



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

Welcome back everyone. Planting season has been real touch and go this year as we have been in a drought. However, we did receive some significant rainfall in the LRGV on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. Majority of the rain was along the river and stretched from Mission to Harlingen and San Benito areas giving rain totals of 2-4 inches. Areas in the Mid Valley Weslaco, Mercedes, Combs, Edinburg and so on received about 1- 2 inches and as you headed further north in Lyford, Raymondville and out far west in McCook rainfall varied between 0.5 to 0.75 inches in the Upper Valley. Even though we did receive some much needed rain this week and was the first significant rainfall of the season we are still facing drought conditions. We have a lot of early planted corn and sorghum that was already maturing too quickly due to the high heat units and had already started to burn up quickly from the heat stress. All crops had been very stressed prior to the rainfall event this week. If you look at the Heat Units graph comparing the last 4 years (Figure 1) you can see that this year's heat units, 2023 (purple line), compared to last year's heat units, 2022 (green line), is significantly higher, combine that with lack of moisture, weekly high winds and it equals drought like conditions which we have been experiencing.

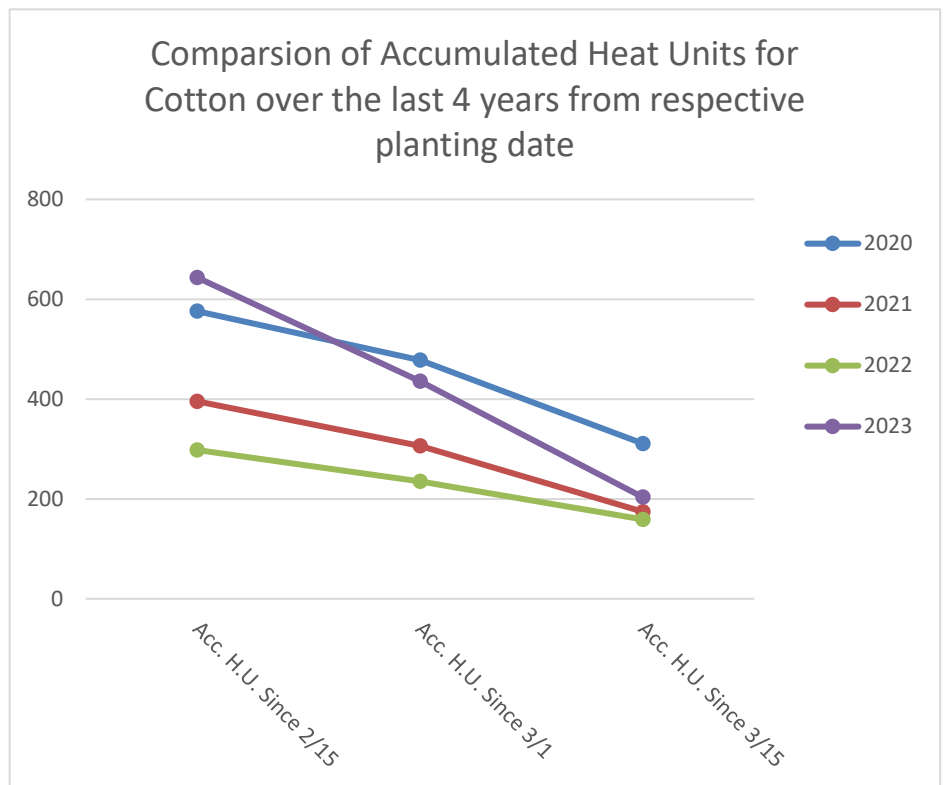


Figure 1: Accumulated HU chart for Cotton comparing last 4 years.

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
2020	576	478	311
2021	396	306	175
2022	298	235	159
2023	644	436	204

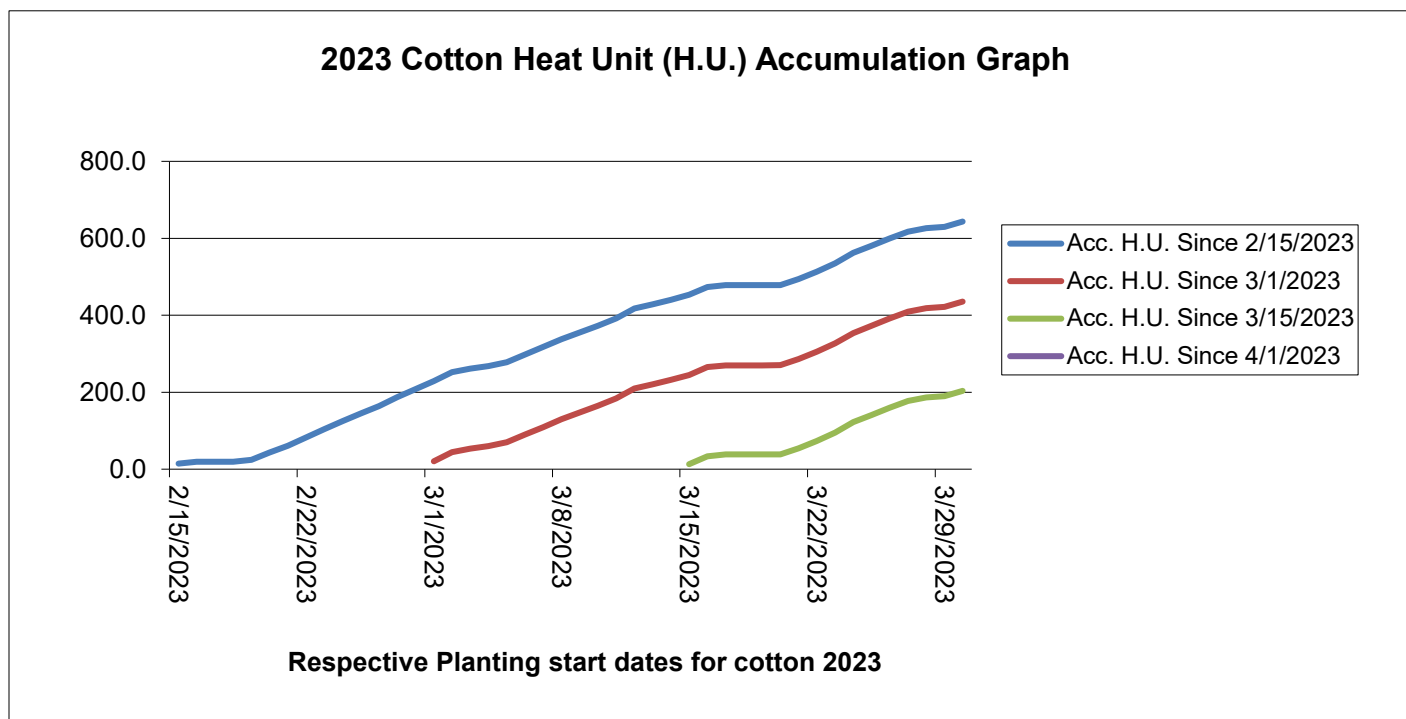


Figure 2: 2023 Accumulated Heat Units Graph for Cotton

Cotton

According to the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication program as of Wednesday March 29th we have about 107,000 acres planted cotton and still might have more being planted weather permitting these next two weeks. We have lots of cotyledon cotton that just emerged this week, a bunch of 2-4 true leaf cotton and we also have plenty of cotton just starting to square across the LRGV. We have been scouting the last two weeks and all the cotton looks clean thus far in the early growth stages.

Scouting cotton along the river this week before the rain from Mission to Los Indios I did pick up on a few thrips, but nothing at threshold. A lot of cotton had 4 -6 true leaves; this is past the point of thrips becoming an issue along the river which is great. We picked up on a few winged cotton aphids barely making its way into the cotton fields and low populations of red spidermites along the river but with the heavy rains received I'm sure it knocked off the mites and some of the aphids just starting to show up. I picked up on very low cotton aphid numbers in fields in the Mid Valley around Elsa and Monte Alto prior to the rains so will be mindful of cotton aphids in the coming weeks. In eastern Willacy County and around Sebastian cotton looked very clean of pests still.

Table 3. Thrips action threshold

Cotton stage	Action threshold
<i>Emergence to</i>	
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 1: 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

Figure 3: Action thresholds for thrips & aphids feeding in cotton

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

Reminder for Producers to report all planted cotton acres to Foundation. It is detrimental to eradication program to have unreported acres not being monitored. Planted cotton acreage should have boll weevil traps around entire perimeter, if traps are not present please report to Foundation. Equally important that there is no volunteer cotton in other crops. If there is presence of cotton in other crops it could be subject to being posted and fees levied through TDA. Acreage out of compliance according to TDA regulations for non-commercial cotton could be subject to boll weevil applications.



Figure 4: Cotton in early pin head squaring stage.

Grain Sorghum

Lots of grain sorghum is coming up in all 3 counties as I scouted many fields stages V3 to V7 out there and it too is looking clean. However, all the sorghum looked stressed prior to the recent rains early this week as leaves were twisted, we did have some sorghum in booting stage and hopefully this rain was beneficial. I have picked up on the usual early season suspects in sorghum, a few corn leaf aphids, and a few fall armyworms in the whorls but no populations of concern. I have seen a little bit of sugarcane aphids in some commercial sorghum along the river but no populations of concern yet as well. In some blooming sorghum however, I was seeing too many adult rice stinkbugs present

mating/laying eggs and just a heads up I am concerned for future populations to develop going forward in the season in sorghum, I honestly did not



Figure 5: grain sorghum at V7 stage



Figure 6: Rice Stinkbug adults

expect to see rice stinkbugs (Figure 6) this early in the season in abundance like that so we will see what happens. In the meantime, we will be actively on the look out for this pest and others when the majority of sorghum gets to blooming/soft dough stages and will let you know but for now things still look fairly clean in sorghum going forward.

Corn, Sunflowers

Lots of corn in the LRGV growing, as we have all stages coming up from V1 to VT & R1. Lots of corn along the river received some much-needed rainfall as I saw many fields in the VT & R1 stages, so this rain was very timely for good ear development. In the McCook area the sunflowers looked good and clean of any pests as they are in the vegetative stages as well.

From your local Ag Agents

The South Texas based Extension Specialists from Corpus Christi will host a **South Texas Agriculture Symposium on Tuesday, April 11, 2023**. We will broadcast them live via TEAMS at the **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Headquarters, 2401 E. Business Highway 83, in Weslaco, Texas**. See the attached program flyer. We will start registration at 8:00 a.m. and get started with the program at 8:30 a.m.

There will be a total of nine presentations designed to modify practices that will increase success on your farm or ranch. Topics include: financial management, horticulture crops, plant diseases, predator management, wildlife and range management. There will be an opportunity for interaction with the Specialists. Fee is \$20. Lunch will be provided; and, the program should conclude by 2:30 p.m. A total of two general CEU's can be earned towards your pesticide license. Please click on link and pre-register online at: <https://bit.ly/3TiRxZe>



Figure 7: Sunflowers in McCook, Texas



Figure 8: Local Willacy Ag Agent Georgina planting cotton variety trial

Audio Update for South Texas IPM in row crops

We will be starting up the weekly audio update for South Texas IPM in row crops again this year. Its a 5

minute update on what is going on in the LRGV and Costal Bend areas . 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!

*****Past Sponsors and continued Sponsors and new sponsors** thank you so much for always supporting your local LRGV IPM Program. We really do care about our growers and want this year to be a successful one. For those of you who would like to Sponsor and maybe didn't receive the sponsorship letter please reach out to me , Danielle Sekula – IPM agent, via email Danielle.sekula@ag.tamu.edu or phone (956) 968-5581 as we are taking donations and I will gladly add you to the Sponsorship page right away.

SPONSORS again Thank you so much for your continued support over the years, this is my 11th year as your IPM agent and I am just truly humbled & grateful to be working with so many great people in the Ag industry in the LRGV, lets see what this year has in store 😊

Thank You 2023 IPM Pest Cast Sponsors!

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