



Post Seeding Tasks

By Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota, ON-CCA

By the time you see this note, you would have completed seeding for this season. Immediate task after seeding is to observe the crop emergence for gaps, if any. If you find gaps, try to find the reasons; is it lack of adequate depth of seeding? Or is it trash that inhibited seed to go to proper soil depth? Or do you find some wilting and/or dead seedlings which most likely could be due to seeding diseases (e.g. Rhizoctonia Solani in canola) or even cutworms, especially in corn and canola. Or do you find some plants cut and thrown to the ground, which would sure be due to cutworms. Cutworm feeding may result in notched, wilted, dead or cut-off plants (<https://www.canolawatch.org/2020/05/27/insects-watch-flea-beetles-cutworms/>). Patches of missing plants could also be due to cutworms. Include cutworms on the scouting checklist for the first one to three weeks after emergence. During the day, cutworms usually go back to underground. Therefore, scout late in the day or extremely early in the morning to look for above-ground feeding cutworms. If cutworms are suspected but scouting is a challenge, consider going out in the evening with the backpack sprayer and proper protective equipment to spray a small area around the border of the patch. Check back in the morning to look for cutworms on the soil surface. Spray threshold for cutworms in canola is 25-30% stand reduction, whereas in corn it is when 2-4% of plants are cut below the ground or 6-8% of plants are cut above the soil surface, and cutworms less than one-inch long present.

Seedling diseases and insect pests would lower the plant stand and impact crop yields. If you didn't treat your seed with fungicides/or insecticides (e.g. in canola for protection from flea beetle), make it a practice to treat seeds with appropriate fungicides and insecticides next year(s). Spray threshold for flea beetle in canola is when average leaf area loss reaches 25% or more. Chlorpyrifos (trade name Lorsban) spray control both cutworms and flea beetles (https://www.cropweb.com/assets/files/productdocuments/doc_9B59E78A6E202C6C7B20E243B4AF1D2DE3422299.pdf) and several other insect pests. Flea beetle attack is more common in warm and dry weather. In severe cases, more than one spray may be required. Keep a watch on deadly swede midge attack on canola too. Its larvae eat and may kill the growing points. The larvae feed protected by surrounding plant tissues, and damage symptoms may take a week or more to develop (<https://www.canolacouncil.org/canola-encyclopedia/insects/swede-midge/>). Use a hand lens to detect larvae and early damage symptoms, which can easily be mistaken for heat or cold stress, fertility issues, mechanical damage, herbicide damage, drought or other insect feeding.

Once the cereals have tillered well and canopy has covered the ground, it's time to spray fungicides (e.g. Stratego) to control foliar diseases that could lower leaf area index, weaken the plants and stems and lower the grain and straw yields. Research at LUARS has shown that spraying Manganese Sulphate @ 8kg/ha in canola at 4-6 leaf stage could bring in

seed and straw yield benefits. If you applied less than 180 kg N/ha to canola at seeding, top dress the balance amount of N at 4-5 leaf stage.

Likewise, for cereals if you haven't applied 80 kg N/ha at seeding, apply the rest of the amount of N at tillering. Corn could be supplemented with required N around knee high stage. Keep scouting your crops throughout the growing season to check for any abnormalities/disorder and take appropriate remedial measures timely. Take help from the Certified Crop Advisors, researchers, crop consultants and OMAFRA specialists in your area if need be. They will all be willing to help you.

May you have bumper crops!

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This industry driven program helps ensure that Ontario crop producers are well served by those providing their crop production advice. This article was written by one of those CCA's.