



Wide Row Spacing



Canola Project

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In 2007 Palouse Conservation District contracted with the Washington Department of Ecology to develop a project looking at wider row spacing of spring canola. The objectives are to (1) provide possible ways for growers to seed into heavy residue without burning and, (2) help growers learn to grow canola in wide rows economically.



Canola can provide benefits on the farm:

- Breaking a disease cycle in rotation with wheat.
- Potential for improving the following wheat crop through weed and disease control.
- Provide a tap root to find water and retrieve nitrogen from the previous crop.

Three growers in the PCD each graciously provided two acres for the spring canola research plots. They were Lee Druffel, Keith Kopf, and John Leendertsen. Seeding was done by the USDA Agricultural Research Service staff at Pullman with a WSU SeedHawk Drill. The SeedHawk drill was donated by the St. John Grange Supply Agronomy Department manager, Ed Bageant. In the first year of research, we found no difference in the spring canola yield between seeding at 11-inch seed row spacing and 22-inch seed row spacing.



In April 2010 the plots were again established on the Keith and Heidi Kopf farm east of Pullman. The plots were direct seeded into 100+ bushels per acre winter wheat residue with the Crops and Soils Department Seed Hawk drill. The yields of the spring canola with both wide row spacing of 22 inches and the standard row spacing of 11 inches showed them the same.



Future implications are that wide rows could reduce seed cost, machine cost, and fuel cost.