

STRAIGHT CUT CANOLA

Over the last decade, straight cutting canola has gone from a radical new idea to a widely adopted management practice in Alberta. Although not every field, or every growing season lends itself to straight cutting, the benefits derived from reducing time and labour costs are too intriguing to ignore. Add in the potential for higher quality seed and a reduced risk of the yield loss that often comes from swathing too early, and it's easy to see why many producers are embracing the concept.



Photo by Michael Raine (Western Producer – July 2018)

I asked our BRI Integrated Solutions Manager, Brad Freadrich about switching from swathed to straight cut canola.

While the benefits may be obvious, there is still the question of figuring out the best way to actually go out and combine a field of standing canola. If you are new to straight cutting, the first place you need to look is to your combine settings. The settings that have served you well in swathed canola may not be the same ones that will give you the best results with straight cutting.

With that in mind I asked our BRI Integrated Solutions Manager, Brad Freadrich about how switching from swathed to straight cut canola would affect the combine settings he recommends. Brad told me that “generally, on straight cut you are dealing with tougher straw and less chaff. You normally would run faster and tighter in the concave and rotor than you do in swathed canola (see the chart for S series combines). Straight cut canola requires a similar mindset as you have when threshing wheat; tighter and faster to thresh better and save grain. This is different than swathed canola which tends to break up very easily. When dealing with a swath you have to be careful with chaff overload in the cleaning area.”

S SERIES COMBINE SETTINGS FOR CANOLA		
COMBINE SETTING	SWATHED	STRAIGHT CUT
Feed Accelerator	slow speed	fast speed
Rotor	450 - 650 rpm	550 - 750 rpm
Concave	20 - 25 mm	10 - 15 mm
Fan	650 - 750 rpm	650 -700 rpm
Chaffer	12 - 13 mm	13 - 14 mm
Sieve	3 - 4 mm	3 -4 mm

If you are new to straight cutting, the first place you need to look is to your combine settings.

As Brad said, there is an old saying that the concave thrashes and the rotor speed smashes.

Remember every year will provide unique challenges, and the settings that worked last year may not be as effective with this year's crop. Each season requires a bit of trial and error to find the settings that will do the best job. When trying out settings, Brad stressed that it pays to watch for damaged seed in the catch pans and tailings. Also make sure to watch for splits in the clean grain sample. As Brad said, "There is an old saying that the concave thrashes and the rotor speed smashes, so if you are seeing damage, the rotor speed may be too fast. That's the time to slow things down a bit and then check again."

If you have any questions on this or any other combining tips going into harvest, be sure to get in touch with our Equipment Optimization group. Their contact info can be found on the Battle River Implements website, (<https://www.brilt.com/>) under Contact>Staff Contacts>Precision Ag. And if you really want a deep dive into straight cutting canola, there is no better resource than the *Guidebook for Straight Cutting Canola* published by PAMI. They have data on all the ins and outs of reel settings and speed, the pros and cons of various headers, and just about any other issue you may encounter. You can find it on their website or by following this link. http://pami.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Straight-Cut_Canola_Guide_Book.pdf



Wayne Spurrill, P.Ag
Agronomist

Cell: 780 761-1616
Office: 780672-4463
wspurrill@briltd.com

BRILTD.COM

*Past issues of this
publication are
available on our
website under the
Precision Ag tab/
Agronomy Report*



1-877-913-3373

