

## **2011 National Sunflower Survey**

Each year the National Sunflower Association conducts a survey of the nation's sunflower crop. Volunteers from several states visit sunflower fields to survey the crop condition.

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The most common disease found in Vermont and Northern Massachusetts sunflower fields was sclerotinia head rot (Figure 2), which was evident in 75% of fields surveyed and damaged an average of 9.3% of plants in fields where it was present. Though over 80% of the fields surveyed had some sclerotinia stalk rot present, the number of plants affected was 8.5% in infected fields. Phomopsis stem canker, an emerging disease that manifests as a large brown lesion on stalks, was included in the nationwide survey for the first time in 2011. Possible signs of phomopsis were identified in only one field in Vermont during the survey.

Insect damage was mostly caused by banded sunflower moth. The incidence of banded sunflower moth damage was highest in Vermont. More than 63% of the fields surveyed had damaged seeds, and of these fields, an average 17% of the seeds were damaged. This insect predated on seeds, lowering test weight and reducing oil content and yields. There was no long-horned beetle damage identified and very low sunflower seed weevil and sunflower bud moth damage compared to national results.

The most prevalent weeds identified in the fields were barnyardgrass, common lambsquarter, common ragweed, wild mustard, and quackgrass. Survey-wide, broadleaf weeds were more prevalent than grasses.

In general, 2011 was a very challenging crop year in the Northeast, with delayed planting and severe weather events in addition to the usual pest damage