



## 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

Welcome back everyone for another growing season in the LRGV! \*All county cotton and grain sorghum variety trials have been planted. A big thank you to our cooperating growers: Chuck McCutchen, Lynn Johnson, Richard Drawe, and Heron Castillo. While the crops are up the plot maps are not but will be soon.

This growing season has certainly been interesting as we have had several cold fronts come through with even one forecasted to be on its way this Sunday along with some potential rainfall as we make our way into April next week. Planting this year has been a stop and go process as growers try to work around the weather to get their acreage planted. We are very behind on heat units in comparison to previous years. The graph says it all as heat units for 2019 (purple line in Figure 1) are considerably lower than previous years past.

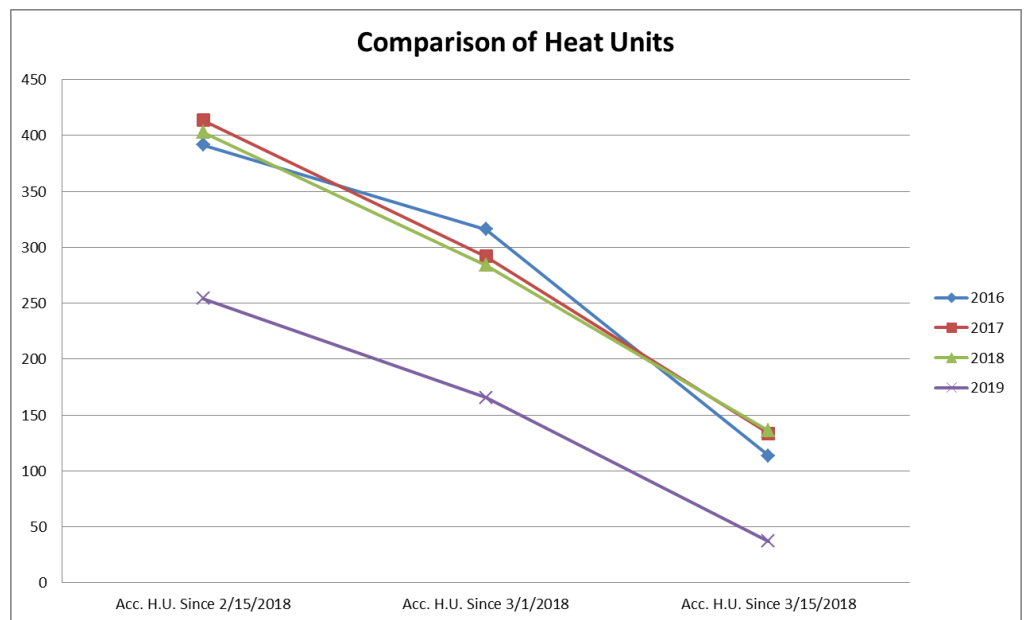


Figure 1: Heat Units chart comparing 2019 to previous years

### Cotton

Many started planting cotton full force the week of March 11<sup>th</sup> and stopped shortly before the cold front on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Then we received very light rainfall that halted planting and growers were able to get back in prior to the weekend and then were halted once again this week as we received heavy rains in the mid valley areas. Some areas north of La Villa received 2 to 3 inches of rain while in Harlingen it was reported 1 inch in some areas as other areas of the Valley received less than two tenths of an inch. Despite the great soil moisture profile we received this year prior to planting, cotton stands have varied due to the cold but overall look very good throughout the Valley. Some of the earlier cotton planted in February got hit with some really cold temperatures and had a little bit of cold damage showing on the cotyledon leaves but now are at 4 to 5 true leaves and looking much better. The majority of the Valley has cotton that is

barely receiving its first to second true leaf or has just emerged and is in the cotyledon stage. According to the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication program as of March 20<sup>th</sup> last week they were showing 106,433 acres of cotton planted with estimation of being 50% complete with cotton planting in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. As we continue to plant cotton we want to encourage producers to leave access around entire perimeter of field to be able to monitor trapping along with applying ground applications in case of weevil detection. Producers are also asked to please contact Boll Weevil office in their area to report acreage planted in cotton to insure there are no fields that are missed causing potential of weevil infestation. Reminder: any acreage planted in cotton will be monitored the entire year regardless if it is carried to harvest or destroyed early. Acreage planted in cotton this season will also be monitored next year as a carry-over field regardless of what crop is planted the following year. Thanks to all our LRGV cotton growers for their continued support working together with the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication program.



Figure 2: Cotton at 4-5 true leaves

Cotton across the Valley is very clean right now. Have not picked up on any thrips yet but expect to see some soon especially for those fields near onions as harvest for them has already begun. We have started to see a couple of adult cotton aphids in a handful of fields starting to make their way in. We have even picked up on a tiny bit of spider mites but with the recent rains and expected rains we will see if they will even be around in the next weeks to come or if the rain will knock them down. We have been approved for Section 18 label for Sulfoxaflor (Transform) in cotton for control of tarnished plantbugs. This Section 18 Emergency Exemption is effective March 1, 2019 and expires October 31, 2019. You can find the label as well as the Pest Cast and other info at:

<https://southtexas.tamu.edu/programs-and-services/ipm/>



Figure 3: Cotton aphid winged adult

### Grain Sorghum

Noticing much limited acreage of grain sorghum planted this year across the Valley. Most grain sorghum is at V2 to V4 stage but I did see some V7 sorghum. In the older sorghum at V7 we did find some pockets of sugarcane aphids present. Sugarcane aphids have been consistently present since last June with high numbers here in the Valley in late October into November of 2018 on sweet Sudan, other forage sorghums as well as volunteer sorghum. I just want growers that have sorghum to be aware of this and be monitoring your sorghum and as we get further into the season I will be giving updates. We have been approved for the Section 18 label for use of Sulfoxaflor (Transform) in grain sorghum for control of sugarcane aphid and will be receiving a label within a weeks' time. When we do I will announce it in the Pest Cast and have it available in the website link above.



Figure 4: Sugarcane aphids on sorghum leaf this year 2019

### **Corn**

We have corn in all stages. Some of the early planted corn was hurt early on by the cold showing a little yellowing with burnt tips but has managed to grow out of the cold spell and is looking very good right now. Some growers had trouble early on having to replant several acres of corn that was eaten and pulled up by wild hogs, javelinas and sandhill cranes. Other than that the corn acreage across the Valley is up from last year and as far as any pests go it is looking very clean. Saw many growers just applying herbicides over top of corn this week for weed management.



**Figure 5: Corn**

### **Sunflowers and Sesame**

Sunflower stands out in McCook are looking beautiful and was not picking up on any pests of concern. There is a little bit of sesame that is up and will be more acreage planted in the next weeks to come as well so we will be monitoring sesame and giving updates as well when necessary.



**Figure 6: Sunflowers**

### **Sponsorship**

Past sponsors and new sponsors thank you so much for supporting our local IPM program. Really happy to be your IPM-agent and look forward to this growing season. We have several projects we are working on and hope to generate some good data this growing season to share with our growers. If anyone would still like to sponsor there is still time and your support is greatly appreciated. If you would like more information on the sponsorship levels or have any questions feel free to email or call me. Thank you.

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