



Guidelines for Direct Harvesting Canola with Pod-Ceal™

The following are some key steps to consider when direct harvesting your canola. This decision and process should start before planting, to give you the maximum return on your investment.

1) SETTING YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Pod-Ceal and direct harvesting are management tools to help increase your profits. They are not silver bullets and need some careful consideration and management to reach their optimum potential.

2) VARIETY SELECTION

Choosing a variety that will give you the best stand and knit together may help reduce pod loss. Growers have reported varying degrees of pod drop on different varieties. Currently we do not have enough data to make specific variety recommendations.

3) PLANT STAND

A high seeding rate and early weed control will give you a heavy, even stand. The maturity will be more even and there will be fewer green weeds and immature plants at harvest time.

4) APPLICATION TIMING

Flex Test – Pods will still bend and crack, not split and burst when bent 90 degrees. The seeds on the main stem will be about 40-50% colour turn at this stage. The field will be turning from a dark green to a lime green colour. This is the optimum time in the application window for Pod-Ceal application.

5) WATER VOLUME

Maximum coverage ensures maximum effectiveness- 50 L/ha by air, or 150 L/ha for a ground rig. This volume of water can force its way to the bottom pods and wrap them in coverage as well.

6) TEMPERATURE AND MOISTURE

Very hot temperatures during application can evaporate some water between sprayer and pod, decreasing coverage.

A heavy dew or light rain does not affect Pod-Ceal, they may even help coverage.

7) CHOOSING TO USE A DESICCANT

A desiccant such as glyphosate, applied at the same time as Pod-Ceal may speed maturity and control problem weeds. Quick acting contact desiccants work too fast. The purpose of Pod-Ceal is to extend the harvest window and let the plants ripen naturally.

8) WINDROWING VS DIRECT HARVESTING

If windrowing is delayed due to weather conditions, (thin stand, hail damage) make sure that you do not

pass the point of no return. If you must windrow, try to do it when moisture conditions will help reduce pod loss (dew, light rain).

9) HEADER TYPE AND SET UP

All header types have been shown to be usable for direct harvesting (auger and draper fronts).

Managing and adjusting your header angles to suit your crop must be done to suit your crop conditions.

Some tips on header set up include:

- a) Tilting the table forward may help feeding;
- b) Pushing the reel back from the knife and high (fingers preferred and spaced wide);
- c) Reel speed to match ground speed;
- d) Ground speed should be slow enough to prevent shattering at the cutter bar;
- e) Ensure belt speed maintains flow and no build up as shatter losses may occur;
- f) For draper headers, ensure no gaps between transition areas from the drapers to the feeder house;
- g) Lower fan speeds reduce seed losses from the back of the header;
- h) Best crop separation occurs when pods are slightly moist so consider harvesting during the early morning or late afternoon/evening or on cloudy days; and
- i) If a pea auger is on your header, it may help to turn this on.

10) HARVEST MONITORING

A good way to collect a canola sample in a standing field is to perform a bag test. Strip pods from 15-20 plants from around the field and put them into a bag or pouch. Rough up the bag to break open the pods. Remove the straw and chaff to collect your canola sample. Run moisture test on sample.

11) HARVEST TIMING (see also next page)

When the canola is 8% moisture, it's time to harvest! Standing Canola should be your top priority when it is ready. The pods may feel tough, and the stalks will probably show some green. This is the optimum time to harvest your canola, when the seeds are ready, not when the plant is dry. Dry plants can lose more seed to shatter and pod drop. Very dry canola will have a greater chance of shattering, and does not feed as well into the header.





DETERMINING WHEN THE CROP IS READY TO HARVEST

Timing for direct harvesting in canola for the first time is often a challenging prospect. It is vital that the crop be evaluated that first time rather closely until growers are comfortable with determining the proper harvest window. Determining the optimum window for direct harvesting is slightly more difficult than the decision to windrow. Routine moisture tests are required to find that window when seed moisture is approximately 8%. Visual evaluation of pod colour and flexibility, in conjunction with moisture evaluation provide the best guide to determining the optimum harvest window. When ripe to direct harvest, the crop needs to be harvested as soon as practical to maximize yield and quality.

Direct harvest decisions need to be timed to maximize yields.

MOISTURE MANAGEMENT TO MAXIMIZE HARVEST

Watch the crop closely, as the grain will ripen quickly when allowed to stand to physiological maturity. It is important to harvest at 8% moisture, and not harvest when moisture levels drop too low.

Grain harvested at 5% is not only too dry, but a yield loss for the grower.

Harvesting in the morning or later in the afternoon if grain moisture drops too low may help to maintain optimum harvest moisture levels. This strategy can allow growers to combine cereals or other crops during that window when canola moisture levels might not be optimum. This can maximize harvest efficiency by allowing for more combining hours in a day.

Keys to Harvest Moisture Testing

Performing a Harvest Moisture Test.

Collect random samples from within the field by raking upward with your hand on the main stem, and place the pods in the Harvest Moisture Test bag.

When you have collected enough pods to fill the bag close the top and shell the pods by pressing on the bag.

The seeds will fall to the bottom of the bag and the empty pods can easily be removed from the bag. Pour the grain into a moisture tester to determine moisture for harvest.



Key Points:

- ***The seed should be ripe and black, while the pods should be tan in colour;***
- ***The stalks can have a mint green colour, but will be easily harvested;***
- ***Seeds in pods will be drier than stalks. Do not let green stalks confuse the decision to Direct Harvest.; and***
- ***Begin direct harvest when moisture level is approximately 8% (but do not let moisture fall too low).***



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