



## Media Release – For Immediate Release Monday, November 4, 2019

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### County declares Agricultural Disaster

County Council has declared an agricultural disaster in the County of Grande Prairie. This year marks the fourth straight year of difficult conditions for local agricultural producers.

Several factors, including wet conditions delaying seeding, excessive rainfall, and cool weather, have slowed agricultural production and led to poor quality crops.

“County Council is very aware of the hardships that our agricultural community is facing as a result of the weather conditions,” said Deputy Reeve Peter Harris. “By declaring an agricultural disaster, Council wants to bring attention to the devastating conditions impacting crop and livestock producers and request more support for them.”

Currently, between 40 and 60 per cent of crops remain in County fields, with the recent snowfall ending any chance of increasing the figures this season. Regionally, crop harvest is trailing 25 per cent behind average: about half of the major crops have been combined, 19 per cent have been swathed, and 31 per cent are still standing.

In addition, overall hay crop quality is poor due to untimely and excessive rainfall. In some areas of the County, hay for feed is in short supply, meaning higher costs for livestock producers who will need to supplement their feed stores by hauling hay from outside the region.

Harris noted the importance of getting this message out at a local level, as well as at the provincial and federal levels.

“The farming sector is vital to the County of Grande Prairie,” he said. “The effects of this agricultural disaster are felt across our communities,” said Harris.

With many crops remaining in the fields, residents and visitors to the County are asked to be mindful about hunting and winter recreation activities. Crops can be severely damaged by vehicle and snowmobile traffic; residents are reminded to obtain permission before travelling on what may appear to be open fields.

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