



# SCOUTING TIPS

Scouting is a critical information tool for the detection and subsequent management of all pests (insects, weeds and diseases).

## UNDERSTAND THE COMMON PESTS OF THE CROP(S) YOU ARE GROWING

- **Know the lifecycle of each pest**
  - » i.e. An insect that overwinters as pupae in the soil or a summer annual weed
- **Know how the pest spreads in a field**
  - » i.e. A disease that spreads by rain splash or a crawling insect
- **Know the environmental conditions that encourage each pest's development**
  - » i.e. Warm and damp or hot and dry
- **Know the crop stage when the damage is most likely to have the biggest impact**
  - » i.e. Canopy closure for a disease in a row crop or a weed germinating at crop emergence
- **Know the pest life stage that will most likely affect the crop**
  - » i.e. Larval or adult stage of an insect
- **Know what damage symptoms look like for each pest**

## MAKE A SCOUTING/MONITORING PROGRAM PART OF THE DAILY/WEEKLY ROUTINE

- **Stay connected with provincial or regional monitoring programs that may give you a heads up on emerging pests (i.e. leek moth/swede midge/brown marmorated stink bug)**
- **Keep records of pest monitoring activities, even when nothing is found**
  - » Including crop stage, weather conditions, time of day, pests found (at what stage) and damage seen
- **Increase scouting frequency during times of higher risk (disease outbreaks, favourable conditions, etc.)**

- **Make sure you are scouting each field in a random pattern**
  - » Don't just scout next to the truck
- **Use established monitoring techniques for each pest**
  - » i.e. a "W" pattern for weeds or correctly placed sticky traps for certain insects
- **Understand the orientation and features of each field to understand potential problem areas**
  - » Prevailing wind direction
  - » Wet areas within a field
  - » Field topography
  - » Where pests have occurred in previous years
- **Look for anomalies in the crop and new pests**
  - » i.e. discoloration in the crop or strange growth habits of the crop
- **Check field borders and areas around fields for immigrating pests**

Finally, scouting is just an information gathering tool. It allows the farmer to make informed decisions about pest control and crop health. Quite often, the direct result of scouting is a closer look at a particular pest problem. The decision to control that pest or do nothing has to be based on all the information collected and the chance that pests will cause an economic impact on the crop. Without a good scouting program, farmers can easily miss a pest outbreak or apply a control product when it is not needed.

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