



NORTHERN

SEPTEMBER 2018

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GRAINS RESEARCH
& DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

CANOLA

SECTION 11

CROP DESICCATION/ SPRAY OUT

Crop desiccation/spray out

(For information on windrowing, see Section 12. Harvest.)

Chemical desiccation is an alternative to windrowing and very effective where crops have lodged or where weeds have emerged in maturing crops. The most commonly used desiccant is diquat (Reglone®), which is registered for aerial application on canola crops (refer to product label for application rates).

Desiccation can be a useful strategy on variable soil types; for example, where heavier soil types or drainage lines keep the crop greener for longer, a desiccant can hasten harvest of these areas and reduce the risk of problems arising from high moisture. It can also be used where windrowing contractors are not available.

Desiccants have no detrimental effects on the seed or its oil quality if applied at the correct time. They work through contact action and require almost complete coverage of the plant to work effectively. An experienced aerial operator can apply a crop desiccant to ensure uniform coverage with minimal spray drift.

The correct time for desiccation is when 70–80% of seeds have changed colour in middle pods, which is when the crop has passed its optimal windrowing stage. The crop will be ready to harvest within 4–7 days after the desiccant is applied, depending on the size and density of the crop.

Desiccate only an area of crop that can be harvested over a period of 1–2 days. The harvester must be ready within 4 days of a desiccant being applied to minimise the potential of losses from shattering. Withholding periods should be adhered to.

Other products not registered for use in canola should not be used as desiccants as issues with chemical residues can potentially affect markets and quality of the canola.

Desiccation is generally considered a special-purpose management aid to be used when problems with windrowing, weeds or harvesting are anticipated. Specialist agronomic advice should be sought.¹

Glyphosate (specifically Weedmaster) has recently been registered for pre harvest application. It should be noted though that the intention is that it is only registered to control weeds present in the crop at that timing not to manage canola maturity i.e. bringing grain moisture down for harvest.

MORE INFORMATION

[Pre-harvest herbicide use. Fact Sheet.](#)

[Harvest options for canola—windrowing timing, direct heading, desiccation with Reglone and treatment with Pod-Ceal. Effects on yield and oil percentages. Using paraquat in canola, wheat or barley warning: crops will cause residue violations](#)

GRDC Update Paper: [GOA investigates Canola desiccation and direct heading and PodGuard canola](#)

¹ P Carmody (2009) Windrowing and harvesting. Ch. 14. In Canola best practice management guide for south-eastern Australia. (Eds D McCaffrey, T Potter, S Marcroft, F Pritchard) GRDC. http://www.grdc.com.au/uploads/documents/GRDC_Canola_Guide_All_1308091.pdf