

MB Sunflower Crop Report

Friday August 17, 2012

Crop

Early fields are at the R-8. At this stage the back of the head is yellow but the bracts are still green. Later planted fields are nearing the end of flowering (R-5.9).

Insects

Banded Sunflower Moth trap counts have been decreasing since the end of July, coinciding with many insecticide applications. Although adult sunflower moths continue to be present across the province, the females do not lay many eggs on the heads of flowering or more mature plants. If you are finding a lot of larva feeding within the seeds, they will be protected from insecticides if an application is made during these later stages.

Although Lygus bugs are still present in sunflower and other susceptible crops, damage to sunflowers is significantly reduced when after flowering (R-6). At this stage the sunflower seeds are too mature to be damaged. Most acres in the province are past the flowering stages and therefore an insecticide application is not warranted.

Disease

Head rot has developed at low incidence across the province. Damage ranges from early visible symptoms to completely shredded heads. The first visible symptom is the appearance of water-soaked spots or bleached areas on the back of the head.

Verticillium Wilt has been observed in a scattered across the province. The disease initially affects the lower leaves and progresses upwards and can eventually affect the entire plant. The symptoms are very striking consisting of necrotic areas surrounded by chlorotic areas between healthy green veins. Infected plants typically die prior to seed maturation and plants are more prone to lodging. The fungi that causes Verticillium is soil borne, emphasizing the important of a 3 or 4 year rotation between sunflowers and non-host crops.

Rust uredinia have developed on the bottom leaves of sunflower plants. Development may be attributed to the heavy morning dews being experienced lately. Fungicide applications are only warranted when severity exceeds 1 percent on the upper 4 leavers prior to or during bloom. Fungicide applications at R-6 or later have not shown to improve yields positively.

Limiting Factor Disease



Figure 1. R-8 growth stage. At this stage the back of the head is yellow but the bracts are still green.



Figure 2. Verticillium wilt has developed in isolated patches of fields across the province.



Figure 3. Blackbirds often leave the empty seeds on the back of the head after feeding.