

On a world scale canola, (oil seed rape), is the crop most severely damaged by slugs. In Australia, under moist conditions, snails & slugs can also pose a threat to canola crops. Slugs do not thrive in dry conditions and most slug species, unlike most snail species, lay several clutches of eggs throughout the year including in summer. White snails lay clutches of eggs in autumn soon after the end of aestivation. The eggs of both slugs and snails only mature in moist conditions.

Most of the problems with slugs in canola occurs at sowing or in the early stages of growth. It is common practice in Europe to mix snail and slug baits with the seed at sowing so the molluscicide is directly sown along with the seed. This is an effective way of killing slugs travelling the drill lines and relatively little molluscicide is needed. However, application in drill lines requires the pellet to be more water resistant and harder than what is optimum for pellets that are applied to the soil. Also any slugs not travelling along the drill lines will attack the seedlings as soon as they emerge above the soil surface. If slugs are a potential problem it is recommended that baiting on bare soil occur 4 or 5 days before sowing if the soil is moist. Snails can attack seedlings but the main problem with snails arises because snails climb up the stalks and aestivate which then contaminates the harvest. Also if the plants are windrowed, snails can climb up into the plant off the soil surface and contaminate the crop. It is possible to separate snails from the seeds but every effort should be made to reduce the number of snails before harvest.

It is important to establish how severe the infestation is before applying **ERADICATE**. Slug traps need to be placed throughout the area to be sown. Usually about 1 trap per one or two acres is needed. Generally slug infestations will be higher in the damper areas of the growing area and are likely to be high near any grass/pasture area such as the field margins. Slugs congregate in areas where they can consume roots. Areas which have recently been used for pasture often have a higher proportion of organic matter and a higher level of slug infestation. Furthermore, generally if there is a high level of crop trash on the soil surface slug numbers tend to be higher. There are various designs of slug traps including some commercially available products. However it is easy to make suitable traps by cutting a masonite sheet into squares about 30 cms x 30 cms and drilling a hole in the middle. These traps are placed on a level area of soil and secured by a "tent" peg through the hole in the middle. It is important that the trap sits snugly on the soil surface as any draught under the trap will reduce the number of slugs caught. Usually a few chicken pellets are spread over the soil surface before securing with the steel peg. If the underside of the trap is inspected within a half an hour of dawn slugs will be found if slugs are present. If there are any slugs under more than half the traps, baiting is recommended.

If there is considerable crop trash on the soil surface, rolling or burning will reduce number of white snails considerably. This is best done before the end of summer. If there is a high infestation of white snails **ERADICATE** can be applied to the growing crop, provided the soil is moist and the weather cool. The recommended application rate is 5 kg/ha for light infestations and up to 15 kg/ha for heavy infestations.



Deroceras reticulatum



Theba pisana



Cochlicella barbara