

## Seeding Flax to Provide the Best Start

Typically flax is seeded from May 1<sup>st</sup> to June 20<sup>th</sup>. It may be seeded the last out of all the crops as the bolls and seeds can stand and ripen in the fall without shelling while other crops such as canola are being harvested. Prolonged exposure to fall weather, though, will reduce the quality of the harvested seed and make it ineligible for a food grade market. MASC data shows flax has good yield potential in the last week of May (Table 3), but yields decline in some areas as the calendar turns to June. MASC seeding deadlines are June 20<sup>th</sup> for all of Manitoba.

Relative yield (%) of FLAX by seeding date and region (1989 to 2008).

Seeding Date (week/month)	RR Valley	Eastern	Interlake	South Central	West Central	Southwest	Northwest
<b>01/May</b>	108	115	118	108	111	109	105
<b>02/May</b>	105	105	116	108	109	102	105
<b>03/May</b>	104	117	112	103	105	104	106
<b>04/May</b>	91	89	96	95	98	98	93
<b>01/June</b>	78	66	72	77	87	85	84
<b>02/June</b>	67	42	61	66	66	71	68
<b>03/June</b>	60	34	NSD	52	49	62	58

*Source: Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Seeded Acreage Report Records (1989-2008)*

Getting the flax out of ground with an even good stand will help later for weed control and consistent maturity.

- Target ½ – ¾ inch seeding depth to allow crop to emerge quickly
- Don't over fertilize, flax does not respond to higher rates of fertilizer. Excess nitrogen will cause prolonged maturity and potential lodging issues.
- Target a higher seeding rate. Flax depends very heavily on adequate stand establishment and plant populations for good weed competition. Target a seeding rate of 40-45 lbs/ac to achieve a target population of 40-56 plants/ft<sup>2</sup>. Typical emergence for flax is 50% to 60%. Seeding rates on the high end

of the recommended seeding range should be used for ground prone to crusting, when seeding late or under heavy weed pressure.

## Fertilizer Recommendations for Flax

For specific recommendations on fertilizer rates, have your soil tested. Flax is easily injured by seed placed fertilizer. All fertilizer should be applied away from the seed.

If soil analysis is not available, a general recommendation is as follows:

**Nitrogen (N):** Apply 40-60 lb/acre N following stubble, 0-40 lb/acre N following grass and grass-legume breaking. Deficiency symptoms – stunting, small leaves that are yellowing, starts with older leaves.

**Phosphate (P2O5):** Apply 30-40 lb/acre P in a sideband or placed below the seed. Deficiency symptoms – darker leaf colour than normal, stunting, smaller leaves, thin stem.

**Potassium (K2O):** On sandy textured or organic soils, apply potassium at rates of 30-60 lb/acre. Deficiency symptoms – stunted growth and leaf tip browning on lower leaves.

**Sulphur (S):** Apply 15 lb/acre sulphate as recommended by a soil sample. Deficiency symptoms – leaf yellowing, starting with the newest leaves.

*Article as posted on the Manitoba Flax Growers Association website*