

...FROM THE DESK OF  
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## BETWEEN THE ROWS

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# Book Soil Testing for 2024

Even with harvest just beginning, it is already time to plan for next year.

We offer comprehensive soil testing packages complete with results analysis and nutrient recommendations for your 2024 crop.

I will begin soil sampling once the soil temperature has cooled to 10°C. The soil temperature needs to cool down to ensure accurate results not skewed by soil microb activity.

We offer both instantaneous scanner results and/or can also send samples to A&L Labs.

I will analyze the results and create a customized nutrition plan specific to each field or your entire farm.

To book your soil samples call Sherri at the Office (780) 927-2767.



# Harvest Progress

Harvest is progressing well here. A majority of the peas have already been combined and work is beginning on barley. Yields are generally down from last year, however, considering many fields did not have significant rainfall until mid July, yields are surprisingly good. Speaking of those July rains; 4" in some areas, could you have imaged the crops we could have had if they had been 3 weeks earlier.

This late season moisture has caused some issues with uneven maturity in most fields, especially canola (which I will discuss in the next article). While every field needs to be treated individually,

I suggest evaluating several factors:

1. Date (not on the calendar, but estimated days to frost)
2. Majority Maturation stage in the field. What stage is the majority at.
3. If I swath or combine today: what are the possible adverse effects. Green seed, high moisture, hard to combine. Will I have the added cost of drying or lower quality grain.
4. Perennial weeds: Is there a significant population of Canada thistle. If so,

should I do a preharvest, what are the chances of a post-harvest?

5. Logistics: Do you have to swath or combine this particular field sooner then you'd like in a perfect world, simply to get it done. A field harvested at slightly the wrong time is always better than one not harvested at all.

Temptation is always great to swath or combine the minute your neighbors does, don't.

Stop. Evaluate each field and develop a plan.



## Berthas

# Bertha Update

Last year I found only one field with Bertha Armyworms, way down south on Highway 88, this year Berthas were found in numerous fields. The majority of the fields were south of the river, but they were found as far north and west as High Level.

So its clear that we are on a upswing of a Bertha cycle. However it is important to note that none of the fields I found them in required chemical control. For the most part in fields where Berthas were located, they were in small patches and below economical thresholds.

The good news, our natural defenses against a Bertha outbreak seem to be holding populations down. In those fields with Berthas subsequent scouting showed almost all worms were dead, dying of a natural fungus. By not spraying this year, we kept up the level of this fungus by providing them a host.

I also noted that Berthas really like



Dead Bertha, killed by fungus



Another Dead Bertha.

Lamb's Quarters. In fields that had issues with Lamb's Quarters, and there were many, Berthas concentrated on the weeds. They also concentrated on late flowering canola.

For next year, we can expect an increase in Bertha numbers, Berthas can however be reduced if we get colder soils ( $<-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) before we get snow. This can kill overwintering pupae. But Berthas will definitely be on our radar screens for next season.



Bertha on lamb's quarters

## Uneven Canola Maturity

# Uneven Canola Maturity

Canola is called an indeterminate plant, meaning it will continue to flower if conditions are favorable. This has lead to uneven maturity in most of our canola fields this year. This can present several challenges when it comes to determining when to swath, or straight cut, if an pre-harvest treatment is necessary, and the potential for green seed.

Swathing is one of the historical tools we have used to deal with uneven maturity. When you swath a field the less mature plants will dry out and immature seeds will pepper out the back of the combine. Swathing should be done 60% of the seeds have started to change color.

Straight cut varieties of canola have given us the option to either delay swathing or straight cut. With these varieties you can wait and swath at 80% seed color change without suffering significant shatter losses.

Things to remember:

1. Don't swath just because your neighbor is.
2. Pod color change may not always indicate seed color change.
3. Don't swath at temperature above  $27^{\circ}\text{C}$ , it can lock the green in the seed.
4. Glyphosate does not dry a plant, it simply kills it. Heat has some dry down, but only Reglone is a true desiccant.

