

PreHarvest Products Can Help with Canola Harvest

by Brian Hall, OMAFRA Canola Specialist

Green stalks, perennial weeds, and uneven ripening can all be a problem at harvest and might be more of an issue in a year like 2011 where we had so much late planted canola. Delays in harvest can result in significant pod shelling and reduced yields. Some don't like the idea of tramping the crop to apply a preharvest product. However pre-harvest product application can speed crop dry down and allow for timely harvest reducing shattering losses. Waiting for stalks to dry down or the other 20% of the field to be ready, can result in low seed moisture in other parts of the field, pod shatter and increased header loss.

Why Apply a Pre-harvest Product?

- faster combining due to dry down of canola and weeds,
- perennial weed control with glyphosate application,
- “evening” out of crop dry down,
- facilitates harvest timing,
- protects crop quality.

If you are direct harvesting, a pre-harvest replaces many of the benefits of swathing.



Which Product?

It is important to keep in mind what you are trying to achieve in selecting the correct product. You can either have good perennial weed control or you can have rapid desiccation of the crop but not both. Glyphosate (e.g. Roundup) is advantageous where perennial weeds are an issue. Glyphosate moves throughout the plant including the root system killing the plant and leading to gradual plant dry down. Under droughty, cool or wet weather, this process can take up to three weeks. Reglone on the other hand, is a true desiccant that works by

disrupting plant cells and leading to rapid dry down of plants and weeds. Reglone acts like a designer frost. So if the crop will be ready to harvest within 7 -10 days and a quick burnoff is required to dry down plants and weeds, choose Reglone. Coverage is critical with Reglone as it must have contact activity. In lodged crops it will be difficult to get good coverage of plants under the canopy. If applying any pre-harvest chemicals prior to harvest with ground rig sprayers, the use of crop dividers can reduce the amount of crop loss due to trampling and shattering. In addition, traveling back and forth in the direction of the prevailing crop lean will further reduce losses.

When to Apply?

The most important thing to keep in mind is the crop must be mature before a harvest-aid product is applied. Products won't directly speed up the maturity of plants, or lower seed moisture content.

They do however, shorten the time between crop maturity and harvest, lowering the risk of a killing frost or weather damage. – *Cont'd on pg 7*

	Glyphosate	Reglone
Harvest Timing	10 -21 days (7 day min after application)	5-7 days
Mode of Action / Benefits	Translocation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of perennial weeds • Will not dry down RR Canola • Don't use on canola intended for seed 	Contact – activated by sunlight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast acting - “Designer frost” • Target application within 7-14 days of harvest. • Plants are more susceptible to breakdown and pod shatter if harvest is delayed.
Application Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply when 60-70% of seeds have changed from green to light tan – brown. At this stage seed moisture is 30% • <i>If application is too early, seed residues may occur and quality of seed and yield is reduced</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply when 60-70% of seeds on plant have turned brown. Note it is later than when 75% of seed on main stem has changed colour. • Applying in evening or on cloudy days allows time for product to spread over surface of leaf and stems before sunlight activates the product providing better desiccation. • Consider using higher rate with dense crop canopy, high weed pressure. • Water volume and rate are key to coverage and efficacy.
Rainfast	6 hours	15 minutes