

Early morning best time to spray fungicides: trials

by Barb Glen

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Hot, dry southern Alberta weather has kept crop diseases generally at bay this year. However, a disease crop walk hosted by Farming Smarter on July 30 drew farmers and industry personnel. | Barb Glen photo

Fungicides might have best effect when applied in the early morning or at night, according to preliminary research data.

The best timing for chemical spraying is being studied by the Farming Smarter applied research group in Lethbridge and by other research partners in Lacombe, Alta., and Peace River, Alta.

Trials indicate early morning is the worst time to spray herbicides for best effect, but fungicides are proving to be different.

“(With fungicides) we’re spraying at a different time of year,” said Farming Smarter general manager Ken Coles during a July 30 crop walk.

We tend to spray our fungicide in July when it’s hot, and our findings so far have been showing early morning fungicide application looks like the best chance of success.”

Coles said researchers speculate that fungicides are only partially systemic and don’t move through plants as herbicides do.

“Maybe by spraying early in the morning or even at night when you have that heavy dew, that dew could be helping distribute the fungicide deeper into the canopy, helping control the areas that tend to be the spots where infections are coming on.”

This season will provide a third year of data on spray timing, so Coles noted results are preliminary. Trials are being conducted on peas, barley, wheat and canola.

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