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The Windssock

2009 Alberta Pest Report

WHEAT MIDGE REPORT

The [Alberta wheat midge forecast](#) for 2009 shows a decrease in the intensity of wheat midge in Alberta. Following the extreme forecast for 2008 risk levels are much lower going into the new crop year. This reduction in midge risk has also occurred in [Saskatchewan](#). There exists enough midge over widely separated areas that individual fields could still be at risk. **Producers throughout the midge area will need to monitor their fields closely in 2009.** High levels of midge were found in irrigated wheat in Newell County.

The forecast is not intended to take the place of individual field monitoring. Even though the forecast for Alberta shows elevated risk of midge damage over a wide range, populations in individual fields can be highly variable. Producers should plan to monitor their fields when the midge adults are flying and the wheat is in the susceptible stage. **In all areas where wheat midge is present growers are urged to monitor wheat fields during the susceptible period (when the wheat head becomes visible as the boot splits until mid-flowering (anthesis)).** Regular field scouting on multiple nights in succession is important to understand the population in a particular field. Temperature and wind play critical roles in egg-laying of the adult female midge.

It is important to note that once midge

has established in an area it is unlikely to ever completely disappear. Low lying and moist areas in a field provide a refuge, enabling the population to survive even when conditions are not favorable in the rest of the field. These low level populations, however, help sustain a population of natural enemies.

The distribution of wheat midge as illustrated in the 2009 Forecast Map is based on cocoons present in soil samples collected in a 2008 fall survey. Although a number of factors influence over-wintering survival of the midge, the survey and map provide a general picture of existing densities and the potential for infestation in 2008. Climatic conditions, mainly temperature and moisture, will ultimately determine the extent and timing of midge emergence during the growing season.

Updates of current conditions and wheat midge emergence will be available through the Ag-Info Centre (310 FARM) during the 2009 growing season. Wheat Midge map is located online at: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm12506/\\$FILE/wheat-midge-lg.gif](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm12506/$FILE/wheat-midge-lg.gif)

CLUBROOT REPORT

Clubroot is a serious soil-borne disease of canola and is considered a declared pest under Alberta's *Agricultural Pests Act*. It is not a new disease

in Canada or Alberta; however, it is just in the last few years that it has been found in a number of counties in Alberta. Clubroot continues to spread and is a significant concern for Alberta producers. Clubroot map is located online at:

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm11821/\\$FILE/ab_clubroot_08_map.gif](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm11821/$FILE/ab_clubroot_08_map.gif)

GRASSHOPPER REPORT

The potential risk of economically significant grasshopper populations in 2009 has decreased throughout most of Alberta, including part the Peace region. The 2009 Alberta grasshopper forecast map shows low populations of grasshoppers throughout much of central and southern Alberta. There are, however, areas of southern and eastern Alberta and the Peace region that have elevated risk. Based on this survey and the extended warm fall which allowed ample time for egg laying these areas are poised for a resurgence of grasshoppers in 2009.

Areas indicated with moderate to severe risk could experience problems with grasshoppers if environmental conditions favor the hatching and development of grasshoppers in late May through June. Localized factors such as light soils or south facing slopes result in an elevated risk of grasshopper infestations. *Continued on Page 3 2009 Alberta Pest Report*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY MARK KINNIBURGH

I would like to use this forum to thank our Past President, Tom Kinniburgh, for his dedication and commitment to advancing the 4A's agenda during the past several years . Thanks are also in order to our three departing Board members; Fran de Kock , Clark Oberholtzer , and Darren Tiede. Elections at our 2008 A.G.M. provided two new Board members, Shaun Kinniburgh and Pat Stinnesson. Thank you for your commitment and welcome to the Board. I chaired my first Board meeting at Wetaskiwin on Feb.5th. The meeting primarily concerned final planning for the upcoming CAAA conference. Thanks to above average support for our 2008 A.G.M. auction, coupled with a donation from the Wild Rose Fund, the 4 A's posted a welcome surplus in 2008; may it continue in 2009! Another interesting development was an aircraft advertising concept proposed by Greg Scott to raise revenue for the 4 A's; stay tuned for more information. Our Alberta CAP clinic will be at Taber. (conducted by Dr. Dennis Gardisser). Dates will be announced ASAP; if your plane requires calibration in 2009 don't miss this rare opportunity. If any member has an issue they would like addressed by the Board please contact myself, or any other Board member, and we will do our best. I'm cautiously optimistic 2009 will be another profitable year for aerial applicators. Although commodity prices have retreated from last years heights, historically they remain at respectable levels, with the added bonus of falling fuel and fertilizer prices. Agriculture may not be recession proof; but few North Americans consider eating a luxury! The world continues to add 84 million new people to feed annually. Biofuel mandates support higher farm gate prices. Canola prices will continue to be positively affected both by the desire to limit trans-fats and the

resumption of exports to the European Union. Alberta had the privilege of hosting the 23rd CAAA AGM at Kananaskis from Feb.26th - 28th. Thank you Clark Oberholtzer and Darren Tiede for co-chairing the convention. Clark performed his M.C. duties flawlessly as usual. In fact, when a miscommunication delayed buses booked to transport us to the icebreaker, Clark & Jill rounded up volunteer drivers, who proceeded to deliver everyone safely 12 minutes ahead of schedule! Hats off to Jill Lane and the Managewise team (Joy, Holly, and Shauna) for smoothly managing the logistical challenges executing an AGM in a remote location presents. My lone complaint was the organic squash masquerading as ravioli served at the Awards Luncheon! Our opening speaker, Mr. Gordon Welsby, discussed human factors in aviation. Steps to reduce fatigue included maintaining stable blood sugar levels by consuming several small meals daily, and remaining hydrated by having water available in the cockpit. A method measuring potential sleep deprivation was outlined whereby every hour of sleep accumulated two points and subsequent hours awake subtracted one point from your total. The C.A.I.R. safety seminar was moderated by Dr. Dennis Gardisser and focused on avoiding wirestrikes and flight into terrain. I was embarrassed my hand wasn't raised when he asked how many student pilots were in the room; more humility apparently is in order. The California pilot whose M.O. includes assuming every object in a field to be sprayed has a power line running to it, until PROVEN otherwise, made perfect sense to me. Our icebreaker that evening was situated at the Boundary Ranch and featured a delicious BBQ supper served cowboy style, and the musical styling's of dueling pianists. Fran and Pat de Kock's grand daughters, Kiefer and Mackenzie provided the evenings best musical moment with a pitch perfect rendition of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. We'll watch for you both on Canadian Idol in a few years!

*Continued on Page 3**President's Report***QBAS****Queen Bee Air Specialties, Inc.**

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During the Exhibitor sessions it was encouraging to see several new products registered for aerial application. In the past two years I've noticed the addition of Infinity, Velocity, Horizon NG, Refine SG, Signal, Quilt, Pod-Stik and Pod-Ceal to our growing arsenal. Our new President, Peter Hanson, will attempt to build on these positive developments by lobbying Monsanto for an expanded Roundup label. Moving on to the AGM portion of the convention; Transport Canada's proposed SMS regulations have not been finalized for 702 operators. Publication is scheduled for September 2009 with a tentative 18 month phase in period. Stay tuned, but don't hold your breath unless blue is your favorite color! A troubling development is the investigation and charging by Transport Canada of operators unfortunate enough to have had a wire strike in 2008. The regulation, until recently unenforced, concerns wirestrikes "causing undue hazard or harm to persons on the ground". Two operators in Alberta have been affected with at least one case pending in Saskatchewan. There were approximately 400 ground based wirestrikes in Saskatchewan last year and only 4 reported aerial strikes. Math was never my strong suit, but one percent of wirestrikes doesn't seem to justify Transport's interest in singling out aerial applicators! No one hits a line on purpose, and as Fran stated at the AGM, the cost of repairing a damaged aircraft coupled with the subsequent loss of revenue is punitive enough without adding charges and fines to the equation. The issue has and will continue to be addressed by the CAAA board. The highlight of the Awards Luncheon (besides the squash) was Denny Striga's succinct speech accepting the M.V.P. award. Well done Denny; I couldn't have said it better myself. The C.A.I.R. AGM brought few surprises. Higher accident numbers was likely indicative of the total hours flown in 2008. Here's hoping our portfolio performance and accident numbers both improve in 2009. Our final credit session concerned glyphosate application technology and was presented by Dennis Gardisser. Participants became officially qualified to apply Vantage and Touchdown, pre-harvest. We learned the three factors most influential in minimizing drift; the pilot, droplet size, and release height. I learned I should be flying GMXO higher (10-12 foot release height) to reduce drift. It was interesting to learn that turbine ag planes drift less than piston ag planes due to the propeller being located further from the spray area. Overall the AGM was an excellent opportunity to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and keep informed of the many changes and challenges affecting our dynamic industry. Congratulations to Fran de Kock on the completion of a successful term as CAAA President. Fran has been a friend and mentor to myself, and countless other young pilots through the years. He's an example of a true ag-aviation professional, worthy of emulation. I'll leave you with a quote by Antoine de Saint-Exupery ; " I fly because it releases my mind from the tyranny of petty things ". Best of luck with your spring preparations; may we all escape tyranny and return to the sky.

Continued from Page 1

The 2009 grasshopper forecast map is based on adult grasshoppers counts conducted in early August of 2008 by [participating Agriculture Fieldmen](#) across the province. These adult counts give an indication of the number of adults at the end of the season that are capable of reproduction and egg laying. Environmental factors can result in higher or lower actual populations than forecast. Individual producers need to be aware of the potential risks in their area and monitor fields in order to be prepared to make the appropriate decisions to implement control measures. Infestation levels in individual fields are NOT indicated in the forecast map.

On individual farms, particular attention should be paid to areas that traditionally have higher grasshopper populations. In addition, grasshoppers tend to lay their eggs near areas of green growth in the fall that will provide potential food sources for emerging young the following spring. Areas with early green plant growth such as field margins, fence-lines and roadsides are also areas that will give early indications of potential grasshopper problems.

For more information on grasshoppers and their management contact the Ag-Info Centre at 310-FARM (3276). [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm12509/\\$FILE/hopper-lg.gif](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm12509/$FILE/hopper-lg.gif)

Think Bees!

Spring is upon us and the push will soon be on for farmers to get their crops in. The drive is also on for Alberta's beekeepers to get our hives up to strength for the upcoming honey and pollination season. Our industry has been appreciative of the positive communication with the Alberta Aerial Applicators, and we hope to continue that trend in the upcoming year. It is always of concern to us when aerial spraying is happening in fields where we have bees. If it is possible for the spraying to be done before 7 am or after 7 pm in those fields it would greatly reduce the chance of accidental kill. It would also be appreciated if you know you are spraying in a field with honey bees, either you the applicator or the farmer that you are spraying for, could get in touch with the beekeeper. Feel free to contact me if there are any questions during the upcoming season.

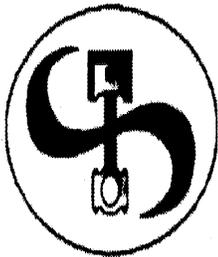
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