Issue 13 – August 14, 2025

Manitoba Crop Pest Update

Seasonal Reports Weekly Weather Maps Insects

Summary

Insects: **Bertha armyworm** continues to be found at high levels in some canola fields in the Northwest, Southwest and Central regions, with some insecticide applications occurring. **Spider mites** are still a concern on some soybeans in the Eastern and Central regions. Some spraying for spider mites is occurring, mostly as spot sprays. The risk of damage from spider mites will decrease as the soybeans move into the R6 stage. Some insecticide applications for **lygus bugs** and **flea beetles** in canola was reported from the Interlake region. A few canola fields in the Eastern region and a canola field in the Interlake were sprayed for **diamondback moth**. Some field borders have been sprayed for **grasshoppers**, although overall the grasshopper levels are not too high in many areas. Grasshoppers have been damaging some pastures in the Interlake where it has been quite dry.

Weeds: Preharvest desiccation and perennial weed control continue as harvest approaches. Late flushes of weeds or weed escapes from spraying are visible in crop, particularly pigweeds, lamb's quarters and kochia. Waterhemp continues to be found in new fields; investigate all suspicious weeds and contact Manitoba Agriculture for assistance in determining which pigweed species is present. Weed growth in harvested fields should be monitored to plan fall weed control operations.

Entomology

Soybean stages most susceptible to spider mites

A reminder that the stages of soybeans that are most susceptible to spider mites are the R4 (full pod) through R5 (beginning seed – when seeds are filling) stages. Once the soybeans reach R6 (full seed or green bean stage) the feeding from spider mites will have less impact on yield.

Thresholds and canola stages most susceptible to lygus bugs

A threshold of 20-30 lygus bugs per 10 sweeps is suitable for good growing conditions. Using the lower end of the threshold (about 20 per 10 sweeps) may be appropriate for stressed canola with less ability to compensate for feeding.

The most vulnerable crop stage for lygus feeding is after flowering and when seeds are enlarging on lower pods. When most pods become leathery and when seeds inside are firm, lygus bugs can no longer penetrate the pods or seeds with their mouthparts and are no longer an economic threat.

Report compiled by John Gavloski, Kim Brown
Entomologist, Weeds Specialist, Manitoba Agriculture
Subscribe to the weekly Crop Pest Update

Manitoba

The first two instars are not taken into account in the economic threshold calculations, because they do not appear to have the ability to puncture the seed.

For more information on Lygus bugs in multiple field crops, including photos of some different instars, see the Manitoba Agriculture factsheet on "Lygus Bugs in Field Crops": https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/lygus-bugs-factsheet3-revised-february2022.pdf

Larvae being found in canola pods

Some have been finding small larvae when opening up pods of canola. There is more than one type of larvae that can be found in canola pods. More commonly and likely is larvae of cabbage seed pod weevils, which are small (2-3 mm when a mature larva) with a brown head. Many of these, however, will have likely fed on seeds, and exited the pod by now, leaving a small but visible hole in the pod.

Less likely but currently being noticed in pods in some canola fields in the Central region, is larvae of the canola flower midge. Larvae of canola flower midge are initially white but change to yellow as they develop. Sometimes they may be orange, almost looking like a wheat midge larva, but in the wrong crop. They are small larvae that taper towards the front end.

Little is known about canola flower midge, particularly the feeding habits of larvae, and what they are doing in the pods. Recent research appears to show they can lay eggs and develop when there is existing damage on the pods, but it doesn't appear that they can lay eggs into otherwise intact pods.

Weeds

Waterhemp

Be on the lookout for waterhemp as there are more plants being found, some in fields new to waterhemp and many where waterhemp had been found in previous years. Waterhemp is easy to see in crops like soybeans and dry beans because its much taller and is starting to stick out above the crop. Monitor row crops like corn and sunflowers, waterhemp is harder to see in these crops but check field edges, low spots or drains in the field and any area where population is thin or plants are missing. Waterhemp can be found in these areas more easily. Remove any suspicious plants and contact us at MB Ag to determine the species of pigweed present. Do NOT let these plants go to seed in your field.

Preharvest desiccation and weed control

Spraying prior to harvest could be for crop drydown, weed drydown, perennial weed control, or all three. Roundup, Heat, Reglone and glufosinate are registered on various crops, but you must know your market – just because its registered does not mean your buyer will accept it.

Roundup and Heat must be applied when grain moisture is less than 30%, this is the hard dough stage in cereals. For canola the majority of the seeds (80% or more) must have changed color. Adding Heat to Roundup can speed the rate of drydown of crops and green weedy material. Reglone is a desiccant and works quickly, canola seeds must be 90% or more brown before application. Reglone will not speed the maturity of green crops and proper staging is crucial to avoid locking in green seed. Certain glufosinate brands are registered as a harvest aid treatment on some crops, consult the labels and product pages in the 2025 Guide to Field Crop Protection to make sure the brand you're using is registered.

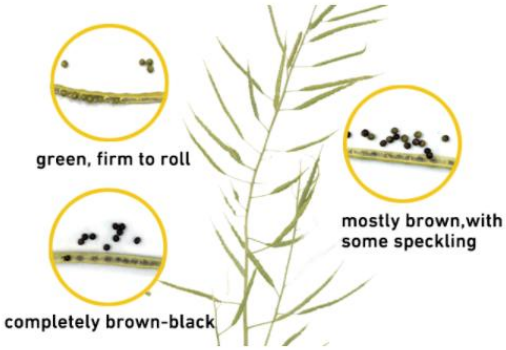
Here are some pictures of correct staging for glyphosate preharvest weed control:

WHEAT

Use the thumbnail test to determine if a kernel is ready for pre-harvest glyphosate application.

- **WHAT TO LOOK FOR:** At less than 30% grain moisture, the kernel is firm and reasonable pressure from your thumbnail leaves a dent (i.e. hard dough stage).
- **RECOMMENDED HARVEST:** 7–14 days after pre-harvest glyphosate application.
- **BE INFORMED:** Wheat **MAY NOT** be accepted if treated with pre-harvest glyphosate – check with your grain buyer before applying. Strictly follow the product label guidelines to minimize scrutiny in the global market place.

CANOLA

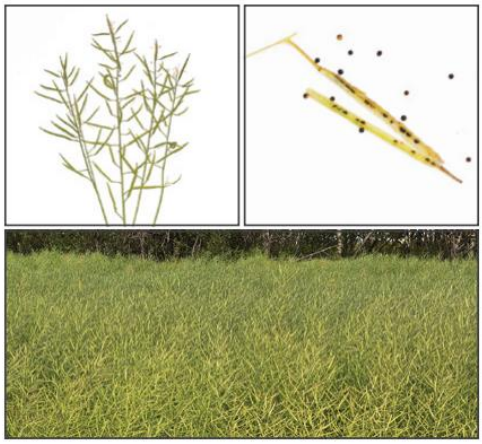


- **WHAT TO LOOK FOR:** By applying pre-harvest glyphosate at 50-60% seed colour change in the least mature areas of the field, growers can be confident grain moisture will be <30% At this stage, seeds in the main stem will be:
  - **Top** = green, firm to roll
  - **Middle** = mostly brown, with some speckling
  - **Bottom** = completely brown/black
- **RECOMMENDED HARVEST:** 7–14 days after pre-harvest glyphosate application.

Optimum timing for Heat application in canola:

Optimal timing

Apply when 80% of seeds have changed colour. Canola timing for application cannot be determined by pod colour. Pods must be opened to determine the amount of seed colour. Canola flowers upwards, so the lowermost pods will contain the first mature seeds, while the upper pods will contain the last maturing seeds. Seeds on the bottom 2/3 to 3/4 of the main receme will have changed from green to dark brown or black in canola.



Manitoba

Optimum timing for Reglone application in canola and peas:

Forecast

Grasshopper survey

A reminder for those participating in the grasshopper survey that counts are done during August, when the majority of grasshoppers are in the adult stage.

Agronomists and farmers who would also be interested in estimating grasshopper numbers in or around any of the fields they are in, and having this information included in the survey, are encouraged to see the survey protocol (at the link below) for more details of the survey and where to send data. Your counts would be welcomed.

Estimates of grasshopper levels can be collected during regular farm visits. "Estimates" of grasshopper populations is stressed as it will not be possible to accurately count grasshoppers along a field edge or ditch area as they will be moving around as you get near the area of the count. But estimates of what is present give us some idea of the relative numbers that are present in different areas.

Data from the survey, along with weather data during the egg laying period of the grasshoppers, will be used to produce a grasshopper forecast for 2026.

The protocol and data sheet for the grasshopper survey is at:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/grasshopper-survey-protocol-revised-2025-07.pdf

Identification Quiz

This caterpillar was found in a flax field. What is it?

Photo by Morgan Cott, Manitoba Crop Alliance

This is a larva of bertha armyworm, *Mamestra configurata*. Many will be more familiar with them as a potential pest of canola. They were a regular pest of flax before canola or mustard were grown on the Prairies. However, since the widespread introduction of the *Brassica* crops, bertha armyworm rarely causes economic damage to weed-free flax fields.

Manitoba

If bertha armyworm infested canola fields are swathed and green flax fields are nearby, flax can be damaged by the larvae.

Bertha armyworm will feed on many broadleaved plants. We saw a lot of bertha armyworm on lamb's quarters around and in a corn field this past week. The corn should be safe, and in this case the heavy lamsb's quarters populations would sustain them. If anyone is growing or scouting quinoa, note that this is another host of bertha armyworm.

To **report observations** on insects, plant pathogens, or weeds that may be of interest or importance to farmers and agronomists in Manitoba, please send messages to one of the following Manitoba Agriculture Pest Management Specialists.

John Gavloski, Entomologist (204) 750-0594
Kim Brown, Weed Specialist (431) 344-0239

Manitoba