



## 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

Our days down here in the LRGV have been pretty hot averaging out at 100°F each day, heat index of 105°F. Looks like we will be heading into next week on Tuesday with some pretty good chances for rain so might be a busy weekend for some trying to apply herbicides and others harvesting through Monday.

### Cotton

Starting to see more cotton fields with open bolls as we head towards the end of this month. Majority of the fields are far along with mature bolls on the bottoms and tops. While out in Willacy County some cotton fields look like they are hurting and



Figure 1: Open boll cotton

needed more rain as the heat has caused them to mature and cutout faster than expected. Populations of tarnished plantbugs are very low. Even though we are harvesting grain sorghum I do not see the pressure and build up we had last year this is probably due to the low moisture as it has been very dry and this might have impacted populations. However I was down by the river this week and was in some late planted cotton that

had pin head squares that had been irrigated and was finding



Figure 2: These black bellied whistling Ducks know what's up... cotton being irrigated!



fleahoppers, couple Verde bugs and couple of tarnished plantbugs on the immature bolls, these late planted fields will want to consider spray treatment to protect the yield. But majority of cotton has mature bolls and is past stage of harm to the bolls by plantbugs. Whitefly populations have also diminished as I have not seen many nymphs, still seeing some adults but not seeing populations that warrant spray treatment. Still seeing lots of beneficials in the cotton, lots of pirate bugs, big eyed bugs, lacewings and a few lady beetles and larvas which is always good.

### Grain Sorghum

The past two weeks I have seen a lot of grain sorghum being harvested (Fig 3). Those fields that still have green leaves have sugarcane aphid present but very little to none populations. We are seeing the sugarcane aphid being controlled in populations by a lot of beneficials at work. Beneficials in sorghum such as green lacewings, pseudoschymenes larvas, ladybeetle larvas, syrphid larvas (Fig 4) and parasitoids (tiny parasitic



Figure 3: Sorghum being harvested

wasps) are taking care of the sugarcane aphid populations. You might have come across a sorghum leaf that appeared to have 'blue aphids' on it (See figure 5), that was more than likely a black or blue-black mummy that was parasitized after the parasitic *Aphelinus* wasp feeds, inserts an egg, then the larva will feed, then develop and the *Aphelinus* leaves (Fig 6). You will not be able to pick up on the parasitic wasp *Aphelinus* so easy as it is very tiny and I myself have only found him about 3 times this year but I have seen his feeding he does by the blue aphids he leaves behind. Just thought you all would like a closer look of what I've been seeing out in the field and documenting.

Take care and have a great weekend.



Figure 4: Syrphid larva feeding on SCA



Figure 5: Sugarcane Aphids parasitized by Aphelinus as you can see they are blue, and you can see two that are not yet.



Figure 6: Sugarcane aphid that has turned blue and has exit hole from Aphelinus feeding and leaving (Center aphid in pic)

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