

# THE ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR

*Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management*

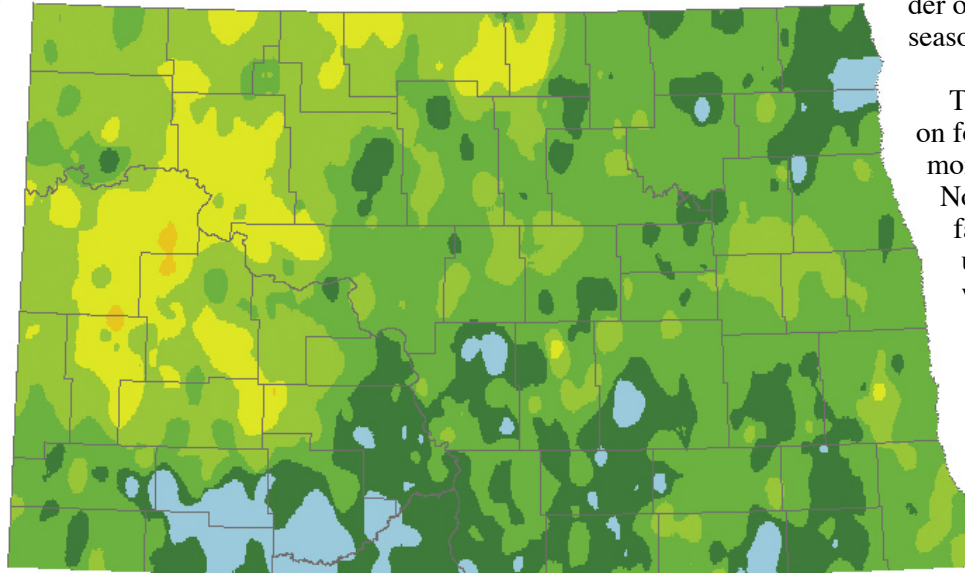
## Looking Back at the 2007 Growing Season

By Mark D. Schneider

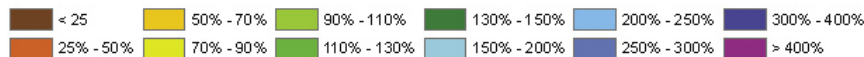
There were smiles on most farmers' faces at the 47th Annual Makoti Threshing Show on Oct. 6 and 7. Those smiles weren't necessarily attributed to the past growing season's rainfall, but to this year's wheat prices, which are at all-time highs. As of early October, durum was selling for around \$15/bushel! That's unheard of in recent years where \$3-5/bushel was the unfortunate reality.

In some areas of North Dakota, bumper crops were reported, but for the most part, a near average yield was harvested. Winter wheat yields averaged about 50 bushels/acre, while spring wheat yields were closer to 36 bushels/acre. This year, the difference between a bumper crop and an average one depended on the timely distribution of rainfall and variation of daytime temperatures.

Farmer Jim Rensch of Makoti says, "the 100 degree heat we had in July made the difference between a really good wheat crop and an average one. The crops can take a week or two of heat if there is sufficient moisture in the soil. We were dry in July during the heat and that really



**2007 Growing Season Percent of Normal Rainfall**



der of the growing season.

The pressure is on for additional moisture to help North Dakota farmers with the upcoming winter wheat crop.

Jim Peterson, marketing director for the North Dakota Wheat Commission, says, "North Dakota producers could seed nearly twice as much winter wheat this year as they did

took a toll on wheat yields."

Looking at the ARBCON 2007 Growing Season Percent of Normal Rainfall Map it's easy to see that most of North Dakota received normal to above normal rainfall for May through September. Of note is a drier region of the state encompassing much of west central through north central North Dakota which is currently experiencing moderate drought conditions.

Farmers across the state know first hand that May was an unusually wet month, with many areas of the state receiving 200-300 percent of normal rainfall. Beginning in June though, about half of the state experienced below normal precipitation and this trend continued through the remain-

last year to take advantage of high prices." In the fall of 2006, 465,000 acres of winter wheat were seeded. The record number of acres in North Dakota seeded for winter wheat in a season was 750,000 in 1985.

Recent long-range forecasts by the Climate Prediction Center indicate equal chances of having normal temperatures and precipitation for this coming winter, providing more optimism for farmers across our state.

Atmospheric Resource Board  
North Dakota State Water Commission  
900 East Boulevard, Bismarck, ND 58505  
(701) 328-2788  
<http://swc.nd.gov>  
ND Weather Modification Association  
PO Box 2599, Bismarck, ND 58502  
(701) 223-4232