



## 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

Another very hot week in the Valley as many crops were thirsty for water. I saw many fields of cotton, corn and grain sorghum being set up for irrigation or being irrigated as we scouted. High winds causing problems for some growers in Willacy and Cameron counties as I saw some growers making barriers to prevent further sandblasting of crops. In Willacy county we did see some cotton acres being tilled under that did not make it due to the drought this year. In the Monte Alto area we saw Canola being harvested at this time.



**Figure 1: First Cotton blooms of 2020**

### Cotton

Slow week in cotton for pests. We are finding more predators in cotton feeding on cotton aphids as the populations of aphids seemed to decline a little this week due to their natural cycle and to predators feeding on them but they were still prevalent and a nuisance in a few fields that will likely be sprayed prior to irrigation.



**Figure 2: Ladybug larva on cotton feeding on aphids**

We did see more cotton squaring nicely and even saw some cotton with the first blooms on it in the Edcouch-Elsa and La Villa areas. Been seeing some red spidermites in field margins of cotton but nothing that warrants treatment. In squaring cotton, I was picking up on a couple of fleahoppers



**Figure 4: Blasted cotton square (fleahopper feeding damage)**

but relatively very low numbers, however I did notice more blasted squares (Figure 4) in Progreso, Weslaco, and Elsa areas this week around the Valley which let me know fleahoppers are actively feeding on squaring cotton. Cotton fleahopper adults are a pale grey/green ghostly color about 1/8 inch long and move pretty quickly when you walk up on them while checking. Fleahopper nymphs are a bright



**Figure 3: Adult fleahopper**

lime green color and you will find them at the growing point on your pinhead squares as they sometimes too are hard to spot but you will notice their erratic fast behavior. Fleahopper adults and nymphs like to feed on the squares by sucking the juices causing cotton squares to just dry up, turn brown and fall off so will be important to monitor populations the next few weeks diligently. In the Los Indios and Rangerville areas there are reports of whitefly adults but no nymphs yet, we will be on look out next week to see how they progress but for now they are not an issue; just present it seems.

\*\*Those who are going to plant a crop after failed cotton acres, please refer to the attached pdf flyer from the **Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation**.

### **Grain Sorghum**

Many sorghum fields flowering and in soft dough stage. Still seeing sugarcane aphids along field margins but very low to none populations. The fields where I did find a handful of leaves that had about 30 to 50 sugarcane aphids had plenty of predators (lacewing larvae, syrphid larvae, ladybug larvae and scymnus larva) feeding on them and I did pick up on parasitism of SCA as I saw a few that had been parasitized and turned from yellow to blue.

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Have a great weekend everyone and stay safe and well. Take care.