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Pest Cast

The Row Crops IPM Newsletter for the LRGV, a cooperative project of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cotton & Grain Producers of the lower Rio Grande.

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Editor

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General Situation: A very warm to hot week with no rain. Crops were doing very well. Some irrigation of cotton began this week. Grain sorghum and corn continued to mature. Insect activity was mixed.

Figure 1. Syrphid fly pupa.

Cotton: Sandy soils were drying fast and a few sandy fields were being irrigated. Most other fields will have irrigation applied by the end of next week if rain does not fall before then. Dryland fields were still very wet in the 3-8 inch layer. All cotton fields across the Valley looked very much alike whether irrigated or dryland. Many fields had small to medium sized bolls showing and most fields were at least blooming by this week. Growth regulator (mepiquat chloride) treatments were being reported Valley wide this week. Most fields appear to be in need of some help to slow very rapid plant growth. Beneficial insect activity remained very high this week in most fields. The usual lady beatles, green lacewings, nabid bugs and syrphid fly larvae, pupa and adults were all observed. The larva of syrphid flies is a blind maggot which finds aphids and other similar prey by "smell". When the larva has molted for the last time, it turns into the green-colored "bird dropping" shape as seen in Figure 1. This stage of the syrphid fly was seen in relatively large numbers in most cotton fields around the Valley this week. Once the

Figure 3. Syrphid fly adult (a.k.a. Hover fly) in sorghum.

Figure 2. Green lacewing larva feeding on syrphid fly pupa 5-21-12.

pupa emerges as an adult fly, it will look like the one in figure 3. The adult most often hovers around plants on which it will lay its eggs to start the cycle all over again. So, don't go around smashing the little green drops on the leaves. They are good friends, even though they may get eaten by another friend like the lacewing larva.

Cotton fleahoppers and a small number of high-aphid infestations were reported this week. Spraying was on-going for fleahoppers in mostly irrigated areas and a few fields with aphid problems. Most fields of dryland cotton had much lower numbers of fleahoppers and aphids this week.

Figure 4. Spidermites on cotton leaf.

Spidermites were on the increase, especially in Cameron and Hidalgo counties. Despite all of the rain just a short week ago, mites were on the move in more fields than was reported last week. Miticide sprays could be needed next week in many fields unless mite numbers start reversing from the current upward trend.

Whitefly infestations were reported to be higher this week than last. Some reports indicated that whitefly spraying had started and more will commence next week if the current populations continue to go higher. The highest infestations were reported along the Rio Grande, especially where vegetable fields were nearby. At least one abandoned cabbage field was providing large numbers of whiteflies safe haven and a source for movement to other nearby crops like cotton. If you know of an old vegetable field that is a possible source for whiteflies near you, talk to the neighbor who has/have the field and try to talk them into cleaning up the vegetable crop residue. That will be cheaper than just sitting on the sidelines while you spend large dollars for whitefly control.

There was a report of thrips migrating from nearby onion fields to cotton. Spraying was conducted and appeared to be successful. Otherwise, thrips were not reported as a problem in cotton this week.

Weed control was another very active topic this week. Many fields were too wet last week to put either spray equipment or cultivators into. This week many fields had larger numbers and sizes of weeds, but control was very good.

Figure 5. Grain color changing 5-22-12.

Grain Sorghum: Sorghum continued to look good this week. Color changes were observed from fields across the Valley. Some fields were just beginning to bloom.

Sorghum midge was sprayed in a few fields this week. Reports indicated that midge were not in every blooming field at sprayable levels. Some fields as close as 1/4 mile away from a higher midge field had none or few midges. Check those fields and remember that the best times for searching for midge is from about 10 am to 2 pm.

And, don't just check the edges of fields. Midge often bunch-up on field margins and nowhere else. This can lead to false treatment decisions. Check the fields further inside, at least 20 to 30 rows in. That way, about 1 midge per head (see table below) are found away from the field edge, you know for certain the field needs spraying. If the field(s) in question needs a spray for midge, don't assume that one spray will finish the midge for the season. Late blooming sorghum (yellow blooms, not orange) often need 2 to 4 sprays for midge if numbers are high, the field has just initiated blooming and/or the field is not uniform in blooming. Spray if needed and then keep checking until most of the field has reached or passed orange bloom stage. If a large portion of the field is still in the yellow bloom stage, keep checking. The following table shows how to determine whether you have reached a treatment level of midge in your field:

Sorghum Midge*

Control Cost $/acre	Crop Value in $ Per 100 lbs	Economic injury level--- Mean number of Midges/flowering head: Flowering Heads= 18,000/acre	Flowering Heads= 45,000/acre	Flowering Heads= 67,500/acre
5	6	1.6	0.6	0.4
5	7	1.3	0.5	0.34
5	8	1.2	0.5	0.3
6	6	1.9	0.8	0.5
6	7	1.6	0.7	0.4
6	8	1.4	0.6	0.35
7	6	2.2	0.85	0.6
7	7	1.9	0.75	0.5
7	8	1.6	0.65	0.45

* From Extension Publication B-1220, Managing Insects and Mite Pests of Texas Sorghum

If the value of your sorghum is higher than $8.00 per hundred weight, then the number of midge per head to make a treatment decision will be lower than those shown in the table above.

Some reports of rice stinkbug spraying in a few fields were received this week. We showed the economic threshold table for rice stinkbugs in last week's Pest Cast. Rice stinkbugs can be a concern on late blooming to milk stage of growth. Check your fields carefully before spraying.

Field Day Coming Up

There will be a field day at Rio Farms for Grain Sorghum, Corn and Sunflowers on Thursday, May 31. The event will kickoff at 10:00 am and end at 1:30 pm. There will field tours and speakers for which you can earn CEU's for 1 General, 1 IPM and 1 Laws & Regs.

LRGV

BOLL WEEVIL TRAPPING INFORMATION

YTD	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
	.00863	.00194	.00740	.16775	.12534	.25231	.33815	1.24723

Week Ending	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
4/1/12	.03353	.00476	.00672	.19847	.08503	.64118	.48544	0
4/8/12	.01617	.00360	.00592	.11633	.30512	.40392	.37552	0
4/15/12	.01572	.00114	.00312	.23686	.17102	.36414	.88875	6.47392
4/22/12	.00339	.00133	.01426	.38106	.05425	.23751	.15855	3.48685
4/29/12	.00474	.00043	.01528	.09081	.09113	.18227	.08629	1.70269
5/6/12	.00136	.00077	.00825	.05548	.08168	.07073	.09976	.73028
5/13/12	.00055	.00174	.00291	.02454	.07013	.17113	.09204	.72057
5/20/12	.00485	.00234	.00140	.10516	.08410	.06717	.20786	.58319

Traps inspected for current week: 28,233

Heat Units (H.U.) as shown are calculated from the dates of planting Shown in the left column		
Dates	2012 H.U.s	Historical H.U.s
2/15	1651.5	1432.8
3/1	1502.5	1331.0
3/15	1399.0	1215.7
4/1	1126.5	1011.5

In Memoriam

Phillip Bennack

1957-2012

A great friend of agriculture

and

a great friend.

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