



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

This week we received some rains totaling up to an inch on Tuesday around Harlingen, Rio Hondo, Los fresnos areas. Along the river from Los indios to Pharr and into Weslaco we received anywhere from 0.2-0.6 inches. Aside from the showers was a very hot week with temperatures in the 90s. Some growers had also started irrigating cotton this week prior to the rain since cotton was looking thirsty. Our heat units have increased but we are still far behind previous years.

Year	Acc. H.U. Since 2/15	Acc. H.U. Since 3/1	Acc. H.U. Since 3/15	Acc. H.U. Since 4/1
2018	2181	2062	1914	1706
2019	2091.5	2003	1874.5	1769
2020	2329.5	2277	2110	1779
2021	1996	1949	1812.5	1652

Figure 1: Comparison of Heat Units (H.U.) over the years

Cotton

This week in cotton whitefly populations were moderate as we saw a few adults and nymphs present in some cotton along river in Pharr as well as in the Edinburg, Mercedes, and La Feria areas but still below threshold. We are still finding a handful of Verde bugs in cotton around the coast and in the mid valley areas and will continue to monitor as those populations may increase as sorghum harvest continues. Pest pressure has been low this week and majority of cotton throughout valley looks clean for now.

Grain Sorghum

This week I saw some growers begin harvesting their grain sorghum in Willacy and Cameron counties, but they had to shut down once the rain made it their way on Tuesday. In Hidalgo County they have begun harvesting sorghum in McCook. I have not picked up on any SCA (sugarcane aphid) pressure in mature grain sorghum leaves prior to



Figure 2: Mature dryland grain sorghum

glyphosate applications going out for harvest. This is great since we do not want leaves to become infested with SCA as their feeding produces sticky sugars that can cause a combine to break down. I am however seeing some SCA pressure in some fields that are in flowering and soft dough stages. This week we did see high SCA populations in a few sorghum fields around Hargill area and saw some moderate SCA pressure around the Mercedes area with a few sticky leaves; note these fields were in either flowering/soft dough stages. Remember when scouting for SCA that if the field average of SCA is 50-125 aphids or more per leaf, then it is recommended that you apply an insecticide within 4 days of finding this infestation level, much sooner if you are averaging 100 SCA per leaf or more. I am still picking up on plenty of midge in flowering sorghum as we found high midge populations around the Hargill, Monte alto, Weslaco, and Mercedes areas. Those that have midge to spray for please check your leaves for possible SCA pressure and treat for both midge and SCA accordingly if present. Rice stinkbug pressure is moderate to high and head worm pressure is moderate in soft dough sorghum right now.

<https://extensionentomology.tamu.edu/files/2019/02/Managing-Insect-and-Mite-Pests-of-Texas-Sorghum-ENTO-085-2018.pdf>

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