

With respect to foliar fungicide, only Headline EC is registered for control of PasmO, the most common disease affecting flax in southeast Saskatchewan. But producers frequently question the potential return on investment for fungicide application on flax. Without third-party data, it is difficult for producers to distinguish which conditions are most conducive to fungicide applications and which of the available products will be the most effective.

Field trials completed in recent years near Indian Head and Swift Current have shown a consistent response to fungicide applications (0.16 L/ac Headline at full flowering) on flax. While fungicide did not provide a statistically significant yield benefit in the absence of disease, there was a tendency for higher yields and prolonged maturity with fungicide application.

While flax does appear to respond well to a fungicide application in certain environments, we have not achieved the desired benefits in cases where disease is not present or other factors are more limiting to yield. The data suggests that growers should still inspect their crop for PasmO at the early flowering stage and base the decision to spray on whether or not the disease is present and environmental conditions are conducive of the development of disease. Leaving check strips and comparing yield response between treated and untreated strips will allow producers who spray a fungicide on their flax, or any crop, to confirm that the practice is in fact cost effective.

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