

# MB Sunflower Crop Report

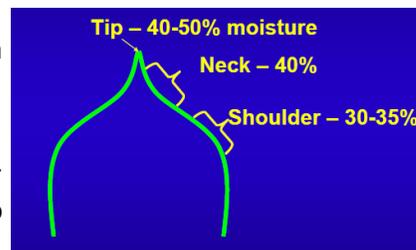
Friday September 7, 2012

The sunflower crop continues to look good across the province. Crop maturity is ahead of normal, with desiccation already commencing in early seeded fields. So far, this could be a really good year to consider desiccating the sunflower crop for several reasons:

1. Although hot and dry, many areas still have good soil moisture
2. The plants are healthy and will take longer to dry down naturally
3. Blackbird predation can cause substantial losses
4. The crop is maturing early and although possibly, a killing frost is not within the foreseeable forecast.

The best way to judge when to desiccate is by watching the color change of the bracts. Most fields have turned 'banana yellow' and are approaching physiological maturity. After the back of the head has turned yellow, the bracts will turn yellow towards the tip. Once the bract has turned yellow the crop is getting close to maturity —but it is still too early to desiccate.

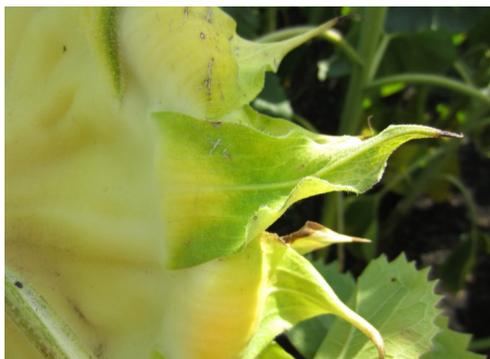
Continue to monitor the field and watch as the bracts turn brown, starting at the tip and working towards the shoulder. As the bracts turn progressively brown the seeds dry down. When the bracts are brown at the shoulder, the seeds are approximately 30 to 35% moisture. This is the right time to spray.



Kirk Howatt + Rich Zollinger— NDSU

Staging for application is proving difficult in fields with high variability, which is pronounced due to the hot and dry conditions. Try to time the desiccation based on the best parts of the field where the majority of the yield is. If a frost is forecast within a couple of days—just let mother nature do the work for you.

## Limiting Factor Blackbirds



**Figure 1.** The head has turned 'banana yellow' and the bracts are green. Continue to monitor.



**Figure 2.** The bracts have turned yellow and the tips are brown. Seed moisture is 40-50%. Too soon to spray.



**Figure 3. Time to spray**— the bracts are brown to the shoulder and seed moisture is <35%