



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

Danielle Sekula
IPM Extension Agent

Volume XLV

Issue 13, July 14, 2023

General Situation

Very hot in the LRGV as we continue to have 100-102°F weather with a heat index of 114°F daytime and averaging at 80°F each night. Harvesting of sorghum and corn is almost done in much of the Valley as yields have been fair. In case you hadn't heard the first bale of cotton was harvested by Wesley Vanderpool on June 20th in Alamo, Texas. It was a BASF Stoneville variety 4990B3XF and was ginned at the Willacy Co-Op Gin (info from Agfax.com). Congrats to Wesley Vanderpool as this is his second year in a row making first bale.



Figure 1: Lots of open boll cotton as we head towards harvest in the LRGV

Cotton

Still seeing low to moderate populations of tarnished and Verde plantbugs in majority of the younger cotton fields with dime sized bolls with a few fields being treated this week and last week due to just a little too much plantbug activity/feeding. In fields with dime sized bolls, I am finding leaf footed bugs present in northern parts of Hidalgo County. Leaf



footed bugs are black in color with a yellowish/white lateral zigzag stripe going across their back and leaf like shapes on lower part of their back legs, hence their name leaf footed bug (See Figure 2). Leaf footed bugs are like stinkbugs and plantbugs in that they use their proboscis mouth part to penetrate bolls and feed so do treat if seeing infesting populations present. Leaf footed bugs are usually never a problem but can be one and have been known to feed on the late season cotton in South Texas. We are also finding heavy whitefly pressure in the Edinburg, Mission, Pharr, and Alamo areas, mainly closer to the river but also in town. Whiteflies can



Figure 2: leaf footed bug in cotton

inadvertently cause lint cotton to stain from the sooty mold that forms on the sugary secretions they make when they feed heavily on the cotton foliage. Treat cotton accordingly to prevent lint quality from degrading due to black sooty mold.

In cotton we are seeing the weather effects of the rain received last Wednesday July 5th through Friday July 7th in a lot of dryland cotton fields causing hard-lock bolls with some sooty mold on the cotton plants. Hard-lock bolls happen when you get rain just as the bolls were opening causing the lint to stay compacted instead of fluffing out and the brackets that hold the lint do not fully open either. In some irrigated cotton where rain was received, we are seeing hard-locked bolls also on the lower and center part of the plants but it was more evident in our dryland cotton that already had many open bolls and bolls just opening at the time of rain fall. We also saw some boll rotting going on in cotton that could've happened from rain entering the bolls from where plantbugs have penetrated and fed causing the boll to be more susceptible to boll rot. We certainly have had a lot more plantbugs (Verdes & tarnished) feeding this year throughout the Valley than we have had in past years to make this a likely possibility.

Again, this year we are seeing symptoms on the cotton leaves, mainly *Alternaria* leaf spot, exhibiting stress from the drought. The symptoms of *Alternaria* leaf spot are everywhere on the cotton leaves and the spores might have been spread more with the rains from last week making it even more evident this week as we were scouting cotton. As you drive around the valley, you will see the reddening and yellowing of the leaves throughout the canopies and will notice spots from *Alternaria* leaf spot throughout the canopy as well. The good thing is yield loss is not considered a problem with *Alternaria* when we see it occurring this late in the season. We might also have some *Stemphylium* leaf spot going on as well but the most common that we see for our area is the *Alternaria* leaf spot. Please click on link below for more information, photos, or to refresh your memory:

<https://southtexas.tamu.edu/files/2022/07/Diagnosis-Management-Foliar-Diseases.pdf>

Most cotton fields have been naturally drying up and senescing from the intense heat and have many open bolls. Majority of early planted cotton is at 60-80% open bolls and in other later planted cotton we are seeing about 30-40% open bolls in the lower portion of the cotton plant and our latest planted cotton is about at 8-10 NAWF with immature bolls still developing. As harvest time approaches us, we should consider the proper application timing of harvest aids to preserve fiber quality and maximize our yield potential. Many growers are planning and evaluating which fields to put on their boll openers, defoliant, and desiccants first for the upcoming weeks as we head to harvest time. Boll openers (active ingredient ethephon) will cause the bolls to open at a faster pace; they do not help the boll mature so that is important to keep in mind when you have smaller immature bolls at the tops of the plants for that may affect your yield greatly. There are two types of defoliant that remove foliage from the cotton plant, your hormone defoliant such as thiadiazuron and your herbicidal defoliant such as tribufos and the ppo inhibitors, and for conventional cotton you can use glyphosate. It's important to note that if you use too high of a rate for your herbicidal defoliant you can cause the leaves to get stuck on the plant. Desiccants (paraquat or sodium chlorate) on the other hand will kill and dry all the plant tissues, they can be used as defoliant but selecting the right rate to use is tricky sometimes with the weather. This was my summarization of an article on cotton harvest brought to you by Dr. Gaylon Morgan and Dr. Josh McGinty, if you want to read their more detailed description of using cotton harvest aids you can click on link below to get to their helpful article:

<http://agrilife.org/texasrowcrops/2015/08/03/preparing-for-the-2015-south-texas-cotton-harvest/>

Grain Sorghum

As many growers finish wrapping up sorghum harvest, we are finding a few pests in the late sorghum fields to be aware of. In soft dough sorghum we were picking up on high infestations of sorghum web worms feeding on the developing kernels, about five per head which is way above threshold so do treat like you would any head worms. The other main pest in late sorghum this week and last week are sugarcane aphids as they seem to be having a peak in population. If you have green foliage and are heading to harvest soon, please check your fields for high infestations of sugarcane aphids as we are finding many late fields consistently having SCA throughout causing glistening and sooty mold. You might need to treat for SCA to prevent your equipment from breaking down due to the sticky honeydew they secrete. Check fields and treat accordingly. All insecticides to use for pests in sorghum & pest thresholds can be found at this link below:

<https://southtexas.tamu.edu/files/2023/05/managing-insect-and-mite-pests-of-texas-sorghum.pdf>

Sesame

Seeing a little bit of shotgun hole damage in some sesame from past corn earworm feeding but very sporadic and nothing to worry about. Still have Not seen any sesame leafroller which is great as most sesame has already put on the pod load it will carry to harvest. Other sesame fields are still blooming a bit more at the top but most are on its way to maturing for harvest in the coming month.

2023 Cotton Heat Unit (H.U.) Accumulation Graph

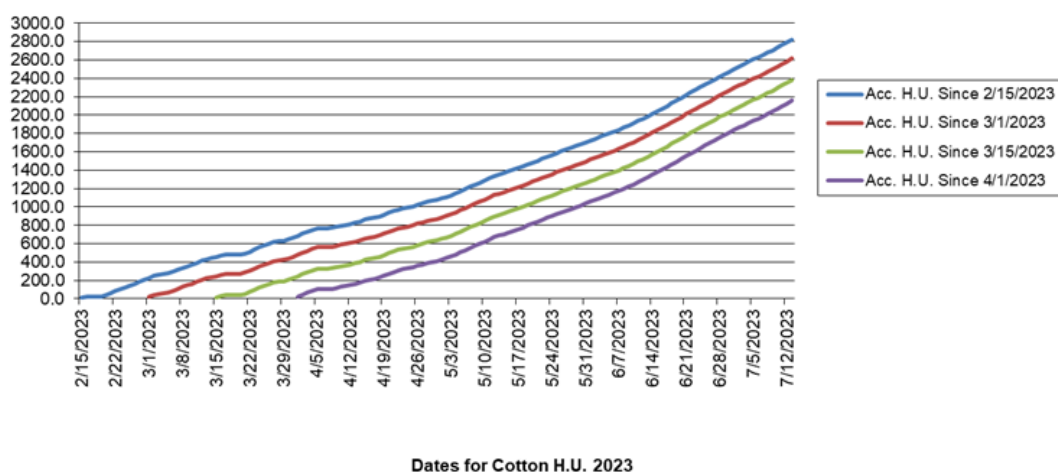


Figure 3: Glistening from sugars secreted by SCA feeding



Figure 4: Lots of sugarcane aphids (SCA) feeding



Figure 5: Sorghum web worms feeding on soft dough sorghum

Dog-day Cicadas

Common Name: Dog-day cicada, **Scientific Name:** *Tibicen* spp., **Order:** Homoptera

Description: Adults vary in size and color according to species. All have prominent bulging eyes and semi-transparent wings held roof-like over their large bodies. The larger species are about 1-5/8 inch long and 1/2-inch wide with brown or green, black and white body markings. Nymphs resemble wingless adults, are brown and have strong front legs well developed for tunneling in the soil.

The periodical cicada species that do occur in Texas complete their life cycles in 13 years, although some emerge almost every year. Adults emerge from April through July, depending upon species and locality.

Life Cycle: The common dog-day cicadas (sometimes called the annual cicadas or locusts) appear in late summer and have life cycles of 2 to 5 years. Female cicadas insert clusters of eggs into the twigs and small branches using a saw-like egg laying structure (ovipositor). In 6 to 7 weeks, small nymphs hatch from the eggs and drop to the ground. They burrow into the soil, seeking tree roots. As they molt through several growth stages (instars), they may burrow several feet down. Fully developed nymphs burrow out of the ground at night, leaving a 1/2-inch hole behind them. Under some conditions, the exit hole is associated with a mud cone or chimney 3 to 4 inches high. The nymphs climb onto tree trunks, low plants or other objects. Adult cicadas emerge from this last nymphal stage through a crack along the back, leaving the light brown cast skin behind. Adults can live for 5 to 6 weeks.

Habitat, Food Source(s), Damage: Male cicadas rest on tree trunks and branches and “sing” to attract females, producing a periodic whine by means of two special vibrating membranes in the sides of the abdomen. Females do not sing. Adult cicadas do not feed on leaves and may suck juices from tender twigs. Nymphs feed on the sap from tree roots.

Pest Status: Texas species are not considered to be plant pests.

Information found and copied from: <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/dog-day-cicada/>



Thank You 2023 IPM Pest Cast Sponsors!

Diamond



*Americot-NexGen

*BASF

*Bayer

*Capital Farm Credit

*Farmers Crop Insurance

*RegalAG

Platinum



*La Feria Co-op Gin

*Simplot

Gold



*Cameron County Farm Bureau

*Hidalgo County Farm Bureau

*Nichino

*Sesaco

*Texas Farm Credit

*Texas Sorghum Producers

*Valley Co-op Oil Mill

*Vital Fertilizers

Silver



*Adams Farms

*Frisby-Bell Gin Co.

*Hargill Growers' Gin

*RGV Gin Company, LLC

*Rob See Co.

*Ross Gin Company Ltd

*Valley Ag Insurance Services Inc

*Willamar Operating, L.P.