

Making Every Seed Count: Crop Management Effects on Canola Establishment

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Second only to fertilizer, seed is one of the most expensive inputs in canola production, and like many things, the price of hybrid canola seed has increased substantially in recent years. Consequently, the incentives are as strong as ever to minimize seedling mortality while also avoiding unnecessarily dense stands; thus, managing input costs without increasing yield instability or agronomic issues associated with suboptimal plant populations. In this presentation, we will draw from regionally relevant field trials to look at the impacts of basic management practices on canola establishment, development, and seed yield. The practices we will consider include, but are not limited to, seeding date, seeding rate, row spacing, seed metering technologies, and seed-applied fertilizer rates/formulations. There are pros and cons to the practices we will consider and, as such, definitive recommendations may be difficult to derive. However, the intent is to provide information that agronomists can utilize to make the best possible decisions with respect to canola establishment and yield, while also allowing the flexibility to adapt to the unique circumstances and challenges which they may encounter from farm-to-farm and year-to-year.