



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 XLII

Issue 12, June 12, 2020

General Situation

Very hot in the Lower Rio Grande Valley with temperatures in the high 90s reaching heat indexes of 101. Good for harvest though this week as several growers were seen getting into their fields and harvesting their grain sorghum. In cotton several growers were applying growth regulators this week as well as a herbicide application for weed control as the pigweed has really taken off from the recent rains last week. I also saw several growers that did not receive that much rain this last week in the Lyford, Elsa, Harlingen areas begin to make their ditches and start to irrigate their cotton once again since it is so hot and dry already. For those that have sugarcane growing there were several growers this week spraying for rice borers.

Cotton

According to the Texas Boll weevil Eradication Foundation in the LRGV, their best figures are approximately 30,000 acres of planted cotton have been replanted into another crop (this is failed cotton acreage that was zeroed out and now is replanted with another crop). This acreage is still part of the total cotton planted acreage for 2020 in the LRGV which is 166,503.1 acres. Cotton that was failed and replanted with another crop is still being monitored by Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation. Those growers that have another crop planted behind failed cotton acres need to be vigilant and do their best to control volunteer cotton that has emerged as it can create high numbers of boll weevils for next season's cotton crop. In Northern Tamaulipas, Mexico there are 21,827.4 planted acres of cotton for 2020. A lot of the cotton around the LRGV is still green with blooming out at the top and some dryland fields are already in cutout stage with the boll load looking good in most fields.

As far as pests go in cotton this week, the main pest we are seeing in cotton in the Mid Valley areas such as Santa Rosa, Mercedes, Combs and then east in Harlingen, Rio Hondo areas is the Verde plant bug. Many growers around these areas are harvesting their grain sorghum and Verde plant bugs tend to migrate out of the sorghum and into the cotton fields during this time to feed on young soft cotton bolls. The Verde plant bug will pierce immature bolls and squares with their mouth parts causing boll malformation to complete fruit loss (Figures 3 & 4). Verde plant bug adults (Figure 1) are about ¼ inch long in size and are light green in color with long antennae and red eyes and nymphs (Figure 2) are a very bright neon green color. Treat for Verde plant bugs when finding more than 20-25 bugs per 100 plants. Many fields I visited had 5% to 8% Verde plant bug infestations but there has been a hatch in nymphs so an increase is definite, and those fields will



Figure 1: Adult Verde bug in cotton

probably need to be sprayed next week. We did find several fields that have a 20% to even a 40% infestation and those fields need to be sprayed as soon as possible to avoid severe boll damage or even boll loss.

A few fields were spray for fleahoppers that had 20% or more infestation in dryland cotton around Cameron and Willacy counties as well as irrigated cotton in the Lyford area being treated for fleahoppers too.



Figure 2: Verde plant bug nymph

Growers along the river were spraying for whiteflies again this week as pressure had been building since the recent rains last week and some fields had visible sooty mold growing on the sugars excreted by the whiteflies feeding.

Sesame

In sesame we are seeing some sesame leaf roller activity in young sesame in northern Hidalgo county as far west as McCook. Also picking up on the sesame leaf roller in the Lyford area as well. Some growers have been having to spray due to sesame leaf roller feeding. Saw a few tarnished plant bugs and mirids in sesame and couple of corn earworm feeding after checking several fields this week but nothing that warrants treatment. Mainly just seeing honeybees pollinating in blooming sesame. For great info on sesame leaf roller feeding and damage please click on this link below where my colleague extension Entomologist Holly Davis goes into detail explaining this pest in sesame:

<https://rgvbugblog.blogspot.com/2020/06/sesame-leafroller-sesame-webworm.html>

*****Texas AgriScience LLC** will be hosting their first virtual field day this year with information provided by several industries. Company representatives will be discussing corn, sorghum, and cotton varieties. CEUs will also be offered by Texas AgriLife extension. We will be sending out a date for this soon!



Figure 3: Outside damage to dime size bolls caused by Verde bugs



Figure 4: Inside boll damage caused by Verde bugs

Thank You 2020 IPM Pest Cast Sponsors!

Diamond



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

Platinum



- *Nutrien Ag Solutions

Gold



- *Americot-NexGen
- *Cameron County Farm Bureau
- *Capital Farm Credit
- *Hidalgo County Farm Bureau
- *Simplot Grower Solutions
- *Texas Sorghum Producers
- *Valley Co-op Oil Mill

Silver



- *Adams Farms
- *Frisby-Bell Gin
- *Hargill Growers Gin
- *RGV Gin Company
- *Rob See Co.
- *Ross Gin
- *Valley Ag Insurance Services
- *Willamar Operating Co.

Bronze



- *Bennack Flying Service, Inc.
- *Vital Fertilizers

*For more information on pests in Valley crops please check out and follow my new colleague Extension Entomologist Dr. Holly Davis's blog:

<https://rgvbugblog.blogspot.com/>

Thank you.