

# Between the Rows

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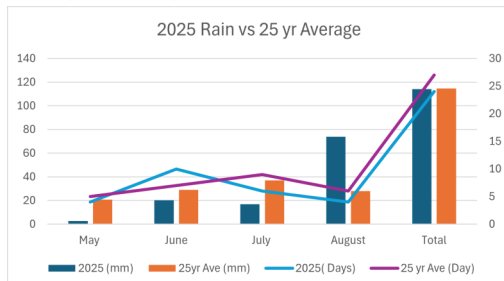
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## Season Moisture Situation: Hero to Zero

Everyone knows that timing is everything. Score 4 goals in 4 pre-season games, okay, great. Score 4 OT winners in the Stanley Cup Final and you're a hero. So it's not how much you score, but when. The same goes for moisture in a growing season. Since May we have received 112.8mm of rain in Fort Vermilion, the 25 year average: 113.8mm. How about days with rain (above 0.1mm). In 2025 24, 25 year average 27. So why is it so dry? We are getting the same amount of

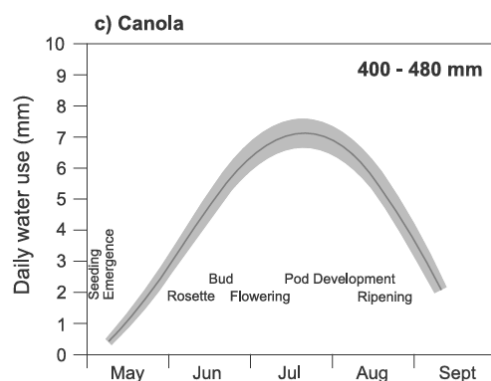
rain as the 25 year average. It's all about timing. You need rain at the right growth stages when crop demand is the highest. Canola water demands range from 2-8mm/day, peaking just after flowering, about 8mm/day.

This year from June 7th to June 25th (rosette stage to mid-flowering) we received 3.5mm of rain in 3 rain events. That means the 8mm of water our canola required each day had to come from soil moisture



rain in almost the same amount of days as our 25 year average.

But to be a "hero" crop it's not how much or even



## Bertha Armyworms: Update

Bertha armyworms have been out and doing some damage to our canola. However headlands and lamb's quarters escape area have seen the most damage. In the fields that I have recommended spraying, economic thresholds have only been exceeded in these areas. By only spraying these areas we can control them there and keep these berthas from moving into the better parts of the field.

Once the canola pods get leathery and hard, berthas can no longer feed on them, so spraying after this point does not protect yield, and is of no economic benefit.

Almost all canola fields will have a few bertha

armyworms, but at levels well below the 20/m<sup>2</sup> threshold. By not spraying fields or parts of fields below the economic threshold, we are providing a host for natural population control agents like viruses, fungi and parasitic wasps. If we spray when levels are below economic thresholds we are not only wasting money but prolonging the berthas high population portion of their natural 7



Bertha armyworm life cycle



Dr Keith Downey of

## History of Canola

*B. rapa* Polish canola

WWII Warships



A couple of bucks in canola

## Misinformation about canola

# Agronomy Focus: History of Canola

My main topic this week is the history of canola. The story of canola is a Canadian success story. It is a joint effort of plant researchers and farmers in Canada that transformed the rapeseed plant into a canola plant to produce the most healthy cooking oil in the world.

Rapeseed was brought over from Europe by farmers who emigrated to the Canadian Prairies in the early 1900's. The rapeseed plant thrived in our cooler summers, however the oil was not suitable for use as a cooking oil. It was however an excellent lubricant. Fun fact: rapeseed oil sticks to wet metals, so production soared during WWII and Canadian rapeseed oil helped the Allies win. After WWII researchers led by Dr Robert Downey of Ag Canada went to work on rapeseed, first they tackled the health aspects by lowering the long chain fatty acids, then painstakingly breeding out erucic acid by 1973. The result was "Canola" trademark to define this new oil and meal.

At this time there were 2 species of the crop *Brassica napus* (Argentine) and *B. rapa* (Polish). The Argentine-type being higher yielding but longer maturity, the Polish: shorter maturing but lower yielding. By the mid 70's research continued to develop new varieties that enhanced the nutrition content of the meal produced in the oil extraction process. By the late 80's Europe and Australia were now using Canadian germplasm to develop their own canola-quality varieties.

In the mid 90's researchers with seed companies developed 3 types of canola resistant to certain herbicides. Monsanto developed "Roundup-Ready", Aventis (Bayer) developed "Liberty-Link" and Pursuit-Smart developed by Cyanamid (now BASF). These traits gave farmers the ability to expand acres, improve weed control and grow higher yields. In 1995 Monsanto (now Bayer) released Quest, Cyanamid (now BASF) released 45A71 and Aventis released Innovator and Independence. Since 1995 100's of varieties have been released as we continue to improve traits.

## Misinformation about canola

As I was researching our proud Canadian history of canola, I came across several misinformation links designed to frighten people about using canola oil. One common theme, focuses on the fact that canola oil was designed to lubricate ships. Of course the lame-brained idiots that spread this information actually got it backwards as you seen in my history of canola. Another common theme is that canola is not a separate species, since it's actually the same species as rapeseed, which is technically true, but of course we know the difference. Of course there's also the general fear these people like to spread over genetically modified plants and Monsanto's plan to take over the world. Well GMO canola is here, it's safe and in fact Monsanto not only didn't take

over the world, it was forced to sell out.

Finally there's the mis-information by RFK Jr. that beef tallow is the only source of cooking oil you should use. The common thread with all of these fiction-spreaders is they all have an agenda that doesn't align with scientific fact. So be wary of misinformation from agenda-driven inter-

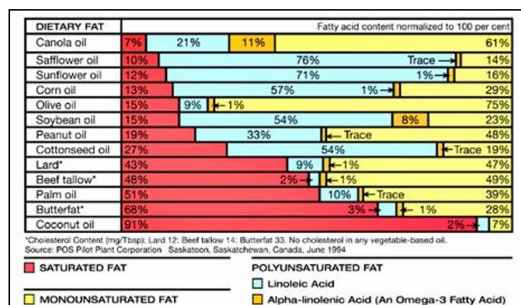


Figure 2. Comparison of dietary fats.

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