

# Clubroot FAQ's

## **1. When does Red Deer County conduct Clubroot inspections in canola?**

Inspections for Clubroot begin once canola is done flowering. We perform a combination of visual inspections, looking for the early ripening symptoms associated with Clubroot, as well as carrying out random field inspections. Field inspections may continue into September and October to determine the severity of Clubroot in a particular field.

## **2. How do you know that the symptoms are from Clubroot disease and not some other problem, disease or pest (insect/fungus)?**

By pulling up or digging up the roots of an actively growing, susceptible host crop (ex. canola), we are able to inspect these roots for galls. While galling is a key indicator of the disease, plant tissue samples are also sent to a lab for DNA analysis and confirmation. Soil can also be sampled when a susceptible host crop is not actively growing in the field.

## **3. What happens if the County finds Clubroot in my field?**

If the lab confirms the presence of Clubroot in your field, the County Inspector will arrange to meet with the landowner or producer on location. At this time, the County Inspector will conduct a Disease Infestation Ratio (DIR) to determine the severity of the infestation.

## **4. My field has Clubroot, now what?**

Once a field has been positively identified and the severity (DIR) is known, a Clubroot management plan can be developed. On moderate to severe cases, a DIR of more than 5%, a “*Notice to Control Pests*” will be issued and will restrict the growth of canola for up to 5 years. The “*Notice*” will also state the other disease management practices that should be followed to minimize the spread of the disease.

## **5. How do I prevent my field from getting Clubroot?**

Being that Clubroot is a soil borne disease and commonly found in Red Deer County, it may not be possible to prevent any field from getting Clubroot. However, to slow the spread or minimize the impact of the disease, follow the best practices set out on the Alberta Clubroot Management Plan:

- Lengthen canola rotation to a minimum of only 1 in 4 years
- Use Clubroot resistant varieties when growing canola
- Limit access to cultivated fields
- Ensure only clean equipment and personnel access your fields

## **6. What do I do if someone wants access to my land?**

It is up to you to agree to access terms with a land agent. Those terms should include a sanitization plan for all equipment and personnel that will access your land. A good plan will ensure that the spread of pests and weeds is minimized, by cleaning equipment before and after accessing your land.

## **7. How does the County ensure they are not spreading the disease during inspections?**

County Inspectors follow Land Entrance Guidelines in relation to accessing cultivated fields. In short, these guidelines stipulate:

- Vehicles are not to enter cultivated land
- Vehicles are not to be parked on approaches
- Before entering cultivated land, boot coverings are put on over footwear and removed/disposed of after exiting a field
- Any tools that come into contact with the top soil are to be cleaned/disinfected with a 2% bleach solution

### **8. Where did Clubroot come from?**

Clubroot was initially discovered in Canola in the Edmonton area back in 2003. However, it was known to exist in other cole crops (cabbage/broccoli) in Alberta since the 1970's. It was first discovered in Red Deer County in 2011 and has continued to spread south into Kneehill and Mountain View Counties. Clubroot is known to exist in 43 different fields in Red Deer County, but it is likely to exist, undetected, in many more fields across our region.

### **9. What happens if a farmer grows canola when not permitted or prohibited under a “*Notice to Control Pests*”?**

The Agricultural Pest Act defines an appeal period as 10 days after a “*Notice to Control Pests*” was issued to a landowner. By sowing an agricultural pest host crop and directly contravening an order, the Municipality will be forced to act. This usually means that the host crop is destroyed at the landowners expense.