

MB Sunflower Crop Report

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Wednesday June 4th, 2014

WELCOME to the 2014 MB Sunflower Crop reporting season. Reports will be sent out bi-monthly from now till harvest.

In the Red River valley, sunflowers have emerged and in V-E to V-5 stage depending on seed date. Areas between Wawanesa and St. Claude are wrapping up sunflower planting. The NE and Eastern part of the province are still struggling to dodge rain and meet MASC sunflower seeding deadline. Areas of SW Manitoba and SE SK are unable to seed due to excess moisture.

Insects

Cutworms are causing economic damage in areas across the province and are appearing to be a major reason behind poor plant stand. Cutworms damage sunflowers in a number of different ways including defoliation and cutting the plant off above or below the soil surface. There are three main species of cutworms that can cause damage in Manitoba; the redbacked, darksided or dingy cutworms. The species differ in their life cycle and feeding habits. Currently, both dingy and redback cutworms have been found feeding on leaves and defoliate plants, however only redbacked cutworms tend to eat stems and often sever them off.

Scouting for cutworms—It is recommended that fields are scouted at least twice per week using a Z pattern. Along the pattern, examine 5—1 sq. ft. area at 25 different sites, looking for larvae and cutworm damage. Cutworms feed at night, and hide under the soil surface during the day. To locate the larva, gently dig around damaged plants; they are typically located in the top inch of soil. **NOTE: Economic Threshold for cutworms is 1 larva per square foot or 25 to 30% stand reduction.**

Control Options—Numerous insecticides are registered for control of cutworms. Applications are best made in the evening since the larvae are most active during the night. Read the product label for full details on proper usage or talk to your local retailer.

Weeds

Fields treated with a pre-emerge herbicide continue to control broadleaf weeds. However, in-season weed control applications will likely need to start this week. Most in-season herbicide are labelled for a minimum of the V-2 stage (Figure 3) or 2 full true leaves. There are exceptions so be sure to read the labels thoroughly before applying to your crop.

Limiting Factor Insects



Figure 1. Cutworms are causing economic damage in insulated fields. Scout regularly.



Figure 2. Cutworms can either defoliate plants, or clip of the stems above or below the ground.



Figure 3. V- 2 stage.