

MB Sunflower Crop Report

“Early planted sunflowers are almost flowering. Banded sunflower moth adults are present across the province”

Friday July 13, 2012

Crop

Sunflower crop development ranges from V-10 to R-4. At R-4, the inflorescence is starting to open, and the ray flowers are visible when viewed from directly above. Drought stress is evident in fields where sunflowers are growing on sandy soil. Otherwise, crop development is good.



Insects

Adult Sunflower Bud Moths have been detected across the province. The adults deposit eggs in leaf axils or the terminals of immature sunflowers. Once hatched the larvae begin tunneling into the sunflower plant. The tunneling is characterized by an entrance hole in the leaf axils or head surrounded by black excrement. The larvae feed within the stem or the fleshy part of the head. Early planted sunflowers are infested primarily along the stem, whereas later planted sunflowers are infested mostly in the pith area of the head. Despite malformations to the head and stalk due to larval feeding, damage is usually negligible.

Banded Sunflower Moths have been noted across Manitoba. The adults typically congregate in ditches during the day and fly into sunflower fields in the evenings to lay eggs on the outside of the bracts of sunflower heads. The small white eggs can often be found on the back of sunflower heads with the aid of a hand lens. Sunflowers are only susceptible to damage during flowering. Traps have been placed across Manitoba to monitor the insect.

Disease

Sunflower Rust pustules have not yet been noted. Continue to monitor for the brown pustules as the disease may yet develop if we receive more rains and heavy dews. A fungicide application is most economical when disease severity is 1 percent on the upper four leaves prior to or during flowering. Studies conducted in the U.S.A. have found that fungicide applications at R-6 or later have not demonstrated a positive impact on yield.

Limiting Factor

Insects



Figure 1. The entrance hole of Sunflower Bud Moth larvae is typically surrounded by black frass (excrement).



Figure 2. Sunflower Bud Moth larvae have a dark head capsule and feed on the fleshy head material and on the stem pith.



Figure 3. Adult Banded Sunflower Moth have emerged and are present across the province. Larvae feed on developing sunflower kernels.