

Field Crop Report



Corn: Greg Stewart

Some very limited corn acreage was planted in the April 13 - 15 window. Target corn planting depth should be 3.8 to 5.0 cm (1.5 to 2.0 inches). Planting corn below 5 cm (2 inches) deep under cool soil conditions generally results in unwanted slow germination and emergence. Be sure to double check seeding depth once you have moved off the headland areas. Seeding rates should be adjusted slightly upwards (i.e. 3 - 5%) if planting in cool conditions and/or if the two week forecast is not favourable. For seedbed preparation in a cool/damp spring think shallow and level.

Soybeans: Horst Bohner

Strong prices and a cool spring are expected to drive soybean acres higher this year. Soybeans are frequently planted too deep, especially under no-till and early planting conditions. Aim for a depth of no more than 3.8 cm (1.5 inches). If planting early 2.5 cm (1 inch) is better. Only in dry conditions should you set the planter deeper. The goal is to have good seed-to-soil contact and a closed seed slot. Do not push very early planting unless field conditions are good. Long term research data shows no real yield reductions until planting after May 10 in an average year.



Above: Winter annuals like stinkweed are already flowering in winter wheat.

Cereals: Peter Johnson / Scott Banks

Winter Wheat: Cool temperatures have meant a slow start, with many producers concerned that stands are poorer than desired. However, winter wheat survival is good to excellent, with very few fields destined for replant. About 50% of the acres have had nitrogen applied from April 13th to 15th. Nitrogen application rates are increasing in the province based on the SMART wheat results, with the base rate now 114 kg/ha (100 lbs/ac) and many producers moving to 136 kg/ha (120 lbs/ac). Under-seeded red clover acreage is up significantly, with some areas reporting over 50% of acres under-seeded to red clover, which is up from 15 % just a few years ago.

Emerging Issues: Winter annual weeds are present, with some already flowering. Maintain at least 190 L/ha (20 gal/acre) water volumes to minimize surfactant burn, especially with a fungicide and herbicide tank mix. If forecasted night-time temperatures are below freezing, there is an increased risk of crop injury with herbicide applications. However, yield impacts of this early injury are minimal.

Spring Cereals: Planting intentions for spring wheat are down 10%, with barley and oat intentions remaining flat. Only a few acres of spring wheat were 'frost' seeded this spring due to a very small window for suitable soil conditions. Wet soils have delayed further planting. Early planting of spring cereals is critical, with significant yield losses occurring if planting occurs after April 30th. Seeding rates should be adjusted as seed size varies significantly between varieties. Ideally, seed should be planted at a depth of 2.5 cm (1 inch) for even emergence and more even heading which improves the effectiveness of fusarium control fungicides. Working soil too wet or too deep results in poor planting depth and uneven emergence.

Forages: Joel Bagg

The break in alfalfa dormancy was delayed by the cold weather, and is significantly later than last year. Seeding is also being delayed in many parts of the province. It appears that many older hay fields are being rotated to other field crops and acreage of new seeding is slightly below normal.

Very little alfalfa winterkill has been reported, including the higher risk area of the Ottawa Valley. There have been a few reports of alfalfa heaving. Monitor alfalfa fields, particularly those that showed signs of disease last year but were not rotated to another crop. Also monitor fields that are slow to green-up. Walk these fields and assess alfalfa for plant health, including root and crown disease and heaving. Using a shovel, dig alfalfa roots, rinse them off in a pail, use a knife to cut open the root and crown, and assess plant health. Watch for crown and root rots, brownish discoloration, spongy texture and lack of secondary roots and nodulation. Plant health can be more significant than plant density to a successful yield. The minimum number of healthy plants per square foot should be 12 - 20 for 1st year stands, 8 - 12 plants for 2nd year stands and 5 plants for a 3rd year or older stand. For more information on assessing alfalfa stands in the spring go to www.simplyurl.com/p

Canola: Brian Hall

Very little spring canola acres have been planted. Ideal seeding depth is 1 - 2.5 cm (1/2 - 1 inch). If you see a little seed on the surface this is okay. Deep seeded canola is more prone to emergence issues, disease and insect damage. Pack before planting to help control seeding depth if the seedbed is loose. Packing or harrowing after planting is helpful if soil conditions are very dry. Ensure the soil is fit at tillage depth. Canola is much more sensitive to crusting and emergence issues than cereals. Soil should crumble easily and not form a ball or ribbon when rolled between your fingers. Most soil compaction and damage is done by the first pass over the field. Do not work soils too finely to reduce risk of crusting from heavy rains. Calibrate seeding equipment before heading to the field. Bulking of seed with standard MAP (11-52-0), pelletized sulphur, or corn cob grits are options for improving seeding rate accuracy. Seeding through the grass seed box with the seed tubes inserted into the disc openers is another option. Do not use other fertilizers for bulking canola seed.

Weather Summary



Location	April 12-18 2011	Temperature (°C)		Rainfall	2010 Season: May 1 to Season End	
		Max	Min	(mm)	Rain	CHU
Windsor	2011	11.4	2.7	13	628.3	4020
	30 Yr. Avg.	13	2.6	16.1	482.6	3737
	2011	10.4	1.1	16.3	582.5	3404
London	30 Yr. Avg.	12.1	1.7	34.7	497.3	3138
	2011	9.8	0.6	17.4	533.4	3151
Outdoor Farm Show	30 Yr. Avg.	11.9	1.5	17	510.6	3167
	2011	8.1	2.1	25.5	619.7	3332
Hamilton	30 Yr. Avg.	11.7	1.6	15.3	469.7	3192
	2011	8.6	-0.2	15.9	612.4	3122
Elora	30 Yr. Avg.	11.4	0.9	31.3	501.1	2925
	2011	8.1	-1.2	12.4	690.7	3009
Mount Forest	30 Yr. Avg.	11	0.6	29.8	504.4	2870
	2011	8.5	-0.2	23.2	458.3	2975
Peterborough	30 Yr. Avg.	11.3	0.5	28.5	436.4	2755
	2011	8.7	0.8	35.2	478.6	3393
Trenton	30 Yr. Avg.	11.4	0.8	14.9	440.2	3075
	2011	7.5	0.1	32	611.1	3298
Ottawa	30 Yr. Avg.	11.6	0.9	13.6	503.1	3162

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