MB Sunflower Crop Report

"Sunflower planting is close to completion and acres are predicted to be between 60-70,000 for 2012. Producers experienced good planting conditions."

Friday May 24, 2012

Intro.

The Surveillance Survey is underway for the 2012 season! Planting conditions have been great across the province, and sunflower planting is close to completion. It is expected that acres will increase from the all time low last year, to be approximately 60,000 to 70,000 acres this year.

If you are yet not signed up for the survey and would like to participate, please call 750-2555 or email research@canadasunflower.com. I will be available throughout the summer if you have an issue or questions regarding your sunflower crop to come visit, scout the field and help develop a plan of action if necessary.

Insects

There has been reporting's of cutworm damage in corn and sunflower fields. Cutworm damage can be observed by walking along a row and looking for missing plants or plants. Cutworm damage can vary among species (there are 3 species of cutworms we can have in Manitoba) from defoliation to cut off plants. Scouting should begin as soon as plants emerge, and should be checked at least twice per week.
If you suspect cutworm activity, dig around the plant to see if you can find any larvae. The larvae are nocturnal, and can often they can be found within the top 1 to 2 to inches of soil around the plant.
Cutworms can likely be found in every field, however the economic threshold is 25-30% stand reduction.

Weeds

Sunflower are not very competitive in the early stages of growth, and weed control should be conducted early. Flushes of emerging weeds can be expected with the passing rain showers being experienced in areas of the province.

Frost

With some weather stations predicting frost for areas of the province over the weekend, it might be on your mind how the sunflowers might fare. Once emerged, sunflowers are most frost tolerant in the cotyledon stage. During this stage, plants can withstand temperatures in the -3.3°C to −3.8°C range for short periods. As the plants progress up through the growth stages they become progressively more sensitive. Fields are mostly just emerging or in the cotyledon, pushing two leaf stage at which stage they can withstand −2.7°C to −3.3°C.

Figure 1. Cutworm defoliation on a sunflower cotyledon.

Figure 2. Redbacked and darksided cutworms can defoliate and cut off plants.

Figure 3. Many fields are just starting to emerge across the province.