



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

Very hot, dry and windy (at times) across the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Temperatures have been in the high 90s and at night anywhere from 78F to 80F. I noticed many growers irrigating their cotton this week or setting up to do so. Those with dryland cotton are starting to see the effects/stress from the heat on the plants as well as other dryland crops. Heat unit chart on last page.

Cotton

Saw a lot more blooming cotton this week across the Valley. Many growers are starting to apply the first round of mepiquat treatments. Fleahopper adults continue to be persistent in cotton across the Valley in low numbers overall but did notice new hatch of nymphs in the La Villa and Lyford areas where we were checking. Persistent monitoring and control of fleahoppers is necessary for optimum yield potential. Received couple of reports of false chinch bugs causing trouble along field edges in blooming cotton where control was needed. Basically, any pyrethroid labeled for cotton will control false chinch bug populations and usually will need to only apply to field margins where they have migrated in and started feeding. They are easy to spot along a field because they congregate in large groups like a little army taking over. According to my counterparts in Lubbock Acephate has been proven effective in controlling false chinch bugs even though the pest is not listed on the label. We are seeing very few whitefly adults in cotton and I have yet to see any nymphs present. For those who are in areas though where whitefly pressure becomes prevalent they would probably like to consider starting a preventative spray treatment program to keep populations from developing once whitefly adults are found present. Did notice a few red spidermites in a couple of fields this week but nothing worth spraying for. Cotton aphids are still present but have been in very low numbers from last week to this week and our usual ladybug and scymus beetle predators are taking care of them.



Figure 1: False chinch bug nymph (on left) and adult false chinch bug (on right) photo by : Salvador Vitanza



Figure 2: False chinch bug pressure and damage to blooming cotton

Bollworms. In parts of Texas we have found evidence of bollworm resistant to one or more Bt genes in our Bt cotton. Fortunately for South Texas we have not seen or experienced increased bollworm pressure like in other areas of Texas. A couple of consultants have seen one or two bollworms present in cotton this week but nothing out of the ordinary. However, if you have a Bt cotton field that has bollworm pressure where a spray might be needed this year I would like you to please contact me, (Danielle Sekula, 956-968-5581) so

we may go out and inspect and collect the larvae if need be. We would like to be ahead of any resistance issues and are asking for your cooperation in protecting our cotton crop.

Grain Sorghum

Most grain sorghum is maturing from soft dough to hard dough stage and coloring nicely as the seed matures. I received reports this week of a few grain sorghum fields having to be retreated this week due to sugarcane aphid infestation. Over the last two weeks many sorghum fields were treated for the first time for sugarcane aphid pressure. Sugarcane aphid populations are currently moderate, and I suspect another peak in population prior to harvest during the third week of June so please be mindful of this as we make our way to harvest. Some sorghum in northern Cameron county was sprayed for headworm pressure this week but overall, I have picked up on very little to none headworm pressure across the Valley. I have seen some rice stinkbug adult and nymphs present but nothing that warrants treatment. For those who have flowering sorghum I have yet to see any midge present which is great.

Sesame

This week I did find mirids (*Nesidiocoris tenuis*) in sesame. Mirids are a type of plantbug that suck plant juices and can cause necrotic damage and stunting of growth to the sesame plant. *N. tenuis* mirids adults and nymphs are lime green in color measuring no more than 5mm in size so fairly small and the adults when their wings are closed make a heart shape that upon close observation is easy to spot (Fig 3). Necrotic damage will look like a reddish/brown scarring to the plant tissue along the stem, leaves and on the seed pods. Mirids *N. tenuis* also can be predators to whiteflies feeding on them sometimes in the lower



Figure 3: *N. tenuis* mirid (above and below)

canopies of the sesame when present. However, mirids can develop successfully on the sesame plant alone and will feed on the plant more when they have depleted their food source (in this case whiteflies) or there is an abundance in populations. I have noticed some high populations of mirids in sesame along the river in the Donna and Pharr areas. Mainly what I noticed first was the coloration of the sesame plant (yellowing on the leaves and brownish necrotic damage) and the curly under of the leaves which are signs of high mirid pressure feeding on the plants. I have also picked up on light populations in the Weslaco and La Villa areas. You will



Figure 5: Mirids feeding on sesame plant from 2015



Figure 4: mirids on the sesame blooms

want to monitor for mirids and treat if necessary since there

feeding can hurt yield potential. Products labeled on sesame that control mirids are Transform and Mustang Maxx. Some growers have also had some worm pressure and for those that need to treat Prevathon is labeled for use on sesame.



Figure 6: Necrotic damage caused to the leaves from this year, 2019



Figure 7: Necrotic damage to pods back in 2015



Figure 8: Severe mirid damage to sesame in 2015 with necrotic scarring as well as leaf curly symptoms as well

****Mark your calendar to make plans to attend the Fike Farms Field Day and look at many Corn and Sorghum hybrids. They will be holding their field day on Tuesday June 11th and will start around 2pm with a tour of the varieties, speakers and dinner to follow. More details in flyer to be sent out next week.**

For those who were able to come out to the first of many field days at Texas AgriScience LLC... Thank you! Your support is appreciated.



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