

# Farmers brace for more drought conditions as unusually warm weather continues



Cows and their calves graze in a pasture on a farm near Cremona, Alta., Wednesday, June 26, 2019. **THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jeff McIntosh**

While Calgarians revel in the warm, dry weather we're seeing this February, it's a different story for farmers and producers outside the city.

Last year, 2021, was Calgary's fourth driest year on record, and so far 2022 hasn't brought much relief.

Allen Jones is already seeing the impact on his farm east of Balzac, where

calving season has just begun.

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Jones said the lack of moisture is already having an impact — reserve pastures are already tapped out, the dugout is getting dangerously low, and one of his wells ran dry last week.

He said with hundreds of calves on the way, he's already thinking of selling off some cattle, especially with things potentially becoming much worse.

Warmer weather is causing soil moisture to evaporate, which Alberta Agriculture's Ralph Wright predicts could create another drought for the growing season.

"It really hurt a lot of crops dramatically. But you know, that was last year," Wright said.

"What this year is going to bring, we just simply don't know at this stage. And right now we're looking at some pretty parched lands. We're looking at hay fields that didn't do too well last year, and are probably a little bit stunted. And everyone's quite worried."

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Wright said that on the positive side, April, May and June are the wettest months of the year, so there is plenty of time to recover — if we get enough moisture.

"We are still expecting there to be some snowstorms in southern Alberta this year that will hopefully bring a little bit of reprieve because it's been so dry

for so long," said Kyle Fougere, Environment Canada meteorologist.

"It's unlikely that even a few good snowstorms will bring that much-needed precipitation to kind of reduce the drought conditions that have been in place."

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