PRECISION PLACEMENT OF CANOLA

Introduction:

Canola seed prices keep increasing over time, and it has become a major input into a canola crop. If producers are able to regulate the amount of seed they need to produce a crop without impacting their yield, their bottom line will be improved. Canola, being such a plastic species, is well-known for being able to expand the size of the individual plant with additional branching and only a slight increase of its maturity. Precisely placing seed, rather than it being randomly interspersed with traditional seeding methods, should make the best use of each individual seed put in the ground.

Precision placement of canola seed appears to be one way of ensuring plants are well spaced and it maximizes the chance of a top-notch canola crop. GRO was fortunate enough to purchase a versatile two row planter that can precision place seeds of all sizes, from canola to corn, and we wanted to determine if ideal seed spacing would save on seed costs while still ensuring an appropriate brassica crop.

Method:

A three-rep randomized block small plot trial was set up and seeded on June 11 with 137.3N-10.5P-87.3K-29.5S actual fertility applied. A preburn of Glyphosate + Heat was conducted on June 7th. GRO's new MaterMacc precision corn seeder was used to place 3.3, 4.7 and 8 lbs/acre of seed in the randomized 1.4 x 7 meter plots. 5.3 inches of rainfall were recorded for the growing season, until the plot had to be abandoned due to hail.

Results:

After the June seeding of the plots, emergence appeared to be rapid and even. Plant or leaf counts were not taken, but all treatments appeared to fully cover the ground. On July 24th, a hailstorm occurred at this research site, which had a major detrimental effect on the trial. As a result of the hail damage, the plot was eventually abandoned. Even though there was significant regrowth, it was determined the storm had such a negative effect that the results could not be considered reliable. The conclusion drawn from these plots is that from the growth seen up until the flowering stage of the crop it is possible that precision placement of seed can reduce input costs in a sufficient manner to cover the costs of the equipment required to conduct this type of operation, particularly if it could also be used for other crops such as corn. More research is required for the local confirmation of this conjecture, which will be easily done with the equipment currently available at GRO.