

# MB Sunflower Crop Report

*"Sunflower Aphids can be found in the western and south central areas but are not causing economic yield losses and will likely be controlled by lady beetles."*

**Report 12**

**Friday, August 26<sup>h</sup> 2011**

## Staging

Fields are starting to mature, as the back of the head continues to yellow. Flowers reach physiological maturity when the back of the head is entirely yellow and the bracts are yellow and brown. This stage is still a few weeks away in the early fields. Later fields are almost finishing flowering and the ray petals are falling off-some of which may be due to the high winds experienced in many areas this week.

## Insects

In the western and north central portions of the province, sunflower aphids are evident. The infestations are localized and restricted to a corner of the field. Sunflower aphids are specific to sunflowers, and as with other aphid species are sap feeders. Aphids produce a sticky exudate called honeydew and cause the upper leaf surface to be shiny. Lady beetle larva and adults can eat up to 100 aphids per day, and often keep the populations below economic damage.

Feeding by Banded Sunflower Moth larva continues in fields across the province. The larva is maturing, and so is changing colour from cream, to red and to green at the mature larva stage. Once mature the larva pupate and fall to the ground to over winter and emerge the following year as the adult.

## Disease

Sclerotinia infection continues to remain low in most areas of the province however appears to be increasing in the southern portion. Sclerotinia head rot infestation is dependent on weather conditions. If moisture increases, incidence could increase.

Phoma or Phomopsis have been observed but in very low incidence. These diseases tend to appear more after flowering is complete. Phoma causes a jet black lesion on the stem, initiated by leaf infections that progress down the petiole to the stalk and grow about 2 inches long. Phomopsis is also a canker on the stem, is tan colored and about 6 inches long. Phomopsis can cause more stem damage internally, and the stalk can be crushed with moderate thumb pressure, and so are more prone to lodging.

## Weeds

As fields are harvested, preparation for next years crop begins. It is the time to begin applying herbicide for the control of winter annual weeds, simple perennials (eg. Dandelion), biennials (biennial wormwood) and cool season perennial weeds. Fall herbicide applications or effective fall tillage is the best way to reduce or stop seed production of winter annual species.

## Limiting Factors Disease



Sunflower Aphids feeding on the underside of a sunflower leaf. They are small, green and move slowly.



Lady beetle larva feed on aphids. Older larva can feed on up to 100 aphids per day which can often keep infestations controlled.



Phoma causes a black lesions that originate in a leaf, continue down the petiole and girdles the stem.