



October Agronomy Report

Sidenote this month. My apologies to Wayne and our readers for the garbled draft that went out last month. We had some technical issues with a new service, and it did not send out what it looked like on the test. It was a disappointing start to this change that I hope we have figured out.



As we roll into October, most areas appear to be well over the hump with harvest and thoughts turn to fall field prep for many. And that means residue management. How well we are able to deal with the residue of the 2022 crop will play a major role in how well seeding will go in 2023.

The best residue management starts with the combine. Uniform and wide distribution of straw and chaff residues is essential in direct seeding systems. You must spread residues evenly to avoid or reduce problems such as: equipment plugging; poor seed placement; disease, weed and insect infestations; nutrient tie-up; and cold soil under straw piles.

Many areas in east central Alberta dealt with a lot of lodged wheat crops in 2022 and not all that lodged straw was run through a combine. Wheat produces an amazing amount of crop residue and usually causes producers some problems when seeding canola into wheat stubble in any year. A year where we are dealing with lodging just makes that all the more challenging. This makes it more essential than ever to spread the residue left after harvest evenly across the field, whether by using a heavy harrow or vertical tillage unit.

According to a 3 year study conducted by PAMI on the **Effect of Cereal Crop Residue Distribution on the Following Year's Canola Emergence and Yield**; "without an even residue distribution pattern, there are risks associated with both bare ground as well as clumping behind the chopper. Bare ground can lead to erosion problems and clumped residue that does not break down can lead to an increase in disease, such as Blackleg." I have attached the entire PAMI Project report below for those who want to plow through the whole 76 pages. They did a couple of things I don't understand, such as deliberately setting the factory original chopper poorly and the after-market one properly, but there is a lot of good information here on how the next canola crop emerged and yielded under various residue management strategies.

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61082401ff3126494abf5b5b/t/620cf78e227fef6c8bb9e2dc/1645017000539/CARP_SCDCAFDF_2016-15.Gregg.Long_Report.pdf

There are advantages and disadvantages to both heavy harrows and vertical tillage units, and which works best for you will depend on your soil type, moisture conditions, climate and the amount of residue you generally have to manage. The main message though is that some time spent on residue management this fall will pay dividends at seeding time.



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