

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 Valley

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Editor

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General Situation: Some rain fell in scattered amounts on Sunday. That was two relatively minor rain events in 4 days--one on Thursday of last week and this past Sunday. The two-event rainfall amount ranged from 0 to near 2 inches in spots. It was partly cloudy to fully overcast much of the time during and after the rains helped to lower the temperature through much of this week. All in all, crops appeared to be responding to the improved weather conditions this week. But, the rains were not adequate in area covered or quantity to solve our drought problem. So, keeping thinking rain.

Cotton: Cotton ranges in age from not yet squaring to blooming out the top with some large bolls. Despite the age range, our cotton appears to be headed for an earlier than usual harvest due in part to the weather conditions this season. Last week we discussed how the irrigated cotton crop appeared to have suffered some form of stress compared to the dryland crop. Well, what a difference a week can make. This week most of the irrigated fields were looking like they should have a month ago. Irrigated fields had much taller canopies and a generally more vigorous growth than last week. Nodes above white flower (NAWF) ranged from 4 to 9. Some irrigated fields still continued to lag behind, but overall, irrigated crop conditions were much improved.

Rainfall was fairly good north and east of Lyford and generally north of highway 186 in Willacy county. Rainfall was in the 3/4 to 1-1/4 inch range. Dryland cotton fields were improved where rain fell in amounts above 1/2 inch. Shoveling down to about 6 inches below the soil surface in the planted drill showed very good moisture. NAWF in fields which received adequate rain ranged from 4 to 8. Rainfall was short in most other areas and dryland fields showed the effects. NAWF counts in areas which received little to no rainfall ranged from 2 to 6. Cotton plants in most of those fields were blooming out the top.

Hail which came with the rain storm on Sunday afternoon fell on a few fields along highway 490 east of Lyford. Where the hail fell, it did considerable damage to cotton, stripping leaves and much of the fruit to the ground. Fortunately, only a relatively small area was hard hit.

Insect and other pest activity was somewhat limited this week. Very few aphids or mites were observed in most fields. Overall, only a small number of fields required treatment for mites. The rain seemed to have reduced much of the mite infestation we saw increasing last week.

The high beet armyworm moth captures reported by the Boll Weevil Eradication Program last week were much lower this week. You may recall that last week BWEP beet armyworm moth traps averaged 448.3 moths per trap. This week beet armyworm traps captured 34.1 moths per trap. That is quite a drop and good news. But, remember that beet armyworm moths caught in traps do not necessarily indicate what is in fields. Checking fields is the best method to determine whether beet armyworms are becoming a problem in cotton fields. They were not this week.

Whiteflies increased to the point that a few fields south of Mercedes and near Donna needed spraying this week. The dry weather has helped whiteflies and old vegetable fields which may have been hosting whiteflies have been plowed out and forced the whiteflies to move. Nearby cotton fields are often the target. Early application of the appropriate insecticides before large numbers of nymphs are found is key to preventing overwhelming whitefly infestations. The Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Arizona has the best information currently available on whitefly management in cotton. While conditions in Arizona are quite different than in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the University of Arizona information useful in our situation. The following link will take you to the current U of A whitefly information for cotton: <http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/az1404.pdf>.

LRGV

BOLL WEEVIL TRAPPING INFORMATION

YTD	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
	.00189	.00806	.17765	.13110	.27630	.35697	1.52198

Week Ending	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
4/3/11	.00476	.00672	.19847	.08503	.64118	.48544	0
4/10/11	.00360	.00592	.11633	.30512	.40392	.37552	0
4/17/11	.00114	.00312	.23686	.17102	.36414	.88875	6.47392
4/24/11	.00133	.01426	.38106	.05425	.23751	.15855	3.48685
5/1/11	.00043	.01528	.09081	.09113	.18227	.08629	1.70269
05/8/11	.00077	.00825	.05548	.08168	.07073	.09976	.73028
05/15/11	.00174	.00291	.02454	.07013	.17113	.09204	.72057

Traps inspected for current week: 47,071

Grain Sorghum and Corn: Grain sorghum continued on to maturity in most fields this week. Grain heads were turning dark nearly brown in color indicating near full maturity. A few fields had yet to head and those fields should be checked regularly once blooming commences for sorghum midge. The following is an excerpt on sampling sorghum midge from the Texas AgriLife Extension Service publication, *Managing Insects and Mite Pests of Texas Sorghum*.

To determine if adult sorghum midges are in a sorghum field, check at mid-morning when the temperature warms to approximately 85 degrees F. Sorghum midge adults are most abundant then on flowering sorghum grain heads. Because adult sorghum midges live less than 1 day, each day a new brood of adults emerges.

Sampling must be done almost daily during the time sorghum grain heads are flowering. Sorghum midge adults can be seen crawling on or flying about flowering sorghum grain heads. The simplest and most efficient way to detect and count sorghum midges is to inspect carefully and at close range all sides of randomly selected flowering grain heads. Handle grain heads carefully during inspection to avoid disturbing adult sorghum midges. Other sampling methods can be used, such as placing a clear plastic bag or jar over the sorghum grain head to trap adults. Because they are relatively weak fliers and rely on wind currents to aid their dispersal, adult sorghum midges usually are most abundant along edges of sorghum fields. For this reason, inspect plants along field borders first, particularly those downwind of earlier flowering sorghum or johnsongrass. If no or few sorghum midges are found on sorghum grain heads along field edges, there should be little need to sample the entire field. However, if you find more than one sorghum midge per flowering grain head in

border areas of a sorghum field, inspect the rest of the field. Sample at least 20 flowering grain heads for every 20 acres in a field. For fields smaller than 20 acres, sample 40 flowering grain heads.

We have also attached the economic threshold table to determine when to spray for midge in grain sorghum.

Sorghum Midge

Control Cost \$/acre	Crop Value, \$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

A message from Cotton & Grain Producers' Association
Webb Wallace, Executive Director

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