DRY BEAN bulletin

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ISSUE 5 Feb 2026

Manitoba Records Largest Dry Bean Crop in Two Decades

IN 2025 WE HARVESTED A RECORD DRY BEAN CROP IN MANITOBA. WITH 214,239 tonnes put in the bins, it was the largest crop grown since 2002. What impact will this crop have on the markets? What is the quality of it like? What did the crop actually look like in the fields? We chatted with Hensall Co-op and a Manitoba Pulse & Soybean (MPSG) dry bean grower to learn more about this past year's crop.

Q&A with Hensall Co-op

We talked with Chad Killam, a field marketer with Hensall Co-op, to better understand this record crop and what impact it's having on the markets.

MPSG: How was the 2025 growing season for dry bean crops in Manitoba?

Chad Killam (CK): The 2025 growing season had its challenges. We faced extremely high disease pressure mixed with drought in some areas and wet conditions in others.

MPSG: What was the 2025 harvest like for dry bean crops in Manitoba?

CK: For the most part, harvest was smooth sailing around the province. We did have some delayed starts due to wet conditions.

MPSG: What yields were recorded for the 2025 dry bean crop in Manitoba?

CK: Yields were all over the place. They ranged from 1,000 lbs to 3,500 lbs. It really depended on how much rain the crop received and how bad the mould affected it.

MPSG: When did it become evident that Manitoba had a record bean crop?

Chad Killam, field marketer with Hensall Co-op.

CK: Right before harvest started, we noticed an above average crop. The dry beans had a heavy pod set and a good plant stand, so we saw good things coming.

MPSG: How has this record crop impacted dry bean markets?

CK: Record yields mixed with a high number of bean acres in the province has created an oversupply. As many growers know space was limited and it was hard to move spec beans. This softened the markets.

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Regional Variety Testing Program – Successful Expansion and a Bold New Look

TERRY BUSS,
PRODUCTION AGRONOMIST – EAST, MPSG

Successful Expansion

As in past years, regional variety trials for dry beans were conducted at both wide row (>24 inches) and narrow row (<12 inches) spacings to provide information for each production system. In 2025, four wide row dry bean trials were successfully completed at Carman, Morden, Portage la Prairie and Winkler. Additionally, five narrow row trials were successfully completed at Dauphin, Hamiota, Melita, Morden and Souris. Unfortunately, the narrow row trial at Portage la Prairie had to be terminated but will return next year. Given that dry bean acres have been expanding westward and northward into areas that are new to the crop, our team was gratified to see the new Dauphin and Hamiota sites produce high quality data. Thanks to all our project partners and contractors for another very successful season!

A Bold New Look

The first change everyone will notice is that we've released the *2026 MPSG Pulse and Soybean Variety Guide* and not a 2025 guide. To better coordinate with Seed Manitoba and prevent any further confusion amongst users, we decided to date our guide based

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MPSG: What is the quality of this dry bean crop like? Any disease issues?

CK: Overall, we saw excellent quality. There was good moisture, low cracked seed coats and good colour. We did see lots of sclerotia in the samples which was a result of high mould in the field.

MPSG: What impact is the quality of the dry bean crop having on markets?

CK: Due to our harvest conditions and quality/colour, the quality has been better than Blacks and Pinto Beans from certain parts of Mexico and the U.S. We had an opportunity to have the product accepted in the markets faster than other originations.

MPSG: What recommendations do you have for Manitoba dry bean growers as they market and sell their crops?

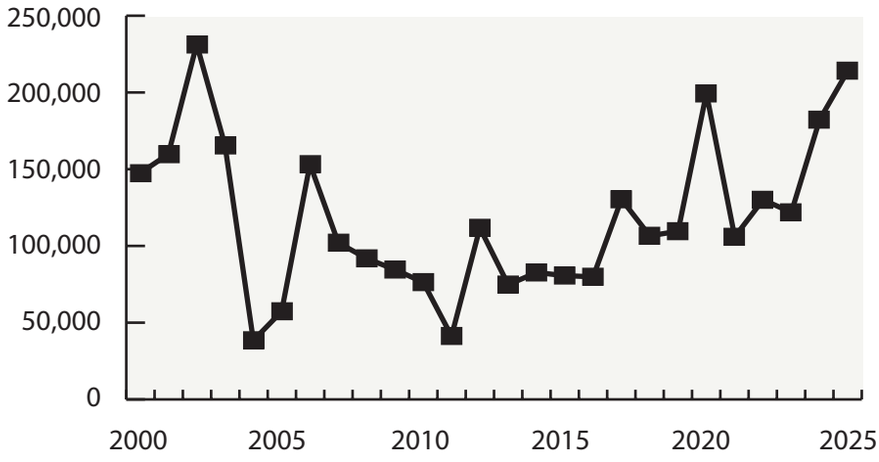
CK: Contracting is a huge part of a grower's success in dry beans. It's very important to have a home for your product, and moving your product on time helps the beans' quality stay intact and have better marketability.

MPSG: What impact will the 2025 dry bean crop have on the 2026 dry bean crop and markets?

CK: Due to the larger yields, the excess will carry over and it will have many end-users sitting back in the market not willing to participate thinking that the 2026 crop market will drag down prices. This will give the dealers a difficult time to come up with offers or large programs due to lower levels of support at the 2026 current values. ■

Manitoba Dry Bean Production By Year (in metric tonnes)

Data from Statistics Canada Production of principal field crops for November 2025



grower *viewpoint*

Bryce Pallister

Farmer in the Portage la Prairie area and MPSG board member

"WE'VE BEEN GROWING DRY beans since the early '90s, with the best yield in 2013 but this year was an above average crop. Yields exceeded the 2,000 pounds mark. This was despite dry conditions early in the year – timely rains in early July saved our crop. The crop quality was very good, with minimal disease pressure. This was unique among the dry bean growing region, but I'd say it was due to not having the early rains which caused disease for others. We hardly sprayed any fungicides.

The market for selling the beans isn't the best though right now but we have enough pounds to break even. Despite the market challenges we are planning to grow dry beans this upcoming year. We may reduce our acreage though as soybeans are closing in on dry beans, making them more profitable to grow." ■

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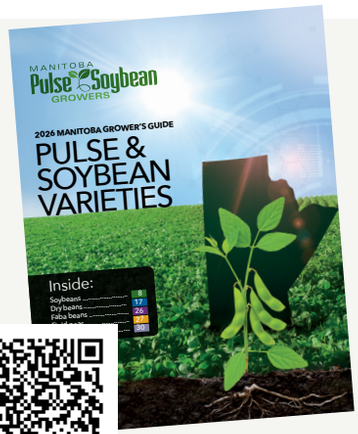
on the year it's being used to make variety decisions as opposed to the year that trial data was collected.

In recognition of the continued growth of narrow-row dry bean production in Manitoba, another change we're happy to announce is the creation of a Narrow Row Dry Bean Variety Description Table (pages 23 to 24 of MPSG's *2026 Pulse and Soybean Variety Guide*). Starting with the 2026 guide and going forwards, varieties suitable for narrow row production will be compared based on long-term data from narrow row variety trials including data related to plant stature and disease susceptibility/tolerance. Given where narrow row production occurs in the province, it's our belief this move will provide more accurate data to narrow row dry bean growers.

Finally, we have reformatted the look and feel of our guide with brighter colours, larger fonts and more graphics making it engaging and easy to read. It's our hope this helps growers get the maximum advantage from using our guide in making the best variety selections for their farms. We are very proud of the new look of our guide. We hope that it meets with your approval.

One thing that hasn't changed is that the regional variety testing program is just that – it's regional, providing access to local, practical information on annual yields, long-term yields and days to maturity. Additional data is collected from both the narrow and wide row trials and is provided in the variety description tables, including thousand seed weight, lodging, pod height, common bacterial blight (CBB) severity, CBB incidence and white mould incidence. This provides the long-term agronomic information that you need to best select varieties for your farm. ■



To view the full 2026 results

On Going Dry Bean Nitrogen Management Work

WENDY MCDONALD, PRODUCTION AGRONOMIST - WEST, MPSG

DRY BEANS ARE A LITTLE BIT different than most other legume crops. While they have lots of positive traits, they're unfortunately inefficient in nitrogen fixation.

This means supplementary nitrogen sources must be added to ensure a standard 2,000 lb/acre dry bean crop is able to access the 90 lbs/ ac of nitrogen it requires. Producers have been leaning on residual nitrogen in the soil and additional nitrogen fertilizer to provide dry beans with their anticipated nitrogen requirements. All that nitrogen fertilizer comes with a large price tag attached to it.

Other studies have shown that in fields with no history of dry beans, one in five farmers saw an increase in yield by using inoculant. Not all inoculants are equal though. One inoculant product provided a yield response; however it is no longer registered for use in Manitoba.

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Photo: Wendy McDonald

Kristen McMillan discusses dry bean nitrogen fixation trials at the Carman plots during a field day with MPSG board members and staff this past summer.

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(On Going Dry Bean Nitrogen Management Work)

Kristen MacMillan, the University of Manitoba-Manitoba Pulse & Soybean agronomist-in-residence and her team began research focused on improving efficiency of nitrogen management in dry beans using biologically fixed nitrogen contributions in 2017.

Through research performed from 2017 to 2019, they were unable to find a linear response to yield based on the amount of nitrogen applied alone. Some plots with zero nitrogen applied had incredible yields. As the nitrogen applied increased yields were incremental but not statistically different.

There was a non-economic yield return to the amount of nitrogen applied. Application rates as high as 140 lbs of applied nitrogen were tested — even the price paid for nitrogen didn't change the response.

To help answer where dry beans are getting their nitrogen from, the team has been doing ongoing inoculant testing. While soybeans only rely on one strain of rhizobia for nitrogen fixation, dry beans can be overly friendly, and will interact with many kinds of rhizobia.

When studying nodulation in dry beans, the only way to know for sure is to dig up the roots to check for functioning nodules. Soil pH can also be a challenge for inoculation success and sample locations are flagged to compare soil pH to visual root nodulation.

From 2020 to 2022, the team tested three different dry bean inoculation products. Dry beans, of all market class types, responded consistently to inoculation, with no yield difference based on the inoculants tested. Those yield responses were site specific, with better nodulation at Melita compared to Carman and Portage. In Melita, there was a yield response to inoculation in two out of three years. The team concluded that response of dry beans to inoculant varies with environment, and the native soil rhizobia plays an important role.

What rate of applied Nitrogen (N) is optimal for Manitoba farmers knowing that the dry beans are fixing some of their own N?

Account for nitrogen that can be accessed through soil residual nitrogen and add biological nitrogen fixation which might provide 20 to 40 lbs/acre of N. The remainder is used to get up to a total of 90 lbs of nitrogen per acre. This is generally a good place to start for a nitrogen fertilizer application rate.

There are over 200 species of rhizobia that have been found in Manitoba soil. Researchers have been able to trap, bait, isolate and reformulate some of them. They found a new strain that had not been documented before.

In Manitoba, there seems to be a high ratio of natural abundance of N14 and N15 isotopes. Researchers have isolated the two prominent strains and produced new inoculants for experimental use.

To determine if these isolated rhizobia can compete with all the other microbes and biological components and processes in our soil, studies are underway at the U of M and Queens University to develop a "made in Manitoba" dry bean inoculant.

This research aims to optimize dry bean agronomy, profitability, and sustainability for Manitoba farmers and determine if farmers can go with a lower rate of applied nitrogen than they have traditionally.

The most recent findings reveal that 10 to 30 per cent of required nitrogen is provided by nitrogen fixation across all dry bean cultivars, but these results are highly variable and limited by zero values. As an example, a study with Blacktail black beans showed 50 to 60 per cent nitrogen fixation in certain plots while other plots, with zero nitrogen applied but having high residual background nitrogen values, had much lower fixation per cent.

Photo: Wendy McDonald

The research plots included a non-nodulating dry bean variety called 99R that can't fix nitrogen. By not fixing nitrogen it acts as a baseline for treatments.

In 2023 to 2025 plots tested five different applied nitrogen rates plus or minus inoculant. Early results hint that you can probably do one or the other but not both. Data is suggesting farmers in the southwest region of Manitoba could benefit from applying nitrogen fertilizer. ■

When is the Best Time to Spray Fungicides on your Dry Beans?

WENDY MCDONALD, PRODUCTION AGRONOMIST - WEST, MPSG

In 2025, with thick canopies and high moisture events, areas of Manitoba experienced ideal conditions for the development of white mould in dry beans. Farmers had tough fungicide decisions to make, and certain fields were sprayed with fungicide as many as three times.

Let's dive into existing research around optimal fungicide application timing for white mould management in dry beans, done by Michael Wunsch from North Dakota State University (NDSU) Carrington Research Extension Centre.

The NDSU group decided to conduct this research after seeing North Dakota dry bean growers spray fungicide twice and still face disasters. The farmers felt they had done everything right, but they still had a serious hit to their yield, with some describing it as a "melt down".

The research started over 15 years ago, and continues to be a huge, labour-intensive process with studies of eight to 12 replicates per treatment. To ensure dry bean lodging doesn't bias yields, they clip plants at the base when doing disease assessments, wind-row to dry and then manually lift plants into the combine. White mould infection is needed, so supplemental irrigation is used to ensure apothecia growth and spores are released. Dry beans are seeded on 14-inch rows and fungicide is applied in medium sized droplets at 15 gal/acre.

White mould is hard to work with because it's inconsistent. Across a field "hot spots" and "cold spots" for the disease occur randomly throughout the plots. It's critical to protect new plant growth for white mould management and there isn't a single field that has consistent dry bean growth throughout. Fungicides act as a tool but won't cure existing infections. White mould management isn't very good, even at optimal application timing.

"Disease is rarely reduced by even 50 per cent. Applying at the perfect timing is very difficult because dry

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	Single Pass Fungicide System Most Effective Timing	**Two Pass Fungicide** System Optimal Time for First Application Depending on Disease Pressure	
 PINTO BEANS	When 60 to 80 per cent of plants have initial pin-shaped pods.	When 10 to 20 per cent of plants have initial pods (very high disease risk).	When 50 to 80 per cent of plants have initial pods (lower disease pressure).
 BLACK BEANS	When 90 to 100 per cent of plants have initial pin-shaped pods.	When one to 30 per cent of plants have initial pods.	
 NAVY BEANS	When 65 to 95 per cent of plants have initial pin-shaped pods.	When three to 20 per cent of plants have initial pods (very high disease risk).	When 20 to 50 per cent of plants have initial pods (lower disease risk).
 KIDNEY BEANS	When 80 per cent of plants have initial pin-shaped pods.	When 20 per cent of plants have initial pods.	

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bean growth and development is variable in most fields and not every day is a suitable day for spraying fungicide," Wunsch noted.

Some of the questions researchers wanted to answer were:

- In years with high moisture and a thick canopy, when should fungicides be applied to manage higher risk of white mould?
- Can fungicide performance be improved by changing the application interval and /or application frequency?
- Are up to three applications of fungicide required?

When white mould risk is high, research has shown the following for all market classes of beans:

1. If your canopy is open, you can improve control of white mould while not sacrificing yield by doing one fungicide pass when 70 to 85 per cent of plants have initial pin-pods.
2. If you have a closed canopy, consider at least a two pass fungicide system. The first application should be made when the field has 10-20 per cent of plants with initial pin pods.

Once the farmer has decided on a single fungicide application system, they will want to wait to spray because if they spray too soon, new growth won't be protected during the later part of the infection period.

Generally, the single fungicide application can have the most impact by applying when approximately 65 to 90 per cent of the dry bean plants have initial pin-shaped pods.

In a multiple pass fungicide system, reducing the number of days between applications will lessen the amount of unprotected new bean growth. This should decrease any yield penalty resulting from applying fungicides too early.

If a farmer decides to use a two-pass fungicide system, it was traditionally thought that the second application should be 10 to 14 days after the first.

When is the best time to make that first fungicide application? Generally, the best time to make the first application should be when approximately five to 20 per cent of plants have initial pin-shaped pods.

Unless your dry beans are starting to bloom, and all the conditions aren't right for white mould (open canopy, high temperatures), then the first application can be delayed until approximately 50 per cent of plants have initial pin-pods.

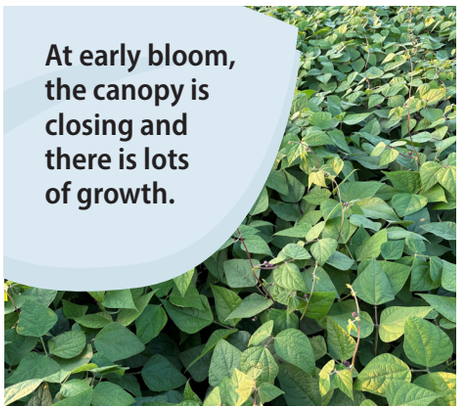
Under high-risk conditions, should producers be confident that two fungicide applications are enough protection? NDSU is studying timings and three-pass fungicide systems. With only two years of data so far, they need several more years of results to be confident in recommendations.

In 2025, the NDSU plots received so much rain that they didn't need to turn on the supplemental irrigation. Even with three fungicide applications, they still discovered over 60 per cent of the canopy diseased.

In Pinto Beans and Kidney Beans, which had three applications made seven to eight days apart, it appeared to optimize white mould management. With lower disease severity, higher yields and the ability to be more flexible when making the first application, the three-pass system, had similar results to applying earlier in bloom stage and over a larger number of dates.

In Black Beans, making a third fungicide application, had very little improvement in white mould management.

In Navy Beans, there was no response difference between two and three applications. ■



Photos: Wendy McDonald