TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
CGP
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Pest Cast

The Row Crops IPM Newsletter for the LRGV, a cooperative project of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, the Texas Pest Management Association, and the Cotton & Grain Producers of the lower Rio Grande Valley

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General Situation

Very hot, muggy, humid, and muddy this week scouting in between a few scattered showers mid-week. Weather conditions have been perfect for pest activity to increase but lots of fields looked very clean and crops are progressing well.

Cotton

This week in cotton we are experiencing an increase in cotton aphids in pockets in some fields. The threshold for cotton aphids is 40-70 per leaf before first cracked boll. Most cotton fields we looked at had little to no cotton aphids present but there were some fields that were experiencing an abundance of cotton aphids infesting squares, stems, and overwhelming leaves but it was really on a field-to-field assessment. We are also seeing fleahopper nymphs present this week as well as adults, just a handful here and there, still very low in populations as most fields were very clean and still free of fleahopper activity. It is during the first 3 weeks of squaring that finding 15-25 cotton fleahoppers (nymphs and adults) per 100 terminals may cause economic damage. Once bolls are present and the cotton begins to flower fleahoppers are Not considered a threat anymore. In years past I've documented that we tend to see the fleahopper populations at threshold mainly beginning the second week of June. The majority of cotton across the Valley was still looking very clean of pests and we saw many cotton fields in full square mode and some of the earliest cotton fields planted already producing mature and dime sized bolls.

Figure 1: Cotton blooming 2023 in Hargill, TX

Grain Sorghum

We are experiencing an increase in sugarcane aphids in sorghum this week due to the perfect muggy, humid, intense heat weather conditions. Most sorghum fields I was seeing low to moderate sugarcane aphid pressure and plenty of predators such as syrphid larvas and ladybug larvas feeding to control them and populations were not consistent throughout the field. However, there are some fields that

Figure 2: Sorghum midge above and below

are experiencing 75 + SCA/ leaf and heavy honey dew from SCA feeding under the canopies, in which glistening of leaves is easily noticeable where more than 30% of the plants in the field were infested in which a spray treatment is warranted (See Figure 3 below for SCA action thresholds). We saw this occurring in sorghum varieties with No sugarcane aphid tolerance or resistant.

This week in sorghum we saw high populations of midge all along the river (5 per head) from Los Indios to Mission in flowering sorghum. There were reports of high populations of midge (Figure 2) in flowering sorghum in Los Fresnos and we picked up on infestations at threshold in Rio Hondo, Weslaco, and Mercedes areas where we were scouting. In the Lyford area we saw moderate populations as well and some fields were almost at threshold but not quite. In the McCook area there was lots of flowering sorghum and I did not pick up on any midge activity there this Friday. With that said most midge activity at threshold seems to be all along the river and along the coastal areas. See figure 4, Table F below with insecticides labeled for control of sorghum midge. As we continue to enter the later part of May into June and will have more blooming sorghum from here on out it will be very important to monitor for midge. When checking for midge (Figure 2) 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 every 3 days between the hours of 10 am and 2pm to inspect for midge pressure. The threshold for midge is one per sorghum head.

We have a lot of beautiful sorghum across the Valley maturing nicely. Lots of sorghum is already in hard dough stage and we have lots of sorghum in soft dough stage and for the most part this week I did not pick up on any headworm or rice stinkbug populations of concern but do be on lookout for those pests as well in coming weeks.

Table 8. Action thresholds for sorghum aphids based on sorghum growth stages.

Sorghum Growth Stage	Threshold
Pre-boot to boot	20% of plants infested with 50 or more aphids.
Flowering to milk stage	30% of plants infested with 50 or more aphids.
Soft-dough to hard-dough	30% of plants infested with established aphid colonies and localized areas with heavy honeydew.
Black layer	Heavy honeydew and established aphid colonies. Treat only to prevent harvest problems.

Figure 3: Sugarcane aphid threshold table, on pg. 15 of the Managing Insect & mite pests of Texas Sorghum guide, ENTO-PU-170 April 2023, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Table F. Insecticides labeled for control of sorghum midges in grain sorghum (follow label directions).						
Active Ingredient	**Insecticide**	**Mode of Action**	**Rate**	**Remarks**	**REI[1]**	**PHI[2]**
Post-emergence Treatment						
Alpha-cypermethrin	Fastac	3A	1.3–3.8 fl. oz./A	Restricted use. **Danger–Poison.**	12H	14 days
Beta-cyfluthrin	Baythroid XL	3A	1.0–1.3 fl. oz./A	Restricted use.	12H	14 days
Cyfluthrin	Tombstone	3A	1.0–1.3 fl. oz./A	Restricted use.		
Deltamethrin	Delta Gold 1.5 EC	3A	1.3–1.9 fl. oz./A	Restricted use. **Danger–Poison.**		
Esfenvalerate	Asana XL, generics	3A	2.9–5.8 fl. oz./A	Restricted use.		
Gamma-cyhalothrin	Declare 1.25, Proaxis 0.5	3A	0.77–1.02 fl. oz./A 1.92–2.56 fl. oz./A	Restricted use.		
Lambda-cyhalothrin	Warrior II with Zeon, Karate with Zeon, generics	3A	0.96–1.28 fl. oz./A	Restricted use.		
Lambda-cyhalothrin + chlorantraniliprole	Besiege	3A	5.0–6.0 fl. oz./A	Do not exceed total of 18 fl. oz./A per year. Restricted use.		
Spinosad	Blackhawk	3A, 28	1.5–3.3 fl. oz./A	See 2(ee) label for midges. For low to moderate midge infestations.		
Methomyl	Lannate LV, Lannate SP, generics	5	0.75–1.0 pt./A 0.25–0.5 lb./A	Do not use methomyl on sweet sorghum varieties. For SP, use a minimum of 10 GPA by ground or 2 GPA by air. Restricted use. **Danger–Poison.**	48H	14 days
Zeta-cypermethrin	Mustang Maxx, Respect	1A	1.28–4.0 fl. oz./A	Restricted use.	12H	14 days

[1] REI = Restricted entry level
[2] PHI = Pre-harvest interval

Figure 4: Table F, on pg. 31 of the Managing Insect & mite pests of Texas Sorghum guide, ENTO-PU-170 April 2023, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Figure 5: Grain sorghum in soft dough stage Hargill, TX

Sesame & Sunflowers

Saw some of the very first blooms in sesame in McCook this week. Still seeing sesame free of pests in these early growth stages throughout the Valley. Sunflowers in McCook looked beautiful as the heads were full of seed as they are in the seed developing stage heading towards ripening for harvest.

Figure 6: Sesame starting to bloom & Sunflowers full of seed maturing in McCook, TX

***Wednesday May 24, 2023, we will be hosting a Cotton & Grain Scouting School for Pests and Diseases at the Weslaco AgriLife Station, 2 IPM & 1 General TDA CEUs. Lunch is provided. Please see attached flyer and make plans to attend, this will be good for all growers, scouts, new scouts, consultants and anyone wanting to learn about Cotton & Grain in the LRGV.**

To register click on this link: https://bit.ly/3VjMZTm

Online link provided below for those who cannot attend in person:

Annett S. Cantu is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Cotton & Grain Scouting School for Pests & Diseases

Time: May 24, 2023 10:15 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89107818097?pwd=TVN1akU4S2M4L044Y1FxYUh3OUNQUT09

Meeting ID: 891 0781 8097

Passcode: 1234

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