



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

Hi everyone, well its growing season. We started off planting season with plenty of moisture to get the crops up and now as of this week we have very little to no moisture across the LRGV in the soil profile. The growers that have access to irrigation started watering their cotton and corn this week. We are forecasted for windier (+25 mph) and hotter (+90°F) weather all this next week with no

chances of rain till maybe April 18th. I also noticed many growers were also applying herbicides this past week to fields for weed control. I also took advantage of the low winds this morning and sprayed out a volunteer cotton herbicide trial and hope to share that info with my growers soon. If you felt like we were a little behind on Heat Units this year 2022 compared to last year 2021, well you were right. When looking at the heat units accumulated for growth in cotton, we are a little behind last year and that's because we had a freeze in 2021 but with the consistent cold fronts we had coming through our area this year (2022) it makes sense. Now for those who waited till March 15th to start planting we are a little ahead on heat units but not by much. (Refer to Figure 1 above with purple line data being current year 2022 and green line data being 2021.) When comparing our heat units for just the current year 2022 with their respective planting dates the heat units accumulated are pretty spread out according to planting date (Refer to Figure 2).

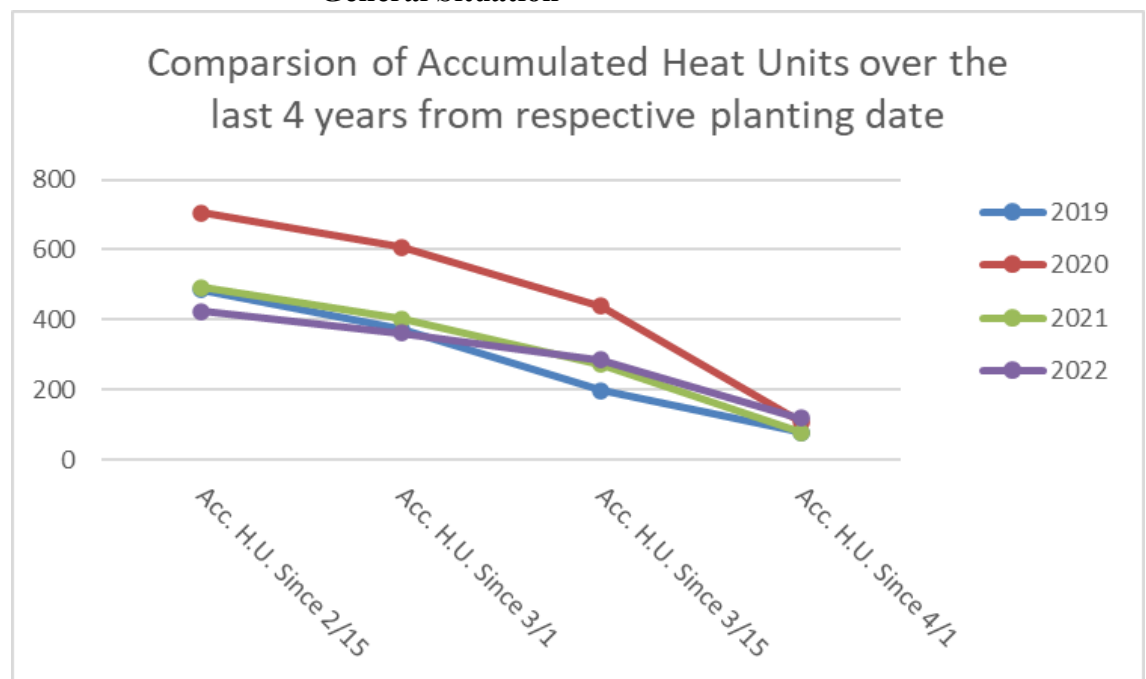


Figure 1: Accumulated Heat Units graph for cotton for 2022

Comparison of Accumulated Heat Units over the last 4 years				
	Acc. H.U. Since 2/15	Acc. H.U. Since 3/1	Acc. H.U. Since 3/15	Acc. H.U. Since 4/1
2019	486	374	199	80
2020	705	607	440	109
2021	493	404	272	79
2022	425	362	286	119

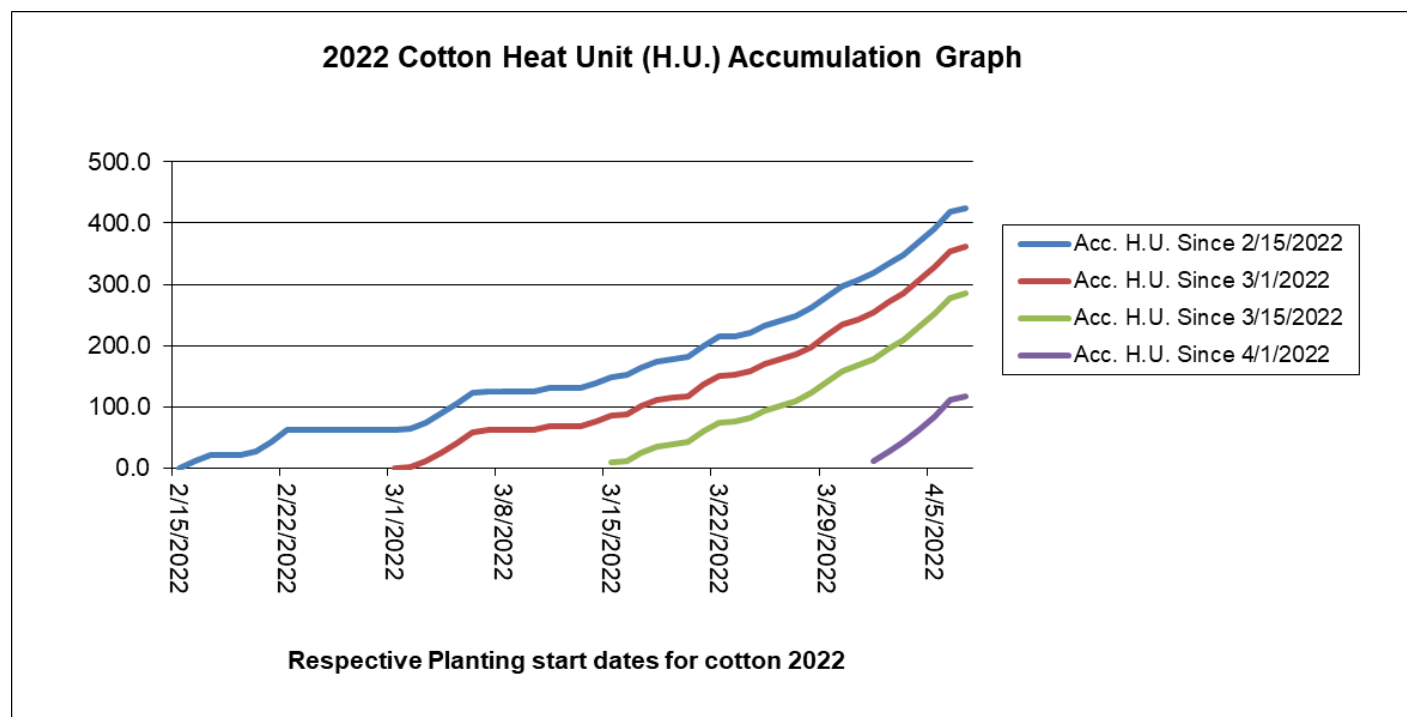


Figure 2: Cotton Heat Unit graph for 2022 according to respective planting date

Cotton

According to the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication program as of Thursday April 7th, we have about 176,504 acres planted into cotton and still have more acreage being planted. Majority of cotton growers in the LRGV started planting cotton in Mid-March after waiting for several cold fronts to pass. We have a lot of cotton throughout the LRGV in all

counties. I am seeing lots of cotyledon cotton, 2-4 true leave cotton and some earlier planted cotton already putting on pin head squaring.

Cotton along the river travelling down Military highway in the Pharr, Donna, Progresso, La Feria areas had light to moderate thrips pressure in some fields while most were pretty clean. Some cotton fields with thrips pressure were those next to onion fields being harvested along river and in the mid Valley and should be checked. Majority of fields in mid valley to upper valley near Raymondville had little to no



Figure 3: Cotton aphids



Figure 4: Adult black and red Scymnus beetle & white mummy scymnus larva on cotton leaves, predators of cotton aphids

thrips present. Cotton aphids were being seen in all fields in very low to no populations. I was also starting to pick up on predators like adult ladybugs and scymnus beetles and a few of their larva (Figure 4). In Rio Hondo, Sebastian, and La Sara areas I picked up on a few red spidermites, nothing worthy of



Figure 6: Red spidermites on cotton

treatment but hopefully we will get a rain that will knock them off the cotton plants because they can

reproduce quickly in high temperatures and dry conditions.

Spidermites in cotton are only treated when 40% or more of the plants show noticeable leaf damage and the mite population is growing.

Table 3. Thrips action threshold

Cotton stage	Action threshold
Emergence to	
1 true leaf	1 thrips per plant
2 true leaves	2 thrips per plant
3 true leaves	3 thrips per plant
4 true leaves	4 thrips per plant
5–7 leaves or squaring initiation	Treatment is rarely justified.

Figure 5: Action thresholds for thrips above and aphids below

Table 6. Aphid action threshold

Cotton stage	Action threshold
Prior to first cracked boll	40–70 aphids per leaf*
After first cracked boll	10 aphids per leaf**

*Higher the yield potential (>1000 lbs lint/acre), lower the threshold
 **Where rainfall is not likely to wash honeydew from the lint

An update from Texas Boll Weevil Eradication program: Edward Herrera LRGV Zone Manager

In looking at our trapping data we are at very low capture numbers with current weeks reporting as little as one capture with multiple weeks at zero captures; for the entire Lower Rio Grande Valley Zone. With this current stage of the eradication program, it becomes ever so critical that we monitor extensively to insure we are not missing anything that could cause setback. Complete access to entire perimeters of both this year's cotton acreage along with last season's cotton acreage is crucial in insuring good accurate data. With the progress of cotton plant development, we will be reaching pinhead square within the next couple of weeks on earliest planted cotton acreage. Foundation applications will be done at pinhead square on any and all acreage plus surrounding acreage with current weevil activity or historical weevil activity going back to late last season. It is important to address any potential weevil emergence from over-wintering weevils. A reminder that is equally important is that any acreage planted into another crop other than cotton has to be kept clear of any volunteer cotton according to TDA stalk destruction regulations. Cotton presence in other crops would trigger additional trap deployment in the area along with potential treatments of cotton in other crops if weevil presence is detected. If these additional actions become necessary, they become a huge expense burden on your eradication program's budget. We are in great shape right now with weevil numbers and have an opportunity to make significant progress in the eradication program in 2022.

Grain Sorghum

Lots of grain sorghum coming up in all 3 counties as I scouted many fields stages V3 to V7 out there and it too is looking pretty clean. I have not seen any armyworms in sorghum yet. I have not picked

up on any sugarcane aphids in commercial sorghum either. I have seen a little bit of yellow sugarcane aphids on the lower two leaves in a couple sorghum fields and have seen a little bit of corn leaf aphids in the whorl but very few.

Corn, Sunflowers, Soybeans, & Sesame

Lots of corn in the LRGV this year. Very good stands, some corn started to be watered this last week. I was not picking up on any cutworms or other pests of concern. Was very clean. Majority of corn is at V5-V7 stage. Sunflowers look good in the McCook area, very clean. Very good stands of soybeans, no pest of concern currently. Some sesame was planted this past week.



Figure 7: Soybeans in LRGV

Audio Update for South Texas IPM in row crops

We are doing the weekly audio update for South Texas IPM in row crops again this year. In fact you might have already received a couple if you had signed up last year. We tried this last year and it worked well, it's a 5minute update on what is going on in the LRGV and Costal 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 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!

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Bronze



Figure 8: Student worker scouting cotton