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

Weather in the Valley this week is rediculously hot but perfect for cotton harvesting! Everyday we have been reaching temperatures between 101°F and 105°F and even higher in some areas as heat units accumulate fast and bolls are opening everywhere across the Valley's cotton fields. Heat Units graph on back.

Figure 1 &2 : Cotton being harvested, John Scaief Farms, San Benito TX

Cotton

As far as pests go in cotton many growers along the river have been experiencing high whitefly populations the last couple of weeks as cotton is being defoliated everywhere and whiteflies move in and out of fields. During this time whiteflies are extremely hard to control and indirectly damage open boll cotton by the staining that happens to the lint by the black sooty mold that forms on the sugars excreted by the whiteflies (honey dew) as they feed on the cotton plant.

Yields so far have been good in both the dryland and irrigated acres of cotton. In dryland cotton yields have ranged from 1 to 2 ¾ bales per acre. In irrigated cotton yields so far have ranged from 2 to 3 ½ bales cotton per acre.

According to Texas Boll Weevil Eradication program we had approximately 4,000 acres of cotton that were lost to the flooding that occurred back in June. However, there were lots of fields that you could see setbacks in cotton plants but not lost completely to flooding.

With many cotton fields already having been harvested and many more to be harvested in the coming weeks it is important to be vigilant on stalk destruction to avoid regrowth of hostable cotton. The deadline for cotton stalk destruction is September 1st and any cotton that remains hostable after this date will be in violation of regulations and subject to fees.

Another serious challenge that will be monitored is harvesting equipment leaving Lower Rio Grande Valley area and traveling North into other Eradication Zones. Persons moving equipment will be responsible for equipment to be clean and not harboring weevils.

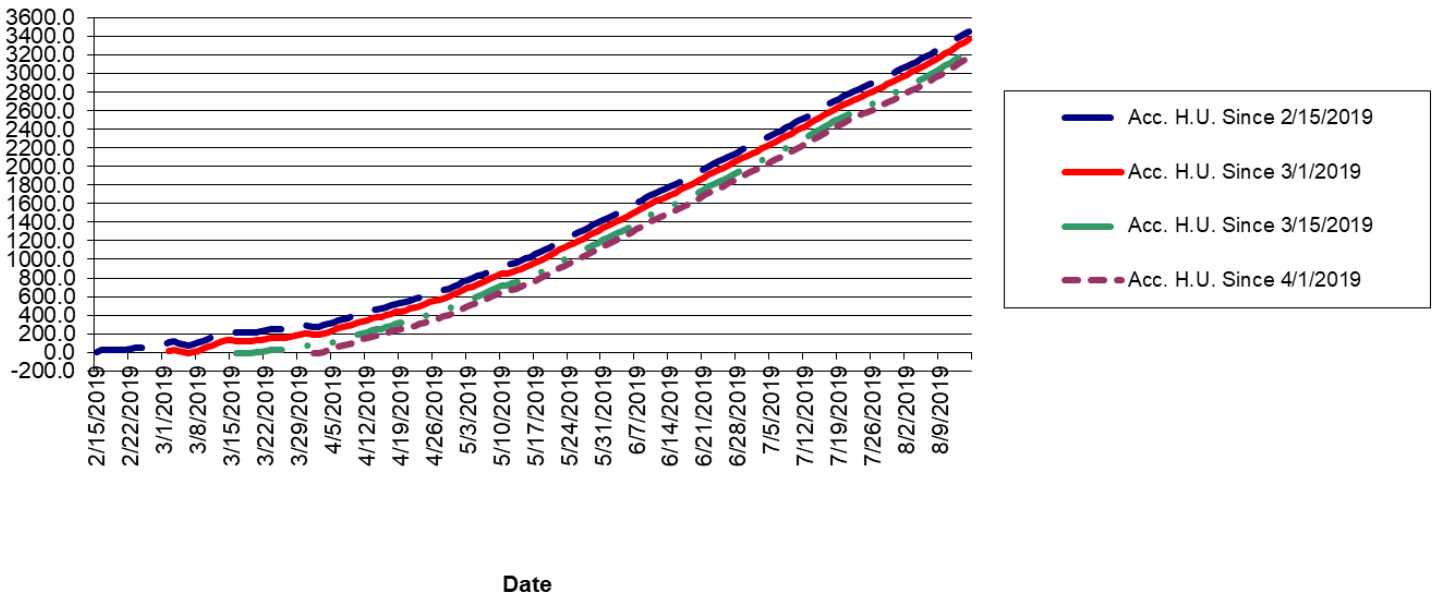
For information within different zones on stalk destruction deadlines and equipment movement you

can visit TDA or TBWEF websites for rules and regulations.

Sesame

Sesame has just begun to be harvested as some dryland acreage has had anywhere from 600 to 1000 lbs per acre in some of the first fields. For those planning to plant sesame in the next coming weeks for the fall crop please be mindful of mirid populations. Since mirid populations are very high right now at the end of harvest I suspect there might be well established populations as soon as sesame starts to come up for the fall crop. Mirids are plantbugs that are sucking pests that like to attack the flowers, buds and young pods on the sesame plant. It is because of this that it will be important to monitor the sesame for mirids early on to prevent plant stunting and pod loss.

Figure 3: Mirid adult



	Heat Units Accumulated till now, 8-15			
Year	**Since 2-15**	**Since 3-1**	**Since 3-15**	**Since 4-1**
2018	3551	3432	3284	3076
2019	**3459**	**3370**	**3242**	**3174**

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