



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 XLIII

Issue 1, April 9, 2021

General Situation

Another windy week in the LRGV with wind gusts of 15 to 30 mph. We had one day, yesterday (Thursday) with minimal to no winds. It has been hot with day temperatures in the high 80s to low 90s and nights in the high 60s and 50s. Today though we are right at 98°F down here, heat index makes it feel like 103°F.

Our heat units have been increasing rapidly and if you look at the graph for heat units accumulated

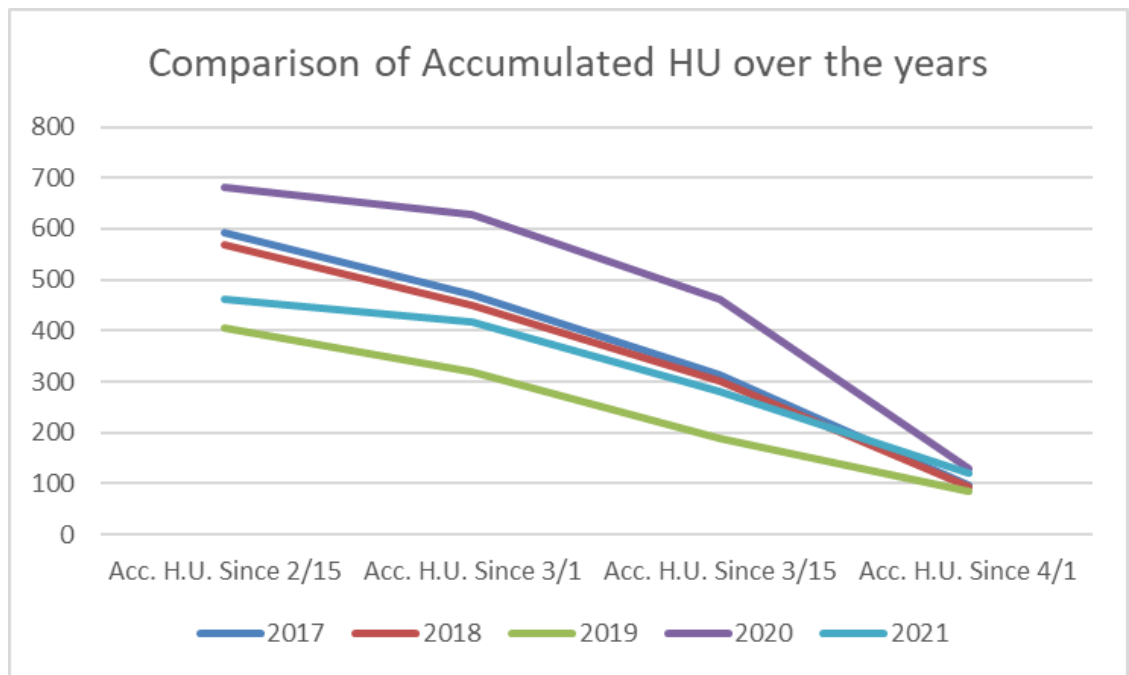


Figure 1: Comparison of HU over the years

| 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 |
|------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 2017 | 593.5 | 472 | 313.5 | 96.5 |
| 2018 | 568 | 449 | 301 | 93 |
| 2019 | 406.5 | 318 | 189.5 | 84 |
| 2020 | 680 | 627.5 | 460.5 | 129.5 |
| 2021 | 463 | 416 | 279.5 | 119 |

over the years since April 1st, you will notice that 2020 (purple line) and current year 2021 (aqua line) are touching as we really need rain here in the LRGV (Refer to Figure 1). I saw some growers irrigating this week and many applying herbicides to fields for weed control. Soil moisture is minimal to none now as we continue to face drought conditions. (Heat Units graph for only this year 2021 is at the end of the Pest Cast.)

Cotton

We have a lot of cotton throughout the LRGV in all counties. I am seeing cotton in all stages from cotyledon to 5 true leaf cotton that is just barely starting to square. According to the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication program as of Wednesday April 7th they were showing total current planted cotton at 167,689.7 acres. As we continue to plant cotton, we want to encourage producers to leave access around

entire perimeter of field to be able to monitor trapping along with applying ground applications in case of weevil detection. Producers are also asked to please contact Boll Weevil office in their area to report acreage planted in cotton to insure there are no fields that are missed causing potential of weevil infestation.

From Edward Herrera, Zone manager for the LRGV with TBWEF: Weevil numbers are historically low giving promise to

advancement of eradication program. Weevil catches this year to date are at 217 while same time last year to date they were at 698 weevils. Some early cotton already squaring, and we have begun initial treatments over acreage with weevil history. Program will be doing three initial treatments over fields with historical weevil activities with follow-ups if necessary, based on current weevil activity.

Cotton along the river travelling down Military highway is starting to receive heavy thrips pressure. I was seeing 2 to 4 thrips per leaf in cotyledon to 4 true leaf cotton in the Donna, Pharr, Alamo areas along the river. I am seeing the classic greyish leaf thrips damage from tobacco and western flower thrips feeding (See Figure 3). Growers along the river I encourage you to check your cotton for thrips infestation and treat accordingly as much of the onions and cabbage along the river is almost done being harvested and thrips are beginning to migrate out of those crops into neighboring cotton fields looking for new food. From McCook to Rio hondo and everywhere between (Hargill, Monte Alto, Lyford, Weslaco, Mercedes, Combs, Santa Rosa, Sebastian, Harlingen) I did pick on a little bit of cotton aphids and a tiny bit of red spidermites but nothing worth spraying and will continue to monitor those populations to see if they increase but for the most part cotton still very clean Valley wide.

Grain Sorghum

Sorghum throughout the LRGV varies as we have all stages from sorghum barely coming up to the more mature sorghum just at booting stage. This week I had my first sugarcane aphid (SCA) sighting in commercial sorghum that was almost at booting stage along the river. I checked many fields of grain sorghum this week in

| Cotton acres in LRGV | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| County | Acres |
| CAMERON | 57,131.20 |
| HIDALGO | 39,790.60 |
| STARR | 2,207.40 |
| WILLACY | 68,216.40 |
| ZAPATA | 344.1 |
| Total acreage | 167,689.70 |



Figure 2: four true leaf cotton field & up-close in righthand corner



Figure 3: Thrips and thrips damage on underside of cotton leaf

all three counties and all of it was very clean; it was only that one field where I found an adult SCA alate having babies. Majority of sorghum in the LRGV is planted with seed treatments so I do not expect to see SCA populations in the early growth stages which lines up with what I am seeing. However, with that in mind though we will be diligently checking for SCA populations in the coming weeks since we have many acres of sorghum planted this year Valley wide. I did see a tiny bit of corn leaf aphids in the whorl and some fall armyworm larva activity but very minimal. Sorghum very clean throughout LRGV at this time.

Corn & Sunflowers

Corn and sunflowers continue to look clean. No pest pressure currently in either crop.

Sesame

Saw some sesame coming up nicely along the river and some sesame was being planted this week in Lyford area.

Soybeans

Soybeans continue to look clean but did pick up on minimal worm feeding (garden webworm and loopers) on the foliage this week.

Audio Update for South Texas IPM in row crops

As a new row crop season gears up we have kicked off a weekly audio update for South Texas IPM in row crops. This is new for our area this year and each week we will provide a 5-7 minute update on what is going on in the LRGV and Coastal Bend. It is a great way to get a heads up on what pests you may need to be on the lookout for in your area and other issues that may be of concern to you. We hope that you will follow this link and sign up: <https://www.texasinsects.org/south-texas.html>

You will receive text when a new update is available and can listen to it right there in your truck, tractor, or wherever you may be. This does not replace the Pest Cast Newsletter but is an extra



Figure 4: Grain sorghum



Figure 5: Double row sesame



Figure 6: Double row Soybeans

source of information to have available. Thank you.

Signing up is easy: Click on this link, <https://www.texasinsects.org/south-texas.html>

On the top of the page select:>> Signup to get a text message when a new post is made.<<

Next, Signup for South Texas IPM Updates, by entering your cell number and input if you are a PRODUCER, CONSULTANT, AG INDUSTRY, AGRILIFE OR OTHER.

And that's it!

RGV Bug Blog

You can sign up for Extension Entomologist Holly Davis [RGV Bug Blog](https://rgvbugblog.blogspot.com/), at <https://rgvbugblog.blogspot.com/>

Sponsorship

Past sponsors and new sponsors thank you so much for supporting our local IPM program. I am truly blown away and humbled at the amount of support we have received for our local IPM program, thank you so much. If you would like more information on the sponsorship levels or have any questions, feel free to email or call me. Thank you.

Danielle Sekula

Extension Agent- IPM

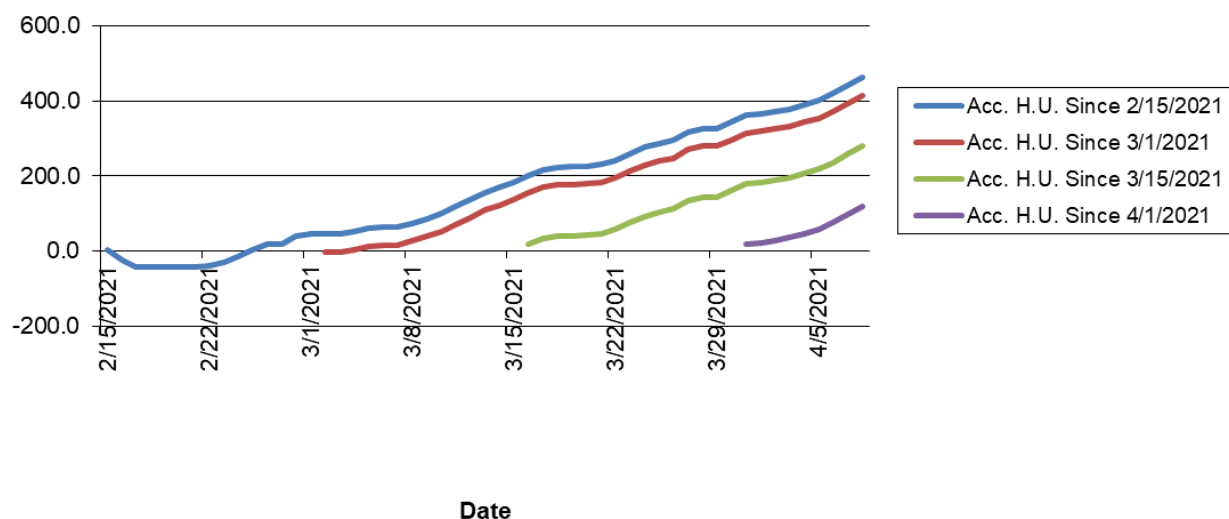
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension/ District 12

2401 East Highway 83/ Weslaco, TX 78596

Tel. 956. 968.5581 ext. 5608

Danielle.Sekula@ag.tamu.edu

2021 Cotton Heat Unit (H.U.) Accumulation Graph



Thank You 2021 IPM Pest Cast Sponsors!

Diamond



- *BASF-FiberMax-Stoneville
- *Bayer-DeltaPine-Dekalb
- *Farmers Crop Insurance
- *FMC Agricultural Solutions
- *Sesaco
- *Wilbur-Ellis Co

Platinum



- *Corteva-PhytoGen
- *Nutrien Ag Solutions

Gold



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

Silver



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

Bronze



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

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