



## 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/ Effects of Hurricane Hanna

Hurricane Hanna hit the LRGV without warning and came with very heavy rainfall (10- 18 inches) and very high winds (60 mph and higher in some areas). Even though this hurricane was a category 1 it still caused just as great of damage as compared to Hurricane Dolly back in 2008. The effects of Hanna are very widespread and have affected all 3 counties (Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy) with heavy flooding, structural property damage, and significant crop damage. Prior to the hurricane many growers had just finished harvesting all corn and grain sorghum. Main crops affected by hurricane Hanna in the LRGV have been cotton, sesame, sugarcane, and citrus.

Last week I had reported in the Pest Cast that harvesting in the LRGV had just ramped up and it seems that only about 2-3% of our dryland cotton crop was harvested prior to hurricane Hanna. Majority of the 2020 cotton crop was at 100% growth and defoliant had already been applied so the effects of Hanna to the cotton crop were very destructive. The massive amount of rain received has left many cotton fields flooded and in standing water, thus causing plants to begin to rot. Where water has receded in some fields the effects from the rain splashing soil onto

to cotton that is strung out makes it less marketable to unmarketable. Where I saw fields last week with completely



Figure 1: Cotton fields flooded by hurricane Hanna



Figure 2: Cotton field that has its cotton on the ground due to heavy rains from Hanna

open fluffed cotton in Lyford, Raymondville, Sebastian, and other areas there is no more as all the cotton was forced down to the ground by the heavy down pour of rain. I saw many cotton fields twisted by the high winds. There is also the chance of having some cotton

seed sprout due to all the moisture thus reducing lint value as well. There are some later planted fields with green bolls still in tack along the river that I saw from Progresso to Los Indios also in some areas of Weslaco, La Feria that seem to have received less rain than other areas and will likely be harvested but only time will tell because many bolls in the lower portion of the plant were beginning to crack and might be rotting from the inside. It is really a wait and see for the later planted cotton if the

fields can dry up and we do not receive any more potential heavy rainfall or flooding. Even though we might have some later planted fields that might be harvestable, after surveying yesterday it seems that 100% of the cotton **yield** in the LRGV cotton crop was affected and damaged in some capacity anywhere from 10% yield loss to 100% yield loss is to be expected in all cotton fields across the valley.



Figure 3: Later planted cotton field flooded with some open bolls but the upper half with closed bolls



Figure 4: Later planted cotton with bolls still in tack but has some damage



Figures 4 and 5: Sesame above and below damaged by wind and flooding



Sesame was also another crop that had many fields ready for harvest and was affected greatly from the hurricane. I saw many sesame fields that had sesame lying on the ground due to the high winds. Other fields were under water and might begin to rot. Some of the mature sesame were water has receded might be able to be

harvested if fields dry up soon. We hope that some of the later planted sesame will be less affected as some areas did receive less rain such as in the McCook area.

Citrus saw a significant loss of fruit that dropped from the trees due to the high winds and there was some sugarcane that experienced significant lodging due to high winds.

### Chille thrips in Cotton



Figure 6: Bronzing on the upper cotton leaves caused by heavy Chille thrips pressure



Figure7: Heavy Chille thrips pressure

My colleague Dr. Holly Davis was able to confirm that the high thrips pressure we had seen feeding and affecting cotton this last month was indeed chille thrips. Chille thrips are a new species of thrips detected in the cotton here in the LRGV that were causing the bronzing of the cotton leaves on the tops of the plants and even causing some fields to defoliate prematurely. Chille thrips are not new to the Valley as they were previously found on citrus 2 years ago. Chille thrips are a pest that many will want to keep an eye on for they feed on many different crops. It will be interesting to see if we will have problems with chille thrips again next year in cotton. For more info I recommend that you read the attached document on chille thrips written by Dr. Holly Davis,

extension entomologist. Those of you who have signed up for Dr. Holly Davis's blog received an email with the same detailed report this morning that discusses the origin, biology and damage caused by Chille thrips. I highly encourage those who have not signed up for this blog to sign up for Dr. Holly Davis's blog to receive important pest updates like these at:

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

\*\*\*We will be having an IPM CEU Workshop where you can receive 2 CEUs in IPM and will send out the details on that next week. So be looking for that.

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