

# MB Sunflower Crop Report

"Cutworms are causing defoliation and cut-off plants in isolated fields across the province. Crops are progressing well otherwise"

Friday June 1, 2012

## Insects

Cutworms are causing economic damage in areas across the province and are appearing to be a major reason behind poor plant stand. Cutworms damage sunflowers in different ways, including defoliation, cutting the plant of above the soil surface or cutting the plant of below the soil surface.

There are three main species of cutworms that can cause damage in Manitoba; the redbacked, darksided or dingy cutworms. All the cutworms have four sets of prolegs and curl up when disturbed. The species differ in their life cycle and feeding habits. We have been finding mostly dingy cutworms, which tend to feed on the leaves and defoliate plants—rarely clipping plants off and redbacked cutworms which tend to eat into stems and often sever them.

### Scouting for cutworms

It is recommended that fields are scouted at least twice per week using a Z pattern. Along the pattern, examine five 1 square-foot areas at 25 sites looking for cutworm damage and the larvae. Cutworms feed at night, and hide under the soil surface during the day. To locate the larva, gently dig around damaged plants; they are typically located in the top inch of soil since there is lots of moisture further down.

*Economic Threshold— 1 larva per square foot or 25 to 30% stand reduction.*

*Control Options—*Insecticides are registered for control of cutworms. Pounce/Perm-Up/Ambush or Lorsban/Pyrinex/Nufos/Citadel can be applied. Applications are best made in the evening since the larvae are most active during the night.

Wireworm damage has also been evident, however not at economic levels. The current seed treatment widely used on sunflower seeds protect against wireworms.

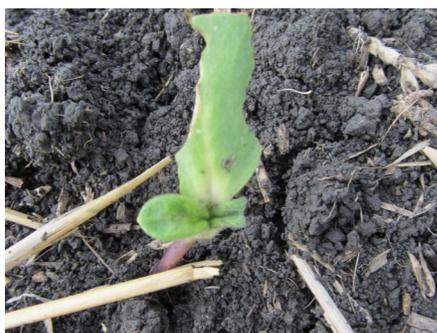
## Weeds

Most fields have light weed pressure. This may be due to summer fallow in 2011, or extensive fall work including harrowing and herbicide applications that have proven to reduce weed pressures. Flushes of weeds are continuing to emerge with the rain showers being experienced across the province. Common weeds are green foxtail, wild oat, kochia and lamb's-quarters.

## Limiting Factor      Insects



**Figure 1.** Cutworms are causing economic damage in insolated fields. Scout regularly.



**Figure 2.** Cutworms can either defoliate plants, or clip of the stems above or below the ground.



**Figure 3.** Some plants are becoming chlorotic due to moisture stress.