

# MB Sunflower Crop Report



*"Sunflower harvest may be earlier than previous years thanks to an early spring and hot temperatures throughout July and August. However, quality and yield will be variable due to a number of challenges faced throughout the season including excess moisture and hail damage."*

## Report 13

Monday, August 23, 2010

### Staging

R-5 to R-8. Majority of fields have completed flowering. Fields planted in late April are at R-8 (Fig 1) and while it has been 120 calendar days for these fields, no crop has been observed at maturity yet. Fields planted mid May have completed flowering and between R-6 and R-7. Fields planted late May/early June are mid to late flower.

*Thinking of desiccation?* While sunflower harvest is looking to be earlier than previous years, growers are still considering desiccation to minimize losses from weathering and bird predation. Desiccation can only be done following physiological maturity (R-9) and when seed moisture is less than 35% to eliminate loss factors. The best indication of this is when the sunflower head and bracts have turned yellow and the bracts are becoming brown. This stage occurs approx. 40-45 days from flowering. More information will be provided in next week's final crop report.

### Weeds

*Jump start your weed control for next year's sunflower crop* with fall glyphosate treatments (pre or post harvest). Canada Thistle was the most common weed found in MB sunflower crops last year and continues to be one of the toughest to manage. With no products to control Canada Thistle in crop and cultivation not always an option, fall Glyphosate is your best defense. A fall glyphosate will also be effective in preventing seed set by Kochia and False ragweed which have grown in cereal stubble.

### Insects

Banded Sunflower Moth larvae (Fig 2) are being found on sunflower heads. While adult trap counts have decreased to trace levels, larvae develop through 5 instars and may be present on sunflower heads until mid September. They will feed to maturity then drop to soil to overwinter.

### Disease

Sclerotinia Mid Stalk Rot has been found in over 90% of sunflower fields in the past two weeks. While the majority are at levels of <5% of plants, some fields have 20-40% of plants infected with mid stalk rot. The first head rot symptoms were observed on August 10th and have been found in 38% of fields. All fields with head rot symptoms have been in the Central and Eastern regions so far and at levels <10%. With continuous moisture, the risk for infection is very high and levels are expected to increase.

Fig 3. displays a sunflower root system from a field with significant root lodging. Normally, an enlarged taproot would extend 4 to 6 inches into the soil to reach moisture. However with this year's excessive rainfall, reduced taproot formation is being observed and is increasing root lodging.

### Limiting Factors

#### Disease Risk



**Fig 1.** Stage R-8. Back of the head has turned yellow but bracts remain green.

**Fig 2.** Banded sunflower moth larvae feeding on florets and inside of sunflower seeds.

**Fig 3.** Sunflower root system with reduced taproot development.