

What the Weevil?

By Sherrilyn Phelps, SPG Agronomy and Seed Program Manager, P.Ag., CCA

It is not the usual time to be thinking about insects, but upon visiting faba bean fields and plots in September there were a lot of notches noticed on the plants that were still green in the fields or where regrowth was occurring. Upon further inspection it was confirmed that pea leaf weevils were readily feeding on that green plant material and were found in areas much further north than originally predicted. In Saskatchewan the focus has been in the southwest corner, but this year we have found pea leaf weevils even at Saskatoon. However, just because they may be present does not mean they are at high enough densities to be a concern, though it is an insect that we need to pay attention to and continue to monitor. The southwest still remains a high pressure area, but pea and faba bean producers should keep their eyes open and watch for signs of pea leaf weevils across the entire province. Notches on the margins of the leaves are a good sign of the insect and often they can be found on the ground nearby or even on the foliage.

Dr. Hector Carcamo with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has a great article on pea leaf weevil biology and management with good visual aids for identifying damage and the insects ([Managing the Pea Leaf Weevil in Field Peas](#)).

New generations of adults start emerging from the soil in late July with peak emergence in mid-August and continue until host plants senesce. Host plants include several legume species including peas and faba beans. New generation adults feed on green foliage and then seek shelter in leaf litter for overwintering. Monitoring fields in the fall can help identify the presence of the insects and help with management decisions prior to spring.

If pea leaf weevil risk is high there are management choices such as use of seed treatments that can help control the insects. Another tool is tillage, or not tilling in this case. In the United States the impact of tillage was investigated and found to have a negative impact on controlling pea leaf weevils. Migrating pea leaf weevils were more attracted to conventionally tilled plots compared to no-till plots, and feeding damage was significantly greater in conventional till than in no-till plots.



Images 1, 2, and 3: Notches on faba bean leaves from pea leaf weevils on regrowth in September. Middle photo shows adult pea leaf weevil on faba bean leaf. Photo on right shows relative size of a pea leaf weevil.