

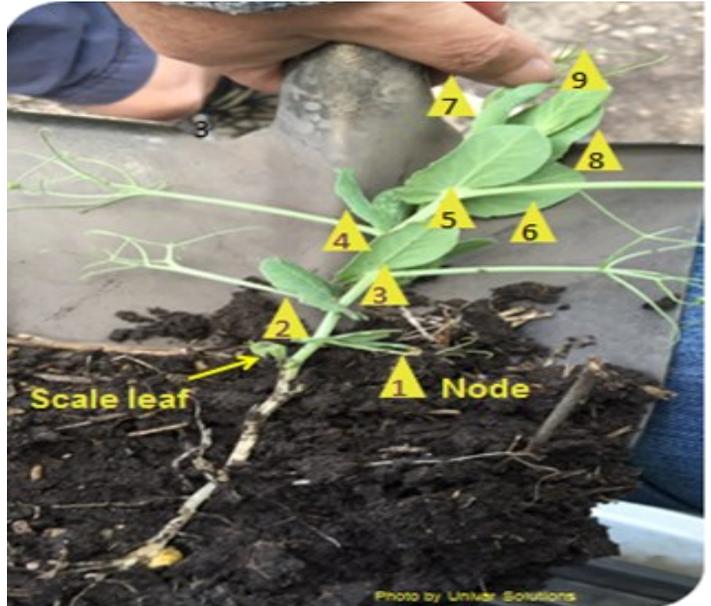
Ask Ms. Ag Expert



Do your pulse crop staging skills measure up?

Pulses crops such as peas and lentils are already seeded and are starting to emerge. It will not be long before staging these crops for in-crop herbicide applications. Most but not all, in-crop herbicide labels recommend application between specific node stages and not by the actual height of the crop. Do your pulse crop staging skills measure up?

2019 is starting off with cooler than normal temperatures and this could have an impact on staging pulses like peas and lentils due to slower than normal growth. The number of nodes you would normally expect on a 8 cm plant may be quite different this spring. Both cool weather and drought conditions may limit the growth between internodes, compacting the stem and reducing crop height. If a pea crop is staged by height alone, the maturity of the peas would not be correct. Application of a broadleaf herbicide registered for peas by height alone, will give a false estimate of the actual maturity of the crop. Many in-crop pulse herbicides risk crop injury if they are applied after the recommended node stage of the crop. To properly access the stage of a pulse crop, count the nodes not the height of the crop.



Most post-emergent pea herbicides used today such as imazamox, imazethapyr, and bentazon recommend application up to and including the six node stage of peas (6 true leaves). Do not stage a pulse crop by using height because plants can be variable in height depending on environmental conditions. It takes more than just a ruler so how do you count the node stage of the crop? A node is the point where a true leaf joins the stems but remember not to count the scale leaf. A scale leaf is the first leaf to emerge on a pulse crop and they are small and poorly developed. Scale leaves are found just at or below ground level and they should not be included when counting nodes.

So when staging pulse crops, it's the node stage you want to count, not the actual height of the crop. Check the specific product's information to confirm are if they talking: above ground nodes which excludes the scale leaves or total nodes with includes the scale leaves. Your herbicide recommendations and crop safety depend on this information. Happy scouting!