

Adoption of herbicide tolerant (HT) canola in Canada

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Despite very low prices and a late, wet spring Canadian canola producers planted about the same amount of canola as in 2005, sowing some 5,457,000 hectares. In some areas the excess spring moisture and hot dry weather at or following flowering will result in some yield loss. However, overall an average or better crop is expected.

Herbicide tolerant (HT) canola has been in commercial production in Canada for over 10 years with no health or significant environmental problems despite the many dire predictions. The technology was very quickly adopted as indicated in the rapid increase in usage of HT varieties between their introduction in 1995 and 2000 followed by a more gradual expansion in usage to the present 96% of total acreage (Figure 1). Glyphosate (Roundup) tolerant varieties appear to have peaked in 2005 at about 50% of the total canola acreage while glufosinate (Liberty) tolerant varieties have increased their market share (33%), partly at the expense of the mutation derived imidazolinone tolerant varieties, thanks to the strong performance of the Liberty tolerant hybrids. Hybrid varieties now available in all three herbicide tolerant systems accounted for about 55% of the canola grown in Western Canada in 2005. The usage of hybrid varieties will undoubtedly increase in future years as all companies focus their attention on the production of hybrid varieties.

Figure 1: Percentage usage of herbicide tolerant (HT) canola by herbicide systems in Canada 1995 through 2005

