



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

Danielle Sekula
IPM Extension Agent

Volume XLI

Issue 9, June 7, 2019

General Situation

Very hot this week across the LRGV. Tuesday and Wednesday the coast received some rain showers that really varied. Overall however we are very dry still as many continue to irrigate. Dryland crops are still stressed from lack of rain.

Cotton

Cotton right now is in full bloom and seeing some good boll set in most areas. Noticed some cotton shedding its squares after this irrigation. Cotton pre-bloom was looking clean from fleahoppers as we are still needing to monitor for fleahoppers on the late planted cotton. I have received a couple reports of cotton being treated for tarnished plantbugs present feeding on immature bolls along the river (Fig 2). Threshold for tarnished plantbugs is 10 tarnished plantbugs/100 sweeps. We were sweep netting in the La Sara, Lyford areas and were picking up on 0 tarnished plantbugs/100 sweeps but as we moved to the Sebastian and Santa Rosa areas we were getting about 3 tarnished plantbugs/ 100 sweeps. Still not at threshold but they are starting to move into cotton fields with immature bolls. In those areas' sorghum had been sprayed with glyphosate drying up getting ready for harvest so I suspect they are migrating out of there and also out of the sesame into the cotton. Adult tarnished plant bugs are winged and brown in color mottled with red yellow and black. Nymphs are similar to the adults, but they lack wings and are greenish in color with black spots. Females lay whitish eggs inserted into the host plant and hatch in about 8 days. From egg to adult the tarnished plant bug life cycle is about 3 to 4 weeks and produce 5 generations a year. I saw some Verde bugs in the Bayview and Los Fresnos areas this week. Verde bugs along with tarnished plantbugs pierce immature bolls and squares with their mouth parts causing boll malformation to complete fruit loss. Verde plant bug adults are about 1/4 inch long in size and are light green in color with long antennae and red eyes.



Figure 1: Cotton in full bloom with immature and mature bolls



Figure 2: Tarnished plant bugs (adults)

Cotton along the river was sprayed this week for whiteflies as many adults and now immatures have been present. Any cotton near sesame along the river need to be proactive in controlling whiteflies as whiteflies will overcrowd on the underside of sesame leaves and then will migrate to nearby cotton fields and populate there to continue feeding.

Grain Sorghum



Lots of midge in flowering sorghum this week as fields were being treated. Heavy headworm pressure in soft dough sorghum along the coast in the Bayview, Los fresnos and Progreso areas. Also saw many ricestink bugs present in softdough sorghum but most were being controlled along with midge or headworm applications. Sugarcane aphid pressure across the Valley has calmed down as we gear up for harvest. I predict a second peak or rise in sugarcane aphid populations come the end of June so late sorghum and even sorghum prior to harvest should be scouted to avoid a sticky situation, literally.



Figure 3: Sesame

Sesame

This week we did find mirids (*Nesidiocoris tenuis*) in sesame across the Valley but most fields do not have abundant mirid populations yet but will need to keep a close eye in case things change especially with this high heat. While no threshold has been established for *N.tenuis* we did notice back in July of 2015 that it took as little as 3 to 5 mirids per sesame terminal/plant to cause significant damage. Right now I have only seen that in a handful of fields and there were many whiteflies present for them to feed on. The majority of the valley has mirids present but an average of 1 per plant and the sesame plants look very healthy.

Mirids are a type of plantbug that suck plant juices and can cause necrotic damage and stunting of growth to the sesame plant as well as injury to the pods. *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 4). Necrotic damage will



Figure 4: adult mirid *N.tenuis*

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 both adults and immatures in the lower 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 mirid populations. Signs of high mirid pressure feeding on the plants will be yellowing on the leaves and brownish necrotic damage and the curling under of the leaves. You will want to monitor for mirids and treat if necessary since their feeding can hurt yield potential. Products labeled on sesame that control mirids are Transform and Mustang Maxx.



Figure 5: mirids on the sesame blooms

****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 this coming Tuesday June 11th and will start around 2pm with a tour of the varieties, speakers and dinner to follow. More details in flyer attached.**

2019 IPM Pest Cast Sponsors are Wonderful people! Thank you!

Diamond



Bayer-DeltaPine-Dekalb
BASF – FiberMax / Stoneville
Corteva-PhytoGen
Farmers Crop Insurance
FMC Agricultural Solutions
Sesaco

Gold



Capital Farm Credit
Hidalgo County Farm Bureau
Valley Co-op Oil Mill
Wilbur-Ellis Company

Silver



Adams Farms
Gulf Compress
Hargill Gin & Grain
La Feria Co-op
RGV Gin Company
Ross Gin Company
Texas AgriScience LLC
Valley Ag Insurance Services
Willamar Operating LP

Bronze



Texas Farm Credit
Vital Fertilizers