



Virulent Blackleg Management Plan

Agriculture Services
Policy D6

Policy:	D6 – Virulent Blackleg Management Plan
Policy Department(s):	Agriculture Services
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Policy Purpose

To minimize the impact of Virulent Blackleg in Canola within the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 by preventing the disease and/or containing the spread.

Policy Statement

The County recognizes that Virulent Blackleg of canola is a declared pest under the Agricultural Pests Act (2000). Virulent Blackleg of canola can have a negative impact on the agricultural practices within the County. Inspection, prevention and control of this disease is required.

Definitions

“CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer.

“County” means the municipality of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 having jurisdiction under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation.

“Inspector” means a person appointed as an inspector, including an inspector by virtue of office, under section 9 of the Agricultural Pests Act (2000)

“Neighbouring Municipality” means any municipality which shares a common border with the County.

“Notice” means when an inspector is of the opinion that land, property or livestock contains or is likely to contain a pest or should be protected against a pest, the inspector may issue a notice in writing directed to the owner or occupant of the land or property.

Policy Guidelines

Authority

1. Virulent Blackleg (*Leptoshaeria maculans*) is a declared pest under the Agricultural Pests Act, and if left uncontrolled is capable of causing significant economic losses to producers within the County as well as neighboring municipalities.



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2. The Agricultural Pests Act authorizes Inspectors appointed under the Act to:
 - 2.1. Enter onto land and inspect for pests;
 - 2.2. Issue notices specifying measures required to control the pest or prevent the pest from establishing.

Producer and Industry Awareness

3. The County Agriculture Department shall educate producers on the significance of the Agriculture Pests Act, and strategies to minimize the risk of Virulent Blackleg infestation. The Agriculture Department shall continue to survey and test producer fields for Virulent Blackleg. Surveys are required to record the level of infestation.

The County, through the Agricultural Service Board and the Agricultural Fieldman will increase awareness of Virulent Blackleg by:

- 3.1. Providing an information package regarding Virulent Blackleg to producers affected by the disease as well as any in the industry that may be impacted as a result of an outbreak;
- 3.2. Contacting affected producers and creating awareness with information, action required and their responsibilities in controlling an outbreak of Virulent Blackleg;
- 3.3. Using education awareness through a) media b) producer meetings c) posters d) trade shows e) displays;
- 3.4. Informing seed retailers and seed cleaning plants of the County's concerns; and
- 3.5. Assisting and encouraging local seed cleaning plants to set and follow policies to accept only canola seed that is certified Virulent Blackleg free.

Inspection

4. The Agricultural Fieldman shall set out the following guidelines for the inspection of fields for the presence of Virulent Blackleg:
 - 4.1. Inspections to be carried out from May 1st to October 31st of each year;
 - 4.2. Utilize a dedicated form to track the inspections of fields;
 - 4.3. The minimum number of fields to be inspected, to be determined yearly, based on previous years' results;
 - 4.4. Make all staff aware of the signs and symptoms of Virulent Blackleg; and
 - 4.5. Submit any suspect plant material for testing to an accredited lab.



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Action Required

5. Upon finding Virulent Blackleg within the County, the Landowner/Lessee will be contacted by the Agricultural Fieldman (or designate) to relay the following information:
 - 5.1. Part A: First Contact
 - 5.1.1. The Agricultural Fieldman will contact affected producers outlining the problem and the obligations of the Landowner/Lessee under the Agricultural Pests Act.
 - 5.1.2. The Landowner/Lessee will receive an awareness package containing information on dealing with Virulent Blackleg and a copy of the Agricultural Pests Act.
 - 5.1.3. Recommendations of the following Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be made by the Agricultural Fieldman as to how the problem will be dealt with, either cooperatively or through enforcement measures:
 - 5.1.3.1. Harvest the crop with the total crop being sold for crushing or feed but NOT for seed.
 - 5.1.3.2. Tarp any loads leaving the infested field.
 - 5.1.3.3. Clean any and all crop residue from equipment, implements and vehicles before leaving infested land.
 - 5.1.3.4. Unless the field is under-seeded to a perennial crop, suggest residue of crop be incorporated by disc or moldboard plow, preferably in the fall of the year.
 - 5.1.3.5. Seed a non-host crop and/or summer fallow for three consecutive years from initial detection.
 - 5.1.3.6. Control volunteer plants susceptible to Virulent Blackleg during the three-year period.

If a susceptible crop is seeded within the three-year period, a Notice to Control pests will be issued and enforced if necessary.
 - 5.1.3.7. Adjacent Landowners/Lessees will be notified and encouraged to grow only resistant Virulent Blackleg varieties, or seed non susceptible crops the next year.
 - 5.1.3.8. The Landowner/Lessee may return the field to canola production in the 4th year after initial detection, providing a Virulent Blackleg resistant variety of seed treated with a recommended fungicide is used.



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5.2. Part B: Failure to Comply

5.2.1. If within the three-year restriction period the Landowner/Lessee fails to comply with the agreed-upon measures to control Virulent Blackleg, the Agricultural Fieldman shall enforce the Agricultural Pests Act (2000). A Notice will be issued that sets out the required actions, based on current Best Management Practices (see 5.1.3) for managing Virulent Blackleg. As per the Agricultural Pests Act, if the Notice is not complied with, the County will enforce the Notice by following the directions set out in the Notice.

Attachments

N/A

References

Legal Authorities	Agricultural Pests Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta (2000)
Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.	Policy B1 – Policy Agricultural Service Board
Other	N/A

Revision History

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December 12, 2022	Reviewed and Amended CM20221212.012
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