

Canola Harvest Management

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Harvest losses due to shattering can significantly reduce canola yields. Whether swathed or straight-cut, delays in combining due to weather or other farm operations may lower yield and profit. An experiment was conducted at the NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center to study management options to reduce harvest losses. Plots were either swathed or straight-cut at the optimum time or after a 7-, 14-, or 21-day delay. In addition, the application of Spodnam (a liquid product applied prior to physiological maturity to reduce shattering) was evaluated.

When harvested at the optimum time, yields with swathing and straight-cutting were not significantly different (Table 1). Delays in harvesting resulted in reduced yields in both systems. However, yield with swathing was more stable over time. Pods on standing plants are more susceptible to rubbing and consequent shattering on windy days than pods in the swath. Although high winds occurred during the 21-day period of these treatments, the weather was very dry. Under conditions of wetting and drying (due to dew and/or rainfall), even greater losses would be expected, especially in the standing crop. Spodnam did not affect yield.

Table 1. Effect of harvest delays on canola yield (lbs./acre).

Harvest Timing	Swath	Straight-Cut	Mean
Optimum	2519	2350	2434
Optimum + 7 days	2164	2137	2150
Optimum + 14 days	2337	1839	2088
Optimum + 21 days	2030	1428	1729
Mean	2262	1939	2100
C.V. (%)	4.8	17.0	13.8
LSD (0.05)	173	527	303
LSD (0.01)	248	757	412