

## EXPERIENCES IN ZERO TILL SUNOLA

In 1992 the Save Our Soils Committee of the District #6 Indian Head ADD Board approved a zero till seeding project of Sunola on five sites near Indian Head. With the cooperation of Dave Hutchinson of Western Seed Growers and Dr. Guy Lafond of the Indian Head Research Station and five farmer cooperators this project was carried out.

Four sites near Indian Head were selected. These were one acre in size each. One five acre site at Montmartre was seeded by the LePage Brothers with their ConservaPak zero till seeding implement.

Three of the sites at Indian Head were on Indian Head heavy clay soils. One of the sites was on a Glenavon silty clay loam soil. These are in the black soil zone. The Montmartre site is situated in the transition area between dark brown and black soil on a Weyburn Oxbow clay loam soil.

Trifluralin granules were spread on the soil surface for weed control and Assert was used where warranted for post-emergent weed control. Fertilizer was either side banded or mid-row banded at the rate of fifty (50) pounds of nitrogen and twenty (20) pounds of phosphorous on the plots. No insecticides were required during the growing season. Ten (10) pounds per acre of AC Sierra Sunola was seeded on the plots during the week of May 25. Growing season rainfall was 177.2 mm. The rainfall by month was May - 62.3 mm, June - 40.6 mm, July - 65.2 mm and August - 9.1 mm. The growing season was very cool in 1992 which no doubt affected the yield of Sunola.

The Sunola was harvested dry at 9.5% moisture during the week of October 27 with a straight cut header on a self propelled combine.

Site	Yield lb./acre	
Experimental Farm	410	- 50% stalk breakage
Terry Rein	970	
Ken Braden	1,139	
Gerald Willerth	1,480	
LePage Brothers	660	- Frost damage
Average	931	

The site at the Indian Head Experimental Station had at least 50% stalk breakage which drastically reduced yield. The field at Montmartre on the LePage Brothers farm was hit with a hard frost on June 28 which caused many small heads that reduced yield.

We found that you can grow AC Sierra Sunola successfully under a zero till seeding system. Weed control is very important as Sunola is not competitive until later in the year. With proper fertility, good yields are possible. The District hopes to demonstrate this crop and seeding system again in 1993.