



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

Fields are saturated as this week on Wednesday the entire Valley received some heavy rains again blanketing the region with about 2.5 inches as areas along the river received the most rain up to 4 inches, and here at the Weslaco station we received 4 inches as well. From last Saturday to today we have many growers that have accumulated about 10 inches altogether in some areas.

Cotton

According to the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, cotton acreage totals currently are at:

Total Planted Acres 2021: 177,986

Total Acres Destroyed to Date: 23,967

Current Cotton Acres: 154,019

Percentage Cotton Acres Destroyed: 13.5%

*This is still a moving target as Producers were still destroying cotton before current rainfall so acreage is still due to change as producers make their way back into their fields once they dry up later next week.



Figure 1: Blooming cotton 2021

Cotton looks very clean right now. I came across a couple of cotton fleahopper adults and one nymph so we are barely starting to see some fleahopper activity. Next week will be important to get out and monitor for fleahoppers in squaring cotton. Cotton fleahopper adults (Figure 2) 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 (Figure 3) are a bright 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 especially in later planted cotton. Since last Friday some of the earlier planted cotton is just starting to bloom. Once cotton is blooming, fleahopper control is rarely justified. However, we



Figure 2: Cotton fleahopper (adult)

have all stages of cotton in the LRGV right now. We have cotton still in the early true leaves stage (4-6 true leaves), cotton at 9 nodes in full squaring mode now and blooming cotton being the most mature at 9 to 11 NAWF starting to put some immature bolls on the lower half of the plant. We had spidermites building in some cotton fields, but the rains washed all of them away. As the cotton fields dry up growers will be wanting to apply PGR's to keep cotton from taking off in growth but it's good to wait just a bit after waterlogged cotton dries so the plant has time to recover, spraying a PGR too soon might inhibit plant hormones that the cotton needs to grow properly so give your cotton a little time to breathe and scout it diligently to see when is the right time to apply PGR application as necessary.

Grain Sorghum



Figure 4: Sorghum Midge

This week in sorghum our IPM program picked up on a handful of sorghum midge around the Los Indios area in flowering sorghum on Thursday. When checking for midge inspect the heads for a small orange/reddish flying insect around the yellow flowering spikelets as this is where the female will lay her eggs, usually about 50 yellow-white eggs, the adults only live for one day. The eggs hatch in 2 to 3 days so you must check daily for sorghum midge as new populations emerge/hatch each morning. It is imperative that if you have flowering sorghum you try to get out there in your muddy fields and check to avoid yield loss if present. As little as one midge per



Figure 3: Cotton fleahopper (nymph)

sorghum head is enough to warrant treatment. We are finding armyworms in pastures and in mature sorghum feeding heavily on the foliage (See Figure). For mature sorghum where armyworms are eating heavily on the foliage a general rule of thumb is that insecticide applications may be considered if feeding reduces leaf area by 30% or more and you are finding 1-2 larvae per plant. If you have young sorghum in V1-V5 stages make sure you check for armyworm pressure as they can wipe out a sorghum field in early growth stages. We are also finding about 3-5% headworm infestation (corn earworm & fall armyworm) in many soft dough stage sorghum fields. The economic injury level for headworms in commercial sorghum is about 1 to 2 larvae per grain head. When scouting for headworms first inspect the sorghum plants for frass on leaves and for frass on the ground between rows. Take a white bucket and beat the heads to dislodge the larvae. To get a good idea of what's going on in your field make sure to beat at least 30 heads. You can find insecticide treatment options for headworms on Page 37 in the Sorghum pest management guide, to access click on link below and go to page 37.



Figure 5: Armyworm defoliating softdough sorghum

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

For rice stink bugs (Figures 6-8) the control threshold is generally around 1rice stinkbug per head and you would use a beat bucket as well to bang them off the sorghum heads into the bucket to get a good estimate of populations in the field. We have seen many rice stinkbug nymphs (Figure 6&7) hatch this week in sorghum around the Valley so while making your decision on what to spray for headworms you might consider something that kills both. Control options are also at the link above on page 45.



Figure 8: Rice stinkbug adult



Figure 6: Rice stinkbugs just hatched



Figure 7: Rice stinkbug nymph

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	1391	1269.5	1111	894
2018	1290	1171	1023	815
2019	1170.5	1082	953.5	848
2020	1543	1490.5	1323.5	992.5
2021	1220	1173	1036.5	876

Field Days coming up...Save the Date Please.

- Fike Farms field day has been postponed and is now on Tuesday June 8th, see flyer attached in email.
- Mark your calendars for Wednesday June 16th for an AgriLife field day in cotton and grain where we will be offering CEUs , program details and agenda to come later next week.

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

