Cereal Leaf Beetle in Western Canada, 2008

In 2008, surveys were conducted in central and southern Alberta and in southern Saskatchewan to monitor the distribution and abundance of the cereal leaf beetle. The first survey, in late May, focused primarily on determination of adult populations in fields of winter wheat. A second survey conducted in June assessed cereal leaf beetle distributions in spring-sown crops of wheat, barley and oats, and a third survey conducted in July focused on determining the distribution and abundance of cereal leaf beetle larvae in spring-sown crops.

In southern Alberta, *Oulema melanopus* adults were found in 17 fields in an area extending eastward from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains to the border of Saskatchewan (a distance of approximately 400 km), and south to the U.S.A. border. Beetle larvae were collected in 18 commercial cereal fields. For the first time in 2008, we observed substantial crop damage at some sites, especially to flag leaves. However, yield losses from *O. melanopus* infestations would have been minimal.

Cereal leaf beetle was recorded from Saskatchewan for the first time in 2008, from three fields of winter wheat in the southwestern corner of the province. The beetle is therefore now known in western Canada from the Creston Valley of British Columbia, southern Alberta, and southwestern Saskatchewan. As a consequence, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has announced its decision to deregulate cereal leaf beetle in western Canada, permitting the interprovincial import and export of hay as of October 2008.

Specimens of cereal leaf beetle larvae were collected from three sites in southern Alberta, returned to the laboratory and reared to determine the presence and incidence of parasitism. Parasitoids that appear morphologically identical to *Tetrastichus julis* were reared from larvae collected in Lethbridge and in Pincher Creek (southcentral and southwestern Alberta, respectively), but not from larvae collected near Bow Island (southeastern Alberta). The putative *T. julis* specimens are being sent for identification.

Submitted by:
Lloyd Dosdall, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada
Héctor Cárcamo, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge, AB, Canada
Owen Olfert, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Saskatoon, SK, Canada
Scott Meers, Alberta Agriculture and Food, Brooks, AB, Canada