

## **Crop Rotations on the Farm**

Kelvin Meadows  
Northfork Seeds  
Moose Jaw, SK

When making crop selections, points to ponder in order of importance to me:

Commodity Prices – which crops look profitable on a spreadsheet?

Chemical Carry-over – we try to keep fields neutral when possible so we do not limit options (ie Liberty canola vs Odyssey canola).

Will it spray out? – you can plant canary seed on canola stubble, but be prepared to do a real good spray job or you will have a wreck (inseparable).

Disease – becoming a major issue for us. If you need to push a rotation, be prepared to spend the money if necessary or do not plant. (ie chickpeas).

Chemical Rotation – we make every effort to rotate our chemical use. The last thing we need are resistance issues.

Root Depth – when possible, take advantage of different rooting depths to access available moisture.

Straw Management – properly processed straw will make life so much easier the next year.

If you are changing or altering your rotation, what are key factors to remember, by crop?

### Chickpeas

- Pick desi or kabuli (desis will volunteer in the kabulis).
- Four year rotation, at least.
- Weed control, weed control, weed control.

### Lentils

- Pick a color. No one likes Christmas lentils (red & green), especially if you are tightening your rotation – lentils, wheat, lentils.

### Canary seed

- Edge carry over makes for a thin field.
- Do not grow after flax (volunteer)
- Watch volunteer canola (it is inseparable)
- Be prepared to deal with straw if crop is heavy (should consider baling)
- Wild oat control is essential

### Peas

- Fits pretty well any situation, as long as you have good perennial weed control.
- Watch pea on lentil stubble for possible erosion or disease issues.

### Barley

- Excellent after canola in our area.
- If used in sloughs, shut spreader off so you minimize contamination of rest of field with volunteers (ie barley sloughs in durum field)

#### Cereals

- Fusarium means its time to rotate just like all the others.
- Follow a pulse. I prefer peas for the nitrogen kick.

#### Canola

- Not after flax unless canola is herbicide tolerant, and even then I have seen wrecks show up at the seed plant hoping we can separate the two.
- Disease, mostly sclerotinia, is something to watch in our area.

#### Grass seed

- In areas with sufficient moisture, this is a great way to rest the land, build organic matter and break disease cycles. However, prices can be fickle.

#### Yellow mustard

- If you are using canola or flax ground, or have weed management problems, forget it. No matter how high the prices get, you are asking for trouble. The tolerance for inseparable seeds is very low and sample grade mustard does not sell for much.