

MB Sunflower Crop Report

Friday August 10, 2012

Crop

Flowering is complete and the sunflower crop continues through the R-6 (ray petals wilting stage) into the R-7 growth stage. At the R-7 stage the back of the head has started to turn a pale yellow. Maturity is typically reached about 1 month after flowering depending on hybrid and weather.

Insects

Lygus bugs continue to be present in sunflower fields. However, once the shell has hardened the insect is no longer able to damage the kernel and should not cause economic damage.

Banded Sunflower Moths continue to feed in fields at low densities. The larva can be found feeding on kernels within the shell and consume all or part of the developing kernel. Once finished feeding the larva typically leave through the entrance hole near the base of the floret. Occasionally the larva create areas of webbing on the face of mature sunflower heads and serve as an indication that feeding is occurring. The larva are currently in the mid-instar stages and are a pinkish-red color.

Disease

Above average incidences of Sclerotinia mid-stalk rot has been reported in Alberta. Incidence appears to be high in sporadic fields in Manitoba, otherwise mid-stalk rot does not appear to be above average. Infection initiates on leaves and progresses within the petiole until reaching the stem. The symptoms are identical to those of basal-rot; tan to light-brown stem lesions. Under humid conditions white mycelia and black sclerotia bodies may develop on the stem and are very characteristic of the disease. Stalk lesions usually cause lodging and the leaves above the canker die. As the disease continues to progress the affected area will become completely shredded with only the vascular components remaining.

Phoma Black Stem has developed in areas of the province. This disease is characterized by large, jet black lesions circling a petiole. Similar to sclerotinia mid-stalk rot, phoma originates via leaf infection. Infection however may also be caused by infected stem weevils. Typically lesions are considered superficial and do not result in pith damage or lodging.

Limiting Factor

Disease



Figure 1. Phoma black stem is characterized by a jet black lesion surrounding a leaf petiole.



Figure 2. Banded sunflower moth larva continue to feed and develop in fields. Typically a larva can feed on 5 to 7 seeds.



Figure 3. Above average levels of mid-stalk rot have been reported in Alberta. Mid-stalk rot causes lodging and yield loss.