

Special Bulletin—Desiccation

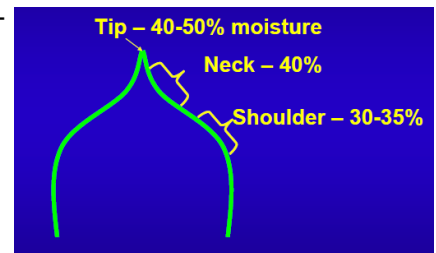
Are you thinking about desiccating your sunflowers?

Why should I consider desiccating my sunflowers?

Natural desiccation can be slow and uneven. Poor weather can cause reduced quality and yield through stem breakage, shattering and predation by blackbirds. To speed up the natural desiccation process, it may be worthwhile to consider the use of a chemical desiccation. Chemical desiccants are generally typical herbicides that have achieved special registration to be used as a harvest aid.

What is the right stage to desiccate at?

Timing of desiccation is critical as application prior to physiological maturity can result in decreased quality, seed size and test weight. Sunflowers are physiologically mature at the stage R-9. At this stage, the seeds have reached maximum size and bushel weight. Visually, this is when the back of the head is yellow and the bracts are brown and seed moisture is between 30-35%.



Kirk Howatt + Rich Zollinger— NDSU

The bract tip turns brown at 40-50%. At this stage, seed moisture is too high and the plant has not reached physiological maturity. The broadest part of the bract should be turning brown. It is at this stage that the seeds are between 30-35% moisture and desiccation can be performed.



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



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What products are registered as a Harvest Aid?

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There are currently three products, Reglone (Syngenta), Desica (Syngenta), and Heat (BASF), registered as a Harvest Aid for sunflowers.

Both of these products can be applied by air. The application rates for the products is as follows;

	Ground Application	Aerial Applications
Reglone	0.5 L/ac to 0.7 L/ac (use high rate for dense crop, heavy weed population), Must be used with a non ionic surfactant	0.7 L/ac to 0.9 L/ac (use high rate for dense crop, heavy weed population) Must be used with a non ionic surfactant
Reglone Ion	0.6 L/ac to 0.8 L/ac (use high rate for dense crop, heavy weed population),	0.8 L/ac to 1.0 L/ac (use high rate for dense crop, heavy weed population)
Desica	0.5 L/ac to 0.7 L/ac (use high rate for dense crop, heavy weed population), Must be used with a non ionic surfactant	0.7 L/ac to 0.9 L/ac (use high rate for dense crop, heavy weed population) Must be used with a non ionic surfactant
Heat	N/A	71 g/ha (30ac/jug or 240 ac/case) HEAT used with Merge alone at 1L/ha (400mL/ac).

- ◆ Preharvest Interval for Reglones and Desica is 15-20 days .
- ◆ For best results with Reglones and Desica apply in the evenings or on a cloudy day for best results.
- ◆ Preharvest Interval for heat is 7 days
- ◆ For all products high water volumes are needed for proper efficacy.
- ◆ The above products may have slightly different timing ranges. Consult the label or chemical representative for more details.