

Combating Late Seeding of Oilseed Crops

In general, oilseed crops in Manitoba still perform well when seeded in late May and early June. With later seeding dates though, rapid and even emergence of plants is crucial to maintaining yield potential. With warm soil conditions and available soil moisture, targeting a shallower seeding depth, consistent seed placement and seeding into firm seedbeds should produce good establishment results. Field and environmental conditions may not grant you the “ideal” scenario, but the following recommendations for each oilseed crop can be implemented and will hopefully favour good crop establishment and great crops throughout this season.

Canola

Many growers are thinking of switching to canola for their remaining acres and, based on records of crop yield, this may be a good decision to make. According to the MASC data (Table 1), canola yields in the last week of May are still around 100% of potential yield and around 90% in the first week of June. It may not be the biggest canola yield you will ever take off, but getting the crop off to the best start from the time of seeding should mean you should still have an economically profitable crop. MASC seeding deadlines are June 10 – 15th and extended coverage from June 15 – 20th, depending on area.

Table 1: Relative yield (%) of CANOLA by seeding date and region (1989 to 2008).

Seeding Date (week/month)	RR Valley (RA 12, 32)	Eastern (RA 14)	Interlake (RA 15)	South Central (RA 5,10,11)	West Central (RA 4, 6)	Southwest (RA 1,2,3)	Northwest (RA 7,8,9)
01/05	108	109	104	106	105	106	103
02/05	103	109	110	104	106	104	104
03/05	100	104	106	101	102	101	101
04/05	96	92	98	96	98	96	97
01/06	85	86	88	85	89	88	88
02/06	73	81	79	80	80	79	86
03/06	63	78	85	73	69	65	81

Source: Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Seeded Acreage Report Records (1989-2008)
Data represents reported seeding date and crop yields of fields >200 acres

To achieve a better canola crop at later seeding dates, please consider the following;

- Target ½ to 1 inch seeding depth to allow crop to emerge quickly.
- Target your seeding rate to establish the recommended 7 – 14 plants/ft².
 - Lighter seeding rates could mean thinner stands and the potential for further delayed maturity. Spring frost risks may not be a concern right now, but fall frost could be a few months down the road. Now is not the time to skimp on seed!
- Check the maturity of your chosen canola variety.
 - Most canola varieties available are well within the maturity range that we normally experience in Manitoba (94-101 days after seeding). It is not recommended to switch to a Polish canola variety. Polish canola may have earlier maturity by 10 days, but also has lower yields and tend not to have the herbicide tolerant traits we are used to with our current canola varieties.
 - If still concerned with maturity, look in your Seed Manitoba 2009 for the days to maturity (page 43). Then, using a typical first fall frost date, count back the days to maturity to get to the safe seeding date. For example, if the first frost is September 1

on average and maturity of the check variety in the area is 100 days, counting back gives a safe seeding date of May 24. If the variety to be seeded is five days earlier in maturity than the check, this means that in a typical year, seeding up to May 29 would be acceptable for that variety. If the variety does not meet the requirements, ask your local retailer to suggest other suitable varieties. Check your average first fall frost for your area at:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/climate/waa50s00fig5.html>

Flax

Typically flax is one of the last seeded of the traditional crops. If we have an open fall, flax is a crop that can stand and ripen without shelling while other crops such as canola are being harvested. Prolonged exposure to fall weather, though, will reduce the quality of the harvested seed and make it ineligible for a food grade market. MASC data shows flax has good yield potential in the last week of May (Table 2), but yields decline in some areas as the calendar turns to June. MASC seeding deadlines are June 20th for all of Manitoba.

Table 2: Relative yield (%) of FLAX by seeding date and region (1989 to 2008).

Seeding Date (week/month)	RR Valley (RA 12, 32)	Eastern (RA 14)	Interlake (RA 15)	South Central (RA 5,10,11)	West Central (RA 4, 6)	Southwest (RA 1,2,3)	Northwest (RA 7,8,9)
01/05	108	115	118	108	111	109	105
02/05	105	105	116	108	109	102	105
03/05	104	117	112	103	105	104	106
04/05	91	89	96	95	98	98	93
01/06	78	66	72	77	87	85	84
02/06	67	42	61	66	66	71	68
03/06	60	34	NSD	52	49	62	58

Source: Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Seeded Acreage Report Records (1989-2008)
Data represents reported seeding date and crop yields of fields >200 acres. NSD = Not sufficient data

Getting the flax out of ground evenly and a good stand will help later for weed control and evenness in maturity.

- Target ½ - ¾ inch seeding depth to allow crop to emerge quickly
- Don't over fertilize, flax does not respond to higher rates of fertilizer. Excess nitrogen will cause prolonged maturity and potential lodging issues.
- Target a higher seeding rate. Flax depends very heavily on adequate stand establishment and plant populations. Target a seeding rate of 40-45 lbs/ac to ensure there is adequate plant populations for weed competition and evenness in flowering and maturity.

Sunflowers

Manitoba sunflower acres are usually planted later than the other more traditional crops. They have the ability to handle summer heat better than late seeded (and still flowering) canola, and can sit out in the fall while you are harvesting your canola or cereal crops. Third week of May planting of sunflowers is quite common; in other years, producers still plant into the first week of June with good yield and quality. MASC data (Table 3) shows that in most areas, yields still between 90-100% in the fourth week of May. MASC seeding deadlines are June 10th with extended coverage to June 15th for land falling within the sunflower insurance area (check http://www.masc.mb.ca/masc.nsf/crop_seeding_deadlines.html for maps and dates).

Table 3: Relative yield (%) of SUNFLOWER by seeding date and region (1989 to 2008).

Seeding Date (week/month)	RR Valley (RA 12, 32)	Eastern (RA 14)	South Central (RA 5,10,11)	West Central (RA 4, 6)	Southwest (RA 1,2,3)
01/05	102	<i>NSD</i>	106	101	101
02/05	103	106	100	102	103
03/05	104	93	99	98	104
04/05	94	92	98	<i>NSD</i>	101
01/06	78	<i>NSD</i>	82	<i>NSD</i>	86

Source: Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Seeded Acreage Report Records (1989-2008)

Data represents reported seeding date and crop yields of fields >200 acres. *NSD* = Not sufficient data

As sunflower is a long-season crop, quick emergence is critical to having the crop advanced enough to handle fall frosts, and not dramatically reduce yield and seed quality.

- Target a shallower depth of 1 ½ inches for faster emergence
- Plant adequate populations, such as targeting 18,000-20,000 plants/acre for confection type sunflowers and 20,000-22,000 plants/ acre for oilseed types. Ensure you have even plant spacing between plants within the row.
- Check the maturity of your variety; there are early maturing confection and oilseed types sunflowers on the market. If the planting season is quite late for your area, oilseed varieties are recommended over confection types.

For more information, contact:

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