



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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General Situation



Round and square modules at the gin yards

This will be the final regular issue of the 2013 summer crops season. As of right now more than over a fourth of the Valley's cotton has been harvested. Cotton harvesting is in full swing as the September 1st deadline is less than 2 weeks away. Currently cotton yields have been right at 3 bales to 3+ bales per acre in irrigated cotton and in dry land cotton $\frac{3}{4}$ bale per acre were being harvested.



This year's cotton crop faced a relentless drought and minor pest problems with the exception of the silver leaf whitefly. Early in the season we had some light fleahopper populations but nothing in comparison to the abundance of whiteflies mainly in the Brownsville and La Feria areas. Hands down what impressed me the most was how many beneficials I saw while scouting cotton. I believe it is an indicator that our growers are practicing good IPM management.

According to Larry Smith of the Texas Boll Weevil Foundation program, we are in much better shape this year than last year at this point with over a 90% reduction in the boll weevil numbers down 2012.

Current year to date captures are less than 7,000 boll weevils. This reduction of weevils is the result of several things such as the treatment program, reduced acreage planted due to the drought and better

crop/stalk destruction of cotton. “Growers have improved stalk destruction tremendously in the LRGV and since 2012 there has been a decrease in early season weevil populations”, Larry reports.

One goal of the Texas Boll Weevil Foundation is to make people aware of how crucial it is to remove hostable cotton plants between September to March to establish a “host free period”. The valley has failed to provide a “host free period” because of its subtropical climate enabling the cotton plant and the boll weevil to thrive all year long. Every plant that is not destroyed represents the chance of reproductive weevils becoming established and additional money lost. It is so important to manage a host free period to reduce boll weevil numbers to ensure next year’s cotton crop.

It is remarkable to see that when the TBWEF was established the total boll weevil captures for the LRGV were almost at 4 million in 2006 and remarkably in 2 years they were able to bring those numbers down to about 280,000 in 2008. By 2011 and 2012 the boll weevil captures are now roughly at 210,000 for those two years. To go from 4 million weevils to less than 7,000 at the present time, in the span of seven year is outstanding and the result of countless efforts and organization from our growers and research organizations.

Stalk Destruction

September 1 is the deadline for stalk destruction. Cotton stalks should be either completely plowed down or shredded down to 6-8 inches in height. Standing cotton stalks should be sprayed with label approved herbicides at least within 7 days after harvest for good control to avoid any regrowth.



Stalks being destroyed

Thank you.

On that note, I hope this year’s Pest Cast has provided useful information in a timely manner. For those of you who have any comments or suggestions for improving the Pest Cast, please email, mail, or phone them to the contact info at the end of the newsletter.

I would like to thank all the Valley Growers for their continued support of the Pest Cast. Thank you! It’s been exciting meeting many of you and I look forward to many more cotton seasons. Finally, I want to offer a special thanks to our Sponsors listed on the next page. We could not have been able to get this job done without their support. Thank you.

A special thanks is also due to those who helped contribute valuable information to the Pest Cast as well as guide me through my first cotton season:

Thanks guys!: John Norman, Jim Trolinger-CPS, Mike Grey-Wilbur Ellis, Webb Wallace-consultant and executive director Cotton and Grain Producers Association, Bruce King –consultant and Jacob Pekar-consultant.

We thank the following Sponsors of the Pest Cast newsletter for their very generous contributions toward this effort.



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Announcement

3rd Organic Conference of the RGV Mid Valley

South Texas College students will present their work on diverse topics dealing with Organic Production of Vegetables.

Date: Friday August 23, 2013

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where: Hoblitzelle Auditorium at Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center 2401 East Highway 83,
Weslaco, TX, 78596

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