



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.

John W. Norman, Jr.
Editor

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GENERAL SITUATION: Very hot and dry. Valley agriculture has gone from too wet to very dry in 2 weeks time. Growers were irrigating cotton and a small amount of grain sorghum as fast as they could get the water out. Yield reductions have occurred in some fields because the fields dried out quickly and the crops matured too fast. Overall, crops were maturing fast and insect/mite activity increased in many fields of cotton this week.



Blooms on top in tall cotton.

COTTON: Field conditions were pushing cotton toward an earlier-than-hoped for ending. Heat units have been accumulating very fast of late (see Heat Unit chart near end of newsletter). While no open bolls were reported, more fields with bolls to the tops of plants were seen this week than last. Small bolls and some squares were being aborted by cotton due to the heat and dry weather. Large sized bolls were common this week in most fields. Many fields had nodes above white flower (NAWF) counts ranging from 0 to 8. Fields planted from March 15 to 30 commonly had NAWF counts of 4

to 6. Earlier plantings had even lower NAWF counts. Another 2-3 inch rain on cotton right now would be most beneficial.



Small bolls and some squares shed.

Spidermites were on the increase in more fields this week. A few more fields were sprayed for mites this week and more could be on tap by early next week.

Whiteflies also were on the rise in more fields this week. Adults-per-leaf counts ranged from 0 to near 40 per leaf. Three to 4 adults per leaf and at least one nymph per leaf is the recommended treatment threshold for whiteflies. Several fields had adult and nymph counts at or above the threshold this week. Check your fields to determine what your whitefly situation is.

Fleahopper infestations still were a concern in many younger fields this week. Many fields which had not yet flowered or just begun to flower had fleahopper counts exceeding 35 per 100 plants this week.



Lacewing larva on whitefly nymphs.

week and that growers should be checking their fields closely.

At least one field in Cameron County was sprayed for *Verde bugs* this week. A few scattered individual Verde bugs were also reported from eastern Willacy County this week. Small to medium sized bolls and all square stages are susceptible to Verde bug damage. Fields should be checked by opening squares and small boll bracts to see if Verde Bug adults or nymphs are present. Damage from Verde Bugs appear as small black feeding marks on small to medium bolls. Cut into the bolls to see if the black spot actually leads to damage inside the boll as other injuries to bolls can have the same as Verde bug damage. Square feeding by Verde bugs may be indicated by a yellow liquid residue on the top of the square. The yellow liquid is the fecal matter often left by the Verde bugs after they have fed on tops of squares or small bolls.

GRAIN SORGHUM: Harvesting is approaching fast. Glyphosate treatments began in some fields this week. Rain is not be favorable for sorghum producers, once harvesting begins. We have reached that time of the year when rain would be a mixed blessing. Sorghum does not need it now but cotton does.

Sorghum midge were reported to be above threshold in most blooming sorghum fields. Nothing but time and no more blooming sorghum at this time of the year will reduce populations of midge now. Once we get past this current midge cycle, another round of sorghum, which was planted in recent weeks and possibly in the next few weeks, will likely miss any serious threat of midge infestations unless the timing of bloom in all of the late planted sorghum fields is spread over several weeks to months. If the midge is provided a constant supply of blooming sorghum heads, populations can be expected to begin attacking blooming sorghum just like they have been doing over the last two to three weeks.

Small square loss - with the appearance of of fleahopper damage - was observed in many fields, especially those with very high fleahopper counts. If your fields have been blooming for some time now and are at or below 5 nodes above white flower, fleahoppers cannot cause yield loss from this point on. Less mature fields need to be inspected and evaluated on a case by case basis. Bollworms were reported from several fields, primarily on non-bt cotton. Counts of worms ranged from 0 to 18 per 100 in non-bt cotton. Worms were also reported in bt cotton this week. However, worm numbers were extremely low and no spraying for worms in bt cotton were received. Reports indicated that more worms could be in cotton next



Heat related damage to lower grain head kernels (shown in bracket). Photo courtesy of Frank Krupala, South Texas Ag Research-RGV, Inc.



Corn earworm feeding on sorghum head. Photo from: B-1220-
Managing Insect and Mite Pests in
Texas Sorghum

Headworms were reported from several locations this week. Most of the action was in late maturing grain. Not all late fields had worms in the heads, but many fields required treatment following counts of 2 to 4 worms per head.

A phenomenon not often seen in the Valley was reported recently in some sorghum fields, especially in eastern Willacy County. Grain sorghum heads with no grain set on the bottom of the head was observed in many later planted fields. According to Dr. Dan Fromme, Extension Agronomist, Corpus Christi, when the bottom part of the head was still inside the boot there was a spike in temperature which killed the pollen. Once the lower part of the head emerged from the boot, the flowers were sterile and there was no

pollen left, therefore, no grain was set on that part of the head. This same problem reportedly appeared in sorghum in some fields in the Corpus area a couple of weeks ago.



Corn showing signs of being ready for harvest.

No doubt, the current hot and very dry weather pattern enhanced the drying-down of corn and mites across the Valley this week.

CORN: At least one report of corn harvesting was received this week from some January planted acreage. Other fields of corn ranged from very green to nearly ready to harvest this week. Many fields of early planted corn showed fired leaves from natural maturity, possible leaf disease and banks grass mites.



Banks grass mite on corn leaf.



Maturing corn this week



Green corn with a ways to go this week

LRGV**BOLL WEEVIL TRAPPING INFORMATION**

YTD	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
	.00745	.00197	.00722	.16713	.11152	.23883	.38684	1.09145

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
5/27/12	.00426	.00177	.00336	.20724	.06413	.17113	.09204	.72057
6/3/12	.00339	.00244	.01018	.13857	.04752	.13497	1.00114	.82565

Traps inspected for current week: 36,035

Heat Units (H.U.) as shown are calculated from the dates of planting Shown in the left column

Planting Dates	2012 H.U.s	Historical H.U.s
2/15	2018.0	1751.2
3/1	1853.0	1649.3
3/15	1749.5	1534.1
4/1	1477.0	1329.9

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Contact Info

Pest Cast Newsletter
 Texas AgriLife Extension Service
 South District 12
 2401 East Highway 83
 Weslaco, TX 78596
 (956) 968-5581
 E-mail: d12south@ag.tamu.edu
<http://southtexas.tamu.edu>