

MB Sunflower Crop Report



"Good/Excessive soil moisture, moderate temperatures and high inoculum levels from last year are not a good combination for disease risk in Sunflower. Fortunately, the weather forecast looks promising to bring some hot, drying weather."

Report 5 Monday, June 28, 2010

Staging Fields planted in late April, V-10 to R-1. Significant variability due to excess moisture stress. Fields planted in mid May to early June, V-E to V-8. Crop losses from excess moisture ranging from 5 to 50% have been observed. Some acres in the Eastern region have been re-seeded to canola.

Weeds Problem weeds being found in sunflower fields across the province include Biennial Wormwood, False Ragweed and Canada Thistle.

Insects Adult sunflower beetle and young grasshopper nymphs were the only insects observed in sunflower fields last week. The vast majority of sunflower seed comes treated with a systemic insecticide (Cruiser®) which works effectively on sunflower beetle. Last September was ideal for grasshopper egg laying but wet conditions this spring have not been favorable for grasshoppers which do well in hot, dry conditions.

Disease Wet soils for extended periods of time across the province are increasing the risk for Sclerotinia and following last year's high disease incidence, there is lots of local inoculum. Unlike any other crop, there are three ways that sunflower is affected by Sclerotinia; Wilt, Mid Stalk and Head Rot. Sclerotinia Wilt shows up earliest when roots come in contact with sclerotia in the soil. Soil moisture and temperature are not important factors affecting wilt incidence but are very important when it comes to Mid Stalk and Head Rot which show up later in the season.

Localized and systemic Downey Mildew infection is being found for the most part at trace to 5% of plants effected but at levels up to 20% in non resistant varieties.

The economical or uredial stage of sunflower rust has not yet been observed in sunflower fields, but is expected to be found shortly.

Limiting Factors High Disease risk (Rust and Sclerotinia)



Biennial Wormwood: A key feature is the notched tips on the cotyledons.



Adult Sunflower Beetle: No economic levels have been observed or reported.



Downey Mildew: Localized infection on leaves (L) vs. Systemic infection affecting entire plant (R)