



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

Hi everyone! This week we experienced a little bit of rain on Monday night creeping into Tuesday morning with rain totals of anywhere from 0.20 to 1 inch in some areas but for the majority of the LRGV it was very light. Most days have been in the mid-80s with nights in the 60s but with some colder nights in between.

Cotton

According to Texas Bollweevil Eradication Foundation there has been a total of 198,869.7 acres of cotton planted in the LRGV to date. The number of acres that have been treated for boll weevil from the start of the 2018 year to date has been 5,204.3 acres. They are still finding a few late planted cotton fields and so acreage expected to fluctuate from number reported but not by much. For our neighbors to the south in Tamaulipas the total cotton acreage planted to date is 22,628.6 acres (9,157.4 ha.).

We had a bit of a rough slow start but it appears as if cotton across the Valley is coming along nicely now. Majority of cotton is still in the early stages and has barely started to square. Then there is some earlier planted cotton in north Hidalgo and Willacy counties that is at 8 nodes and fully squaring. Some fields in the early cotelydon stage were sprayed for thrips this week while most fields are past that stage. We are slowly seeing cotton aphids increasing in fields across the valley. Majority of fields have a few cotton aphids but also have a good amount of active predators such as lady bug adults and larva, scymnus beetle larva and adults, and syrphid larvae. However if you do come across cotton where the growing point/terminal are completely covered in cotton aphids you may want to consider spraying. We have been picking up on red spidermites in the Midvalley area, Harlingen area, and Lyford areas. If we continue to have dry weather it will be critical to scout younger cotton for red spider mites to avoid stunted growth from excessive feeding. Some areas that had light red spidermite populations had them dislodged by the recent little bit of rain. In all three counties starting to pick up on fleahopper adults and nymphs but very few at this time so far. However, we are seeing more fleahoppers in the dryland cotton in Willacy and north Hidalgo counties where I have noticed some blasted squares damage from



Figure 1, 2: Cotton aphids being eaten by lady bug larva and scymnus larva



the fleahoppers. The next four to five weeks will be critical to monitor for fleahoppers as research shows that as many as 85% of total bolls harvested come from squares set during this time period. Again when scouting for fleahoppers, each time you sample (weekly is good) you will want to check 25 terminals in at least 4 locations of a field starting when the first squares are appearing. If you notice anywhere from 15 to 25 fleahoppers per 100 terminals with squares being lost (rule of thumb: 10% the first week of squaring, 15% the second week of squaring, and 25% the third week of squaring, with treatment rarely needed after first bloom) treatment is justified



Figure 3: Adult Fleahopper



Grain Sorghum and Corn

In grain sorghum we have been scouting several fields across all three counties. This week was our first spotting of sugarcane aphids in sorghum in Willacy County in the Lyford, and Raymondsville areas. While we have been coming across sugarcane aphids in commercial sorghum we have yet to see any populations of concern. We have also seen moderate populations of yellow sugarcane aphids and corn leaf aphids in most fields. Other than that the grain sorghum crop is looking good. Corn is also looking good as some fields are already silking and producing tassels. We have not run into any pests of concern in corn either.

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