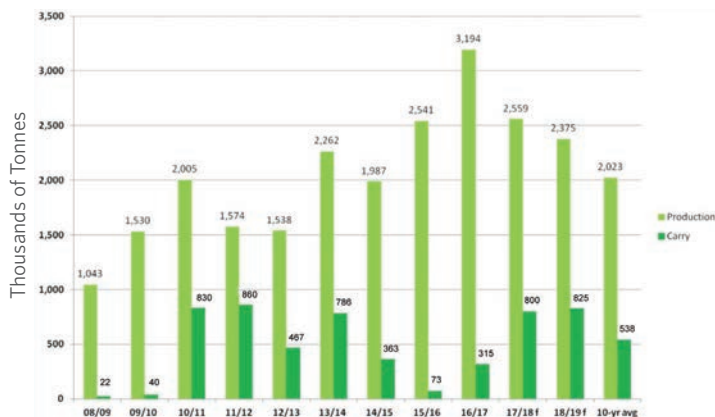
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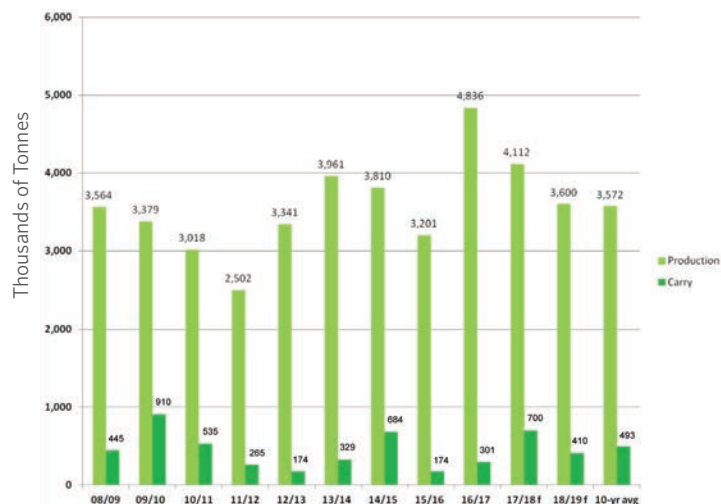
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Publications Mail Agreement No. #40021625. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
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Saskatoon SK S7N 3R3

Canada: Lentils - Production and Carry-Out (2009-2018) Source: Statistics Canada & Weber Commodities Ltd.



Canada: Peas - Production and Carry Out Carry-Out (2009-2018) Source: Statistics Canada & Weber Commodities Ltd.



NDVI Index - All Saskatchewan Crops: First Week July (2013-2018) Source: Statistics Canada

	SK Region 1 Cropland	SK Region 2 Cropland	SK Region 3 Cropland	SK Region 4 Cropland	SK Region 5 Cropland	SK Region 6 Cropland	SK Region 7 Cropland
01-Jul-13	0.597	0.576	0.544	0.571	0.588	0.580	0.609
07-Jul-14	0.468	0.457	0.469	0.488	0.536	0.543	0.591
06-Jul-15	0.521	0.415	0.367	0.442	0.551	0.506	0.430
04-Jul-16	0.550	0.566	0.541	0.543	0.565	0.563	0.562
03-Jul-17	0.554	0.459	0.447	0.529	0.542	0.541	0.581
Five-Year Average	0.538	0.495	0.474	0.515	0.556	0.547	0.555
02-Jul-18	0.607	0.605	0.515	0.570	0.639	0.566	0.591
Difference over five-year average	12.8%	22.3%	8.7%	10.8%	14.8%	3.5%	6.6%

