



AGRONOMY UPDATE
AUGUST 2023

HARVEST HEADACHES?



Driving around the country this summer it's not hard to see the negative impact that marginal seedbed moisture had on crop emergence and stand establishment. In early July, it was common to see canola fields in full bloom interspersed with patches that had not yet bolted; or cereal fields fully headed out while the hilltops were still not done tillering. These conditions are inevitably going to lead to some challenging harvest decisions. Judging overall crop maturity will be difficult, but, as you can see in the picture here, handling the heavy weed infestations in the places where the canopy was late to fill in is going to be a problem as well. It is lining up to be one of those years where determining how and when to terminate a crop will be a tough call.

In years like this, pre-harvest decisions get tricky. How to handle flowering weeds such as volunteer canola when the cereals are ready to spray? Which crop stage in the field should be focused on when timing pre-harvest operations? How long should you wait on those parts of the field that may be as much as 2 to 3 weeks behind in maturity? Is the crop so uneven that pre-harvest may not be a viable option and swathing should be considered?

An important thing to keep in mind when you are making all these decisions is the maximum residue limit (MRL) for each pre-harvest herbicide and crop. Using the wrong product at the wrong time is easy to do when you are juggling all the complex management decisions that come with this time of year. And doing so can have unintended consequences when it comes time to market the crop. Make sure you have all the latest information on acceptable crop staging and products before you pull into the field to spray. The best place to find what you need to know is by consulting the "Keep it Clean" website; a joint initiative by the Canola Council of Canada, Cereals Canada, Pulse Canada and the Prairie Oat Growers Association. Every year, they issue a product advisory to let growers know the marketing implications of the products they may use. Just because something is registered does not mean buyers will necessarily accept it! For more information, follow this link to the website; <https://keepitclean.ca/>

It is in the best interests of our entire industry to ensure that we are viewed as a safe and reliable supplier of quality products worldwide. In a fall like the one we seem to have coming, this can be a real challenge and we all need to be cognisant of the rules so we can do our part.

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