

# MB Sunflower Crop Report

*"The growth stage of R5.1-R5.2, until end of flowering (3 week window) is the most susceptible stage for sclerotinia head rot development."*

Thursday, July 31, 2014

## STAGING

The sunflower crop continues to accelerate through growth stages under the warm conditions. Early planted sunflowers in the R 5.1 to R 5.5 stage, with later planted sunflowers in the R-4 stage.

## INSECTS

**Lygus bug** (Figure 1) numbers exceeding the economic threshold (1 adult per 9 heads) have been reported from many areas of the province. Sunflowers are susceptible to damage until the seed shells have hardened sufficiently for the insect to no longer penetrate the shell. Applications are best made in the evening (after 8 p.m.) to reduce damage to pollinating bees.

**Banded Sunflower Moth (BSM)** are present across the province (Figure 2). Pheromone traps across the province continue to detect increasing numbers of BSM. The insect impacts both quality and yield of sunflowers, with each larva consuming 5 to 7 seeds until pupation.

Scouting for lygus bug and banded sunflower moth is best done between R4 to R5.1, with control occurring in the late bud (R4) to earlier bloom staging (R5.1).

## DISEASE

**Sclerotinia Head Rot** continues to be on the mind of many growers. The question, "**When is the Best Time to Spray for Head Rot?**" has been a common call into the office over the past week and a half.

**Dr. Khalid Rashid, Oilseed Pathologist with AAFC**, states: "The growth stage of R5.1-R5.2, (Figure 3) until end of flowering (3 week window) is the most susceptible stage. The main factors for susceptibility are the availability of ascospores from mushroom production in adjacent fields (less are produced in the sunflower fields), and there is humidity in the air and on the sunflower heads, for ascospores to germinate and infect the heads. Sometimes, a second application 2 weeks after the first application may further reduce the disease infections. In some years/some fields get high late infection after the end of flowering due to a flux of ascospores production late in the season coupled with favourable humidity/rain conditions."

**Number of applications:** Depends on product. If registered and conditions good for infection a second application can be made 12-14 days after the first application.

## Photos



**Figure 1.** Adult lygus bugs vary from light green to dark brown and have a distinctive 'V' on the wings.



**Figure 2.** Adult Banded Sunflower Moths congregate in ditches during the day. The best time to scout is during the evening.



**Figure 3.** R-5.1 is the best time to apply insecticide to target lygus bugs or Banded sunflower moths.