



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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Volume XLIII

Issue 9, June 11, 2021

General Situation

This week we finally received some sunshine and crops started to dry out and the mosquitos decided to show up. Many growers were getting into what fields they could to control weeds. We have some cotton that is not going to make it because was under water too long and choked out by weeds. However we were able to get into and scout many fields that were able to dry out. High temperatures in the 90s this week and hopefully we will continue to receive these high temperatures to add to our heat units.

Figure 1: Accumulated heat units as of June 10th in 2021 and 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
2017	1872	1750.5	1592	1375
2018	1832.5	1713.5	1565.5	1357.5
2019	1731	1642.5	1514	1408.5
2020	2017	1964.5	1797.5	1466.5
2021	1661	1614	1477.5	1317

Cotton

Still clean in cotton this week regarding pests. We have only picked up on a handful of fleahoppers and since the majority of cotton across the LRGV is in blooming stage I do not consider them a concern anymore. I did see whitefly adults along the river, not very many but they are there. I saw a few more whitefly adults present in the cotton around the Pharr area along the river and did see a few nymphs there. Cotton growers along the river need to be ahead of whitefly control since populations tend to increase rapidly especially in muggy, humid, hot conditions as these. I did not pick up on any whiteflies in the mid Valley, very clean. We have been sweep netting for plant bugs across the valley, Verde bugs and tarnished plant bugs, but so far I have not picked up on any. I have been looking for these plantbugs in the hard dough sorghum because usually they migrate out of it into cotton when harvested and I have not seen or picked up on any yet, which is good. I did see a handful of cotton aphids. Other than the abundance of pigweeds in the fields the cotton is fairly clean of pests this week.

Grain Sorghum

We have some beautiful mature grain sorghum across the Valley. Many fields have been maturing and majority of grain sorghum is either in soft dough stage or hard dough stage getting ready for harvest. Fields look pretty clean from sugarcane aphids this week as I have only picked up on a handful of them after scouting several fields across the valley. We still are having problems with midge in sorghum. I didn't see too many big fields flowering this week just some flowering along field margins but there is a lot of sorghum in booting stage and sorghum already heading out and some of those fields had a few heads come out early that were flowering, and I picked up on heavy midge populations of 10 or more per head. So please monitor for midge diligently these next two weeks. I am still picking up on some high rice stinkbug pressure in a few fields, but hit has been hit or miss. I am seeing some head worm activity but

nothing alarming, however I am concerned that armyworm might migrate off dying pigweed and other weeds to sorghum heads so be on look out and use a beat bucket to check heads in your soft dough sorghum. In younger sorghum, still in the early vegetative stages (V3-V5) in the Willacy County area I was picking up on one fall armyworm per plant feeding in the whorls. Some late planted fields are just being hammered by fall armyworm pressure that I believe are migrating from neighboring pigweed and purslane being sprayed and controlled. It is very hard to control fall armyworm pressure in the whorl and generally is not encouraged but if you have over 30% defoliation you might want to consider treatment especially when sorghum is still in the early growth stages.



Figure 3: Sorghum Midge

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

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