

**2008 Crop Production Report of Extension Activities
For the British Columbia
Peace River Agriculture Development Fund**

Production Update

a) Acres

According to Stats Canada, harvested area for canola in 2008 was 16.042 million acres, exceeding 2007's record acreage and setting new records for acreage in SK, MB and AB. High commodity prices in the spring and returns relative to other crops were the main drivers behind increased acres in 2008.

b) Yield

Average yield from the 2008 crop was a record 34.7 bushels per acre, up 7.6 bushels from 2007. After a relatively tough start to the season in most of western Canada, growing conditions were near ideal with timely rains and cooler conditions during flowering that helped the crop along. Drought affected yields in much of the Peace River district which kept averages yields in AB and BC down, but records yields were recorded in SK and MB.

c) Production

A record yield, grown on a record acreage resulted in a record crop for 2008. Canadian canola production rose to 12.6 million tonnes in 2008, shattering 2007's record harvest of 9.5 million tonnes.

Supporting More Acres and More Yield

a) Industry Training

i. Canola Watch

Canola Watch ran from the first week of May until the second week of September with 18 issues and one bulletin published. Survey results were very positive with over 99% of respondents finding the service very or somewhat useful and almost half of respondents forwarding on the e-newsletter to an average of 15 others. With 2640 subscribers and half of them forwarding Canola Watch to 15 people, Canola Watch was sent directly and indirectly to over 20,000 people each issue. Upon the completion of the 2008 edition of Canola Watch, 140 participants took the follow-up exam, in order to qualify for CCA credits. The result was 600 CCA credits being awarded, increased participation compared to the 110 participants and 481.5 credits earned in 2007. In addition, the Canola Watch exam moved to a more accessible, online format in 2008.

ii. Canola Colleges

The annual Canola Colleges were held in Nisku, AB, Saskatoon, SK and Brandon, MB in 2008. All were well attended, with a total of 184 participants at the three Colleges. The topic for 2008 was Canola Diseases. The agenda included researchers and Canola Council agronomists presenting on aster yellows, sclerotinia, blackleg and clubroot. A total of 5.0 CCA credits were available to those who attended.

Due to the success of past Canola Colleges, for 2009, Satellite Canola Colleges have been scheduled for Medicine Hat, AB, Grand Prairie, AB, and Yorkton, SK in addition to the traditional locations.

b) Grower Communications

2008 was another successful extension year filled with meetings, trade shows, Colleges and clinics. Over the course of the year, Canola Council Crop Production staff participated in 100 public meetings plus 27 industry led meetings. Total direct contacts to producers, agronomists and industry people was over 14,500 through a combination of meetings, tradeshow, crop walks, tours, diagnostic schools, dealer visits, and on-farm calls.

i. Seed SMART

The Canola Council of Canada initiated a new campaign for the 2008/2009 season focused on tips that growers can adopt to optimize emergence and ensure more uniform plant stands. Initiatives within this campaign include a Seed SMART card that is being distributed to growers through meetings, tradeshow as well as through retail outlets. Companies are also able to purchase these cards to distribute to growers or for their own use within their organizations. As well, advertisement space for the Seed SMART campaign has been purchased in print media across Western Canada. The Seed SMART message has been and will continue to be promoted through grower meetings at which members of the Canola Council Crop Production team are presenting.

ii. Air Drill Clinic

An Air Drill Clinic was held in Lethbridge, AB on February 19, 2008. About 100 participants, approximately 75% of which were canola producers, learned important information on setting, adjusting and measuring performance on their seeding equipment. This clinic has been very beneficial for teaching participants the need to slow down, set their equipment properly and make sure they are getting the seed placement they need in order to establish good plant stands.

c) Media Outreach

Media uptake on CCC releases, Canola Watch and events has been very positive in 2008. For 2008, crop production staff participated in 68 print interviews and articles, and 148 radio and TV interviews across Western Canada.

Special Projects and Issues

Canola Export Ready

Dollars that went into the Canola Export Ready program in 2008 supported the following initiatives:

1. Direct mail out to producers, supported by a stand alone website, which educated them about what on-farm practices can put Canada's canola export markets at risk.
2. Development and distribution of print materials in National and Community newspapers and magazines.
 - a. 'Know what you grow' – Keep de-registered canola varieties out of the field.
 - b. 'Don't use malathion' – Keep the insecticide malathion away from bins to be used for canola storage, as well as canola seed itself.
3. Development and distribution of radio spots supporting the above two messages.
4. Development of presentation materials that were used in a targeted education campaign in the Peace River region.
 - a. Erin Brock, Agronomist and Arvel Lawson, Program Manager for Crop Production spent three days on the road in this region to ensure retailers had the most up to date information on hand for customers.

Big Dollars at Stake in Spring and Summer Canola Storage

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

As spring temperatures increase, the Canola Council is encouraging growers to check their bins for signs of possible seed deterioration. With canola prices at record levels, leaving a 4,000 bushel bin valued at over \$50,000 dollars unchecked is a big mistake.

"We are concerned that as temperatures start to rise through April and May, reports of spoilage and seed damage will also increase," says Canola Council agronomy specialist David Vanthuyne. "That sort of quality loss doesn't need to happen.

Vanthuyne explains that in spring when the sun warms the outside of the bin, warm air moves up near the outside wall of the bin and down through the centre of the grain mass. The cooler canola in the centre of the bin re-absorbs moisture, creating a damp and warm area prone to rapid spoilage.

"That's when you need to monitor the seed more regularly", Vanthuyne says. "This area of the bin can favour the growth of storage moulds and eventually the seed may become damaged."

Aeration is the most effective way to stabilize temperature and moisture within a bin. At the very least, he advises growers to take out some of the canola from the centre of the bin. "That way," he says, "you'll interrupt any increase in temperature and moisture in the central core."

Vanthuyne says if moisture and temperature are properly maintained, it's possible to store quality canola seed for two to three years.

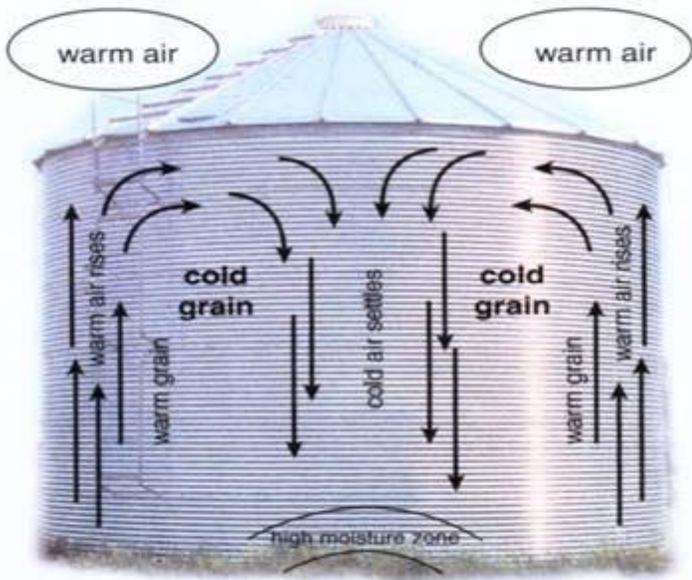
"The best approach is to stabilize the bin temperature between 10 to 15 degrees Celsius as summer approaches", advises Vanthuyne. This becomes even more critical with large storage structures which tend to be at greater risk for heating.

For more information in your area, contact:

Derwyn Hammond, Manitoba: 204-729-9011; David Vanthuyne, Eastern Saskatchewan: 306-946-3588; Jim Bessel, North Central & North Eastern Saskatchewan: 306-373-6771; Matthew Stanford, Southern Alberta & South Western Saskatchewan: 403-327-4832; Doug Moisey, East Central Alberta & West Central Saskatchewan: 780-645-3624; John Mayko, Western Alberta: 780-764-2593; Erin Brock, Peace Region: 780-933-0456.

Stored Grain Moisture Migration Spring and Summer

Spring and summer



This press release is part of the Canola Council's Crop Production extension program. The program is supported regionally by: Alberta Canola Producers Commission; Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission; Manitoba Canola Growers Association; Canola Council of Canada; Peace River Agriculture Development Fund; and B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

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Check canola for flea beetles every few days

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Cold temperatures may have slowed growth of the canola crop, but that doesn't mean flea beetles are hibernating. Keep scouting for these early season pests every few days, and remember that days of protection from a seed treatment start ticking away as soon as the seed goes in the ground, says Matt Stanford, agronomy specialist for the Canola Council of Canada.

“Cool conditions make slow emerging canola plants more vulnerable,” he says. “Even in weather like this, flea beetles are showing up in traps in the Saskatoon area.”

Be extra vigilant in areas where flea beetle populations were high last fall. Look for flea beetles and evidence of feeding on weeds like wild mustard, stinkweed and shepherd's purse, Stanford advises. With cooler air temperatures, flea beetles may be inclined to stay closer to the ground where it's warmer and they can feed off stems, he adds.

If you see shot holes in cotyledons and true leaves made by feeding flea beetles, step up monitoring. Flea beetle activity can increase dramatically, even exceeding the action threshold of 25% damage in a matter of days if conditions become warm and dry, says Stanford.

Flea beetle forecasting and control – FAQ AARD [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/faq8031?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/faq8031?opendocument)

The Canola Growers Manual – Flea beetle information and ID http://www.canola-council.org/canola_growers_manual.aspx

MAFRI Flea Beetle Fact Sheet <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/fad09s00.html>

Canola Scouting and Sweep Net Insect ID Card http://www.canola-council.org/canola_resources/product10.aspx

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Clean seeding equipment cuts risk of clubroot

Thursday, May 01, 2008

Whether fields are mucky or dry this spring, cleaning farm equipment is the best way to reduce the spread of clubroot. Now that seeders, cultivators and sprayers are moving into the field en masse, Erin Brock, Canola Council agronomy specialist, urges farmers across the prairies, and especially affected areas of Alberta, to make sure their equipment is as clean as possible.

Canola growers can minimize the spread of clubroot this spring, simply by knocking off soil lumps and sweeping loose soil off machinery, she adds. Clubroot can spread only through resting spores in the soil or in canola plant material containing galls. Resting spores are most likely to spread via contaminated soil carried from field to field by equipment, she says.

“That’s why it’s important to clean wheel wells, tires, the undercarriage and any other areas where dirt really accumulates,” Brock says. “I recommend a power washer with either hot water or steam. Then finish off with a weak disinfectant of 1-2% active ingredient bleach solution.”

She admits this is a time-consuming extra headache at seeding but “it’s a must – and not just a quick slosh of bleach on dirty tires.”

Because organic matter deactivates bleach, Brock advises growers to remove all the soil first, use clean – not dugout – water, and make sure the bleach solution remains on machinery for at least 10-15 minutes before rinsing.

She also recommends planting a grassed area near the field entrance on which to do the cleaning. Use an air line from the air drill fan to make it easier to blow off dust.

Clubroot is a serious disease of canola, mustard and other crops in the cabbage family. There are no measures to control it in canola. It was first found in canola fields near Edmonton in 2003. By the end of 2007, clubroot was present in 10 municipalities around Edmonton and one county in southern Alberta. It was added as a declared pest to Alberta’s *Agricultural Pests Act*.

For more information about clubroot, check the Alberta Agriculture and Food factsheet: Clubroot Disease of Canola and Mustard [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex8593](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex8593)

and the Alberta Clubroot Management Plan at

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex11519](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex11519)

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Eliminate the competition with pre-emergence weed control

Tuesday, May 06, 2008

Control weeds early to eliminate the competition for this year's canola crop, says Arvel Lawson, crop production program manager with the Canola Council of Canada.

"Young canola plants are not very competitive," explains Lawson. "Weeds just out-compete young canola plants for soil moisture and nutrients. The yield loss can be high."

Research shows that weeds that emerge before or with the canola crop cause greater yield loss than weeds that emerge after the crop is established – approximately the 4- to 6-leaf stage. But a pre-seed burnoff with glyphosate can allow canola to develop with minimal weed competition, she says.

Scouting for weeds before applying a pre-seed burnoff is critical this season since the cold, dry spring has limited weed emergence in many areas. If few weeds are visible in the field and the ideal seeding date has arrived, consider using a post-seed, pre-emergent treatment BEFORE seeded canola comes out of the ground, says Lawson. First, make sure weeds are actually present.

Remember glyphosate is a systemic herbicide that needs time to work for maximum control, Lawson adds. Consider formulation and target weeds when determining the time required between application and soil disturbance from tillage or seeding.

"With temperatures getting close to or dipping below zero at night, we recommend spraying glyphosate only after temperatures have warmed the following day," she says. "After a hard frost, check for new growth before applying herbicide because weeds must be actively growing to ensure herbicide uptake and maximum kill."

If volunteer canola control is your target, the only option before canola is a pre-seed application of glyphosate and carfentrazone. This will control all types of volunteer canola if used at the proper stage. Applying even light rates of 2-4,D or MCPA to control volunteer canola or other hard to control winter annuals is a bad idea because this is not a registered use prior to canola and may result in herbicide injury to the crop, says Lawson.

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Seed smart this spring

Friday, May 09, 2008

Give canola a fighting chance by seeding smart this spring. Careless or rushed seeding can produce uneven crop stands, and that can cost big time, says Doug Moisey, Canola Council agronomy specialist.

Recent research has shown that uneven stands averaging 4 plants/ft² could cost as much as 21% in yield when compared to an even plant stand of 8 plants/ft² under normal conditions. In uniform stands of 4 and 8 plants/ft², there was no significant difference in yield, emphasizing the benefit of an even stand, Moisey points out.

Based on a 30 bu/ac average yield, a 20% loss is 6 bu/ac. At \$12/bu, the cost of an uneven plant stand can be more than \$72/ac. Multiplied by 640 acres, that's a potential loss of over \$46,000.

Do it right the first time

“We know seeding early is good, but going into cold soils can put stress on germinating seedlings,” says Moisey. “Ideal soil temperature is above 10 °C at seeding depth, but you can reasonably start seeding canola at 4-5 °C.”

When seeding canola into cool soil, keep these tips in mind:

- Seed shallow (½ to ¾”).
- Maintain a reasonable seeding rate as emergence may be variable in the field. Germination values don't equate to emergence values in the field.
- Place some phosphate fertilizer with the seed.
- Seed slowly to ensure uniform seed distribution, depth, and proper fertilizer/seed separation in single-pass seeding systems. Check seeding depth periodically.

“Achieving good, uniform plants stands is critical for canola,” says Moisey. “It will make the crop more competitive, and uniform crop development simplifies pest and harvest management later in the season.”

Ideal plant population is 7-14 plants/ft². He recommends targeting 10 plants/ft², remembering that emergence is typically 50% in western Canada (Hybrids can be 10% higher). Use 50-60% emergence when calculating seeding rates unless your own evidence has established a different baseline level.

To calculate appropriate canola seeding rates, look at the following Canol@Fact online:

http://www.canolacouncil.org/canola_resources/product34.aspx

For more information, contact:

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Take care when converting pasture land to canola

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

Mundare, AB: Alberta farmers intend to seed 600,000 more acres to canola this year. In some cases that may mean livestock producers will convert pasture land to canola, and these “new” growers have only one chance to give their crops a good start.

Make crop nutrition and a properly prepared seedbed your priority this spring if you are converting acres, says John Mayko, senior agronomy specialist with the Canola Council.

“You’re going to be looking at lumpy, dry soil with a few fertility deficiencies that will definitely challenge your seeding operation,” he warns, adding, “You’ve really got to wrap your head around what needs to be done to condition the land.”

Get a soil test and fertilize according to realistic yield goals that take into account current and expected moisture, Mayko recommends.

Because breaking up heavy stands of sod or long-term forage ground creates lumps and dries out the ground, it will be difficult to place canola seed in a shallow, uniform way. Direct seeding will help conserve moisture and get you closer to the ideal 1-2 cm depth for seed placement, he says.

Ideally, pastures to be converted to crop land would have been prepped last fall with an application of glyphosate.

“Spraying out your forage or pasture in the spring can actually create a tough environment for your next crop,” says Mayko. “The decaying forage plants tie up nutrients and increase disease pressure. A fall spray makes more sense because it allows time for soil moisture to return and for the soil to mellow.”

Finally, he recommends that before you fire up the cultivator, consider the condition of the land. If soil texture, topography, salinity, solonchic soil or other chemical or physical factors are too risky, think twice before converting it.

For more information on converting hay or pasture land to annual cropping, go to:

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/newslett.nsf/all/cot113153](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/cot113153)

<http://reducedtillage.ca/articles8.aspx>

<http://reducedtillage.ca/article13.aspx>

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