



## 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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### **New Year/Season**

It's a new year and as you all know a new growing season so welcome back to your Integrated Pest Management (IPM) news source for 2013 in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Driving around the valley I've noticed many growers already have their furrows up for their row crops and some have even started their pre-plant irrigation to get that much needed soil moisture for their soil profile before planting. Hopefully this year will bring us rain when needed in those critical months ahead. Either way, being a grower here in the Valley it is always important to practice better management of water use because of the increasing years of drought.

I would like to introduce myself, Hello my name is Danielle Sekula and I was hired as your new IPM extension agent here for the lower Rio Grande Valley. I look forward to working with you and meeting you all as we start this new planting season. For those of you wondering, I have an extensive citrus entomology background but am excited to learn and excel at row crops (cotton, sorghum and corn). If there is anything I can help you with or if there are any suggestions on what trials you'd like to see, please call me at 956-968-5581 or email me at [Danielle.Sekula@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Danielle.Sekula@ag.tamu.edu). This newsletter will be free for all who want it, just send me an email and we will include you in the mailing list. If you do not have an email you can call and give us your mailing address and we will be sure to add you.

We had about 175 people in attendance at our annual RGV PrePlant Conference. A special thanks to Brad Cowan, Enrique Perez, and Omar Gonzales who put on an excellent and very informative conference. If you haven't already done so, don't forget that the 'Soil Testing Campaign' is still going on and you have until March 1, 2013 to get your samples along with a completed form to the Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, County Extension offices and to the District 12 office in Weslaco. A reminder, there will be the 8<sup>th</sup> Rio Grande Valley Irrigation Conference and Trade Show in the auditorium at the AgriLife Extension in Weslaco Tuesday January 29<sup>th</sup> from 8am-5pm.

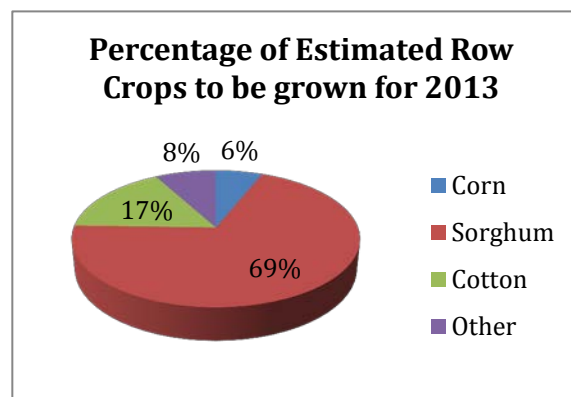
### **Cotton**

With the drought each year and the constant need to practice better water management in cotton, it has become increasingly important to take the time to consider which seed varieties will give you your optimal yield potential. Variety selection has become one of the most important decisions a cotton producer makes each spring because it sets the stage for the entire season and with all the selection it is key to keep these things in mind. When selecting a seed variety ask it is drought tolerant, is it tolerant to nematodes and

disease? What kind of plant type is it (fruiting in a columnar pattern or bushy type)? Should you choose Bt or conventional? All these can contribute to yield. Maturity is another thing to consider, whether it is early, early-mid, mid, mid-full, and full season. Generally in South Texas we tend to lean towards more full season varieties. Leaf type is important because hairy leaves can sometimes ward off insects or work in favor of some insects such as whiteflies, just an example. Fiber quality is another factor that is very important to consider since we compete in a global market. All companies have good seed varieties to grow but in general it is the growers right to use multiple years data done on multiple site locations in order to help them make their final decision. For information about seed variety trails you can go to <http://varietytesting.tamu.edu>.

## Grain Sorghum

I'm sure you have already heard or noticed grain sorghum seed will be in high demand and in short supply this year and an increase in cost as well. From the information gathered on a survey completed by some of our local growers at the RGV Preplant conference it look like there will be a decrease in cotton planting (17% on graph) and a switch to an increase in sorghum planting (69% on graph) this year. Of course this is not representative of the whole valley, just the growers who attended the meeting. So with that, below is some information on grain sorghum seed costs.



The information below on Action Tips and sorghum seed prices of 2013 was taken from: "Focus on South Plains Agriculture"

### Action Tips for Grain Sorghum Seed

- If you anticipate needing grain sorghum seed in 2013 I urge you to check with your preferred seed dealer now. Supply is declining and prices are subject to change (they won't be going down!). The longer you wait the less selection you will have.
- Be cautious about moving to a maturity of grain sorghum seed that is not appropriate for your production system. If all you can find is early maturity hybrids, then call another dealer. Don't book a medium-long or long season hybrid for dryland just because that's all you can get.
- Evaluate your seeding rate. For grain sorghum seeding rate targets in the South Plains or Texas High Plains, consult the two different United Sorghum Checkoff Program grain sorghum pocket guides that cover the Texas High Plains at <http://sorghumcheckoff.com/for-farmer/production-tools/> {These include editions for West Texas (South Plains, Concho Valley, Rolling Plains), and High Plains (Texas Panhandle)}. Many producers in Texas still plant more seed than they need, sometimes at the expense of grain yield. I would rather pick a preferred hybrid and reduce the seeding rate by 20% to stretch a limited supply of seed than go with something I am not familiar or is less appropriate.

Here is a sampling of grain sorghum seed prices (Dec. 18, 2012) from four seed companies with Texas High Plains sales. This represents both regional and national brands. Prices are the same across Texas.

Company #1: Concep III treated seed only (allows use of Dual Magnum herbicide), \$109/bag. Gaucho or CruiserMaxx treated, about \$159/bag. Three of six primary hybrids sold out, 1 is thin, 2 with modest supply. 4% discount if paid in Jan.-Feb.

Company #2: \$100 to \$135/bag, depending on hybrid. Add \$18/bag for Concep III. Gaucho treatment about \$13-15/bag. Other premium comprehensive seed treatments somewhat higher than Gaucho. Seed supply is extremely short, and some hybrids are sold out. No pre-pay discounts as seed supplies are too short

Company #3: All hybrids are \$172-184/bag which have Concep III and CruiserMaxx. They don't sell grain sorghum seed any other way. All medium maturity hybrids sold out (at least in High Plains), but some supplies left of medium-early and medium-long. 7% cash discount if paid by Jan. 18, and quantity discounts available.

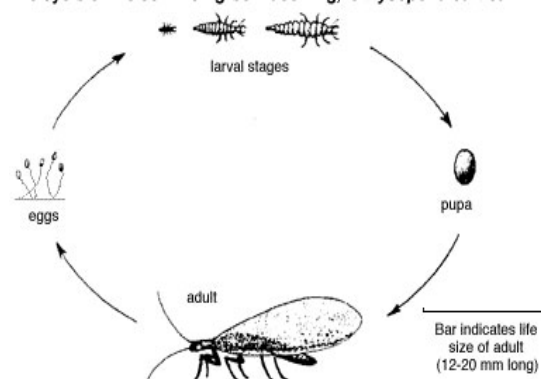
Company #4: \$102/bag for older lines, \$110/bag for newer lines, all Concep III treated. Up to \$64/bag for Poncho treatment. Seed supplies low and company will re-allocate remaining seed stocks in early January. Call about discounts.

## Green Lacewing

Green lacewings (*Chrysoperla carnea*) are very well known natural predators in most crops ranging from corn, cotton, potatoes, tomatoes, leafy greens, citrus and other crops infested by aphids. The adults just feed on nectar and honeydew but their larvae are good killers feeding on aphid infestations and other pests. The adults are lime green in color and they are about 12-20mm long (no bigger than 1/3 of your index finger). The adults have long antennae and wings to fly but they are fragile. They are more active fliers in the evenings and at night and lay oval shaped eggs one by one at end of silken stalks, they look like whitish pale green balloons. The larvae are gray or brownish and have large pincers in which they do the killing/feeding with. Larvae can be about 5 mm long and can attack different species of aphids, spidermites, thrips, whiteflies, leafhopper eggs, leafminers, softscale nymphs, caterpillars, and other prey. Sometimes lacewings are called aphid predators or aphid lions because it has been reported they can eat anywhere from 100-600 aphids each. At one point in Texas there was a mass release of *C. carnea* in a Cotton field trial in Texas where the lacewings reduced bollworm infestation by 96%, but recent studies have shown that lacewing larvae sometimes prey on other predators that help with aphid control in cotton, plus it was very costly to mass release lacewings. Lacewings overwinter as adults and during the spring and summer the females can lay several hundred small eggs on leaves, in which the larvae will emerge in 3-6 days. The larval stage lasts 2-3 weeks in which it the lacewing has 3 instars. Then the mature third instars will spin a silken cocoon and will emerge as adults in 10 to 14 days. In the summer their life cycle can be under 4 weeks given higher temperatures and there are anywhere from two to several generations per year. Let's hope to see plenty of lacewings this growing season.



Life cycle of the common green lacewing, *Chrysoperla carnea*



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## Sponsorship

Pest Cast sponsorship opportunities will be available again this year. Your support is very much appreciated. Cotton and Grain Producers of the LRGV will be coordinating the sponsorships again. For more information on sponsorship, please contact Webb Wallace at [cottonandgrain.lrgv@gmail.com](mailto:cottonandgrain.lrgv@gmail.com) or (956) 491-1793.

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