



"Crop surveying and reporting wrapped up last week. Crop conditions have improved over the past couple of weeks due to warm and dry weather. Growers are hoping that rains this week are minimal to keep Head Rot levels down and to hasten maturity and dry down. Sunflower harvest will be good if conditions become warm and dry again with the potential for early harvest to minimize losses."

Final Report

Monday, August 30, 2010

Staging

R-6 to R-9 (Fig 1 and 2). Sunflowers have progressed very well in the past couple of weeks. The earliest fields in the Eastern and Central regions are reaching maturity but still need time to dry down. If the weather becomes warm and dry, earliest harvest could take place mid to late September. Applying a chemical desiccant could assist in plant dry down and may speed up harvest by 5 to 10 days. Timing is important, the plant must reach physiological maturity and seed moisture should be less than 35% (especially for a fast acting desiccant like Reglone®). The best indicator of this is when the back of the sunflower head and bracts are yellow and the bracts are starting to turn brown. More specifically; *the broadest portion of the bracts should be browning along the margins* (Fig 3). It is important to use healthy, disease free heads to determine plant staging. An article and video from the Sunflower Association in the US can be viewed from this link; <http://www.sunflowerusa.com/growers/default.asp?contentID=310>

Crop Rating	June	July	August	North Dakota
Excellent	24%	29%	25%	9%
Good	42%	36%	47%	71%
Fair	21%	25%	16%	15%
Poor	12%	11%	11%	5%

Disease

Desiccation and Head Rot. Early dry down of sunflowers plants may reduce the impact of Sclerotinia head rot by slowing or stopping disease development which will reduce seed destruction and sclerotia formation. However, wet weather following desiccation may actually increase the problem in desiccated sunflowers compared to plants that are still green. If you are considering desiccation, the forecast is important to consider. Head Rot levels across the province remain relatively low and stable. However, rains this week could result in increased development. Page 2 displays a map of disease incidence.

New rust infection. Favorable conditions over the past couple of weeks have resulted in the obvious development of new rust infection. Multiple observations and reports of sunflower rust appearing on upper areas of the plant occurred last week. The important time to protect upper leaves is during flowering; rust that appears after flowering will help dry down the plant and is not warranted for a fungicide application.

Limiting Factors Disease



Fig 1. R-9, early. Back of head and bracts are yellow, bracts starting to turn brown, starting at tips..



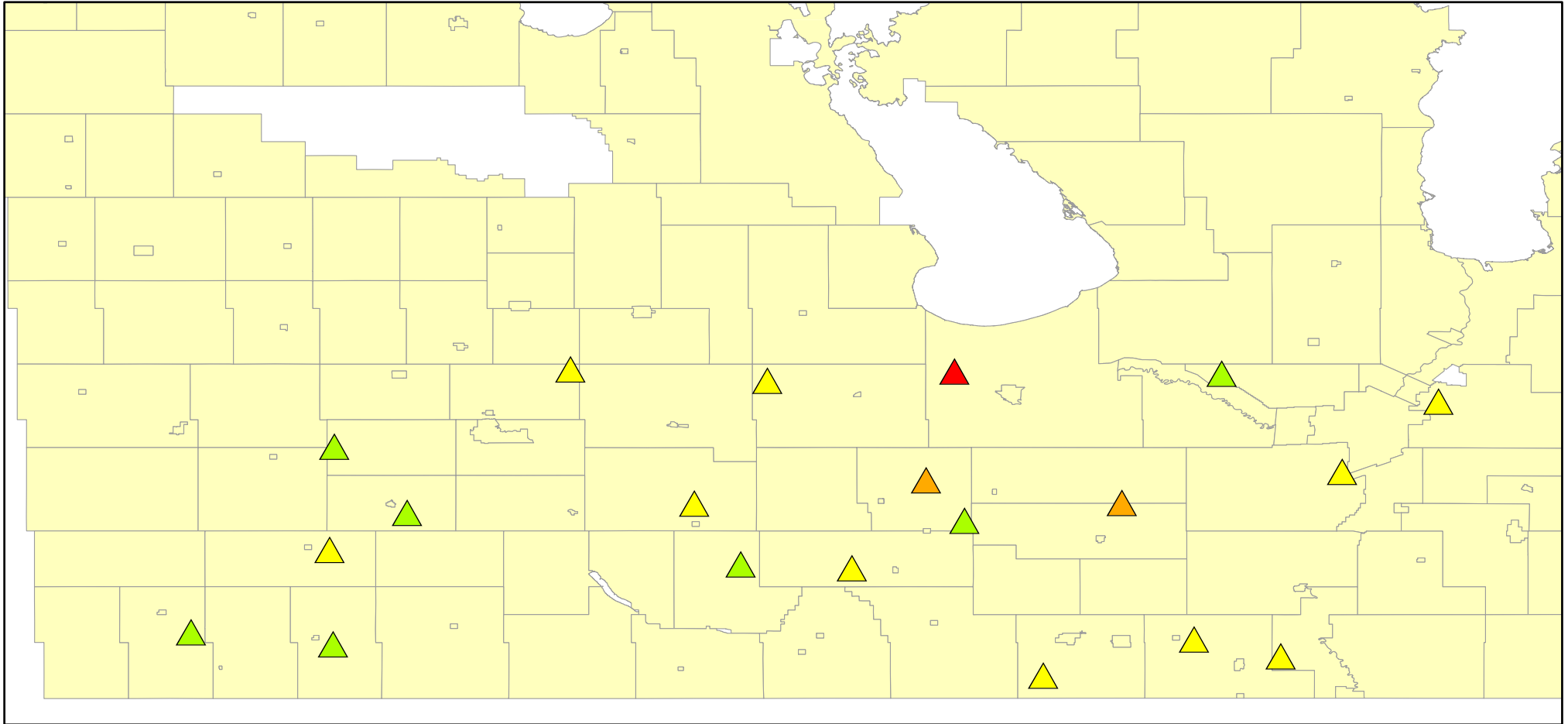
Fig 2. Stage R-9. Following drying, back of head and bracts become brown.







Fig 3. Proper timing for desiccation; margins along shoulders of the bracts are turning brown.



Findings of Sclerotonia Head Rot from Aug 17 to Aug 27



Legend

-  None found
-  1-10%
-  10-20%
-  20-40%