



MB Sunflower Crop Report

“Development of rust has stalled due to the hot and dry conditions. Minor defoliation continue by both the thistle caterpillar and grasshoppers.”

Friday July 7, 2012

Crop

Sunflower crop development ranges from V-6 to R-2. We have seen rapid growth over the last week due to the hot and dry conditions. Despite the hot and dry weather conditions, the crop is not exhibiting signs of drought stress, and most fields are good to excellent.

Disease

Sunflower Rust development has slowed due to the weather conditions. Despite early sightings of rust pycnia the brown spore stage has not yet developed. It is important to continue to monitor for rust as a heavy dew provides adequate water for infection to occur.

Insects

Thistle caterpillars are continuing to cause defoliation across the province. The larvae are approximately 1.25 inches long. The larvae grow to approximately 1.5 inches long, at which stage they pupate and hang from leaves as chrysalids. In some fields the caterpillars are already pupating. About 10 days later the adults will emerge and a second generation begins. Although we will likely experience a second generation this year, thistle caterpillars rarely warrant an insecticide application.

Grasshoppers are also causing low levels of defoliation across the province. Damage is typically most severe when the weather is hot and dry, however grasshoppers rarely cause economic damage in sunflowers. Grasshoppers emerge from eggs deposited in uncultivated ground. For this reason populations are often highest along field margins. It is important to scout throughout the field to obtain an accurate indication of grasshopper populations.

Lygus bugs have been noted in some sunflower fields. At this early growth stage the sucking insects are not a threat to the crop. Once the crop is flowering it will be necessary to scout for lygus bugs.

Other

Group 4 injury is evident in isolated fields across the province due to drift or residue left in sprayers. Group 4 herbicide exposure causes leaf distortion, development of parallel leaf venation and the development of shoots from leaf axils of some mid-stem leaves.

Limiting Factor Insects



Figure 1. Sunflower reproductive growth stage R-2. At this stage the stem between the head and top leaves is less than 2cm.



Figure 2. Grasshoppers are causing low levels of defoliation in fields across the province.



Figure 3. Group 4 herbicide injury causes leaf distortion and development of parallel leaf venation.