



## 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*

Danielle Sekula  
IPM Extension Agent

Volume XLVI

Issue 10, May 31, 2024

### General Situation

We received some rains Monday and Tuesday nights with some areas receiving anywhere from 4 tenths of an inch to 1 inch of rain across the Valley. Grain sorghum and corn harvest has begun this week and will continue into June. Temperatures continue to be very hot anywhere from 99-101°F during day and nights averaging at 82 °F. Current Heat Units comparing 2023 to 2024 are below and Heat Units chart for 2024 is at the end of the Pest Cast.

Accumulated Heat Units for Cotton 2024 compared to 2023 at this time				
	Acc. H.U. Since 2/15	Acc. H.U. Since 3/1	Acc. H.U. Since 3/15	Acc. H.U. Since 4/1
2023	1682	1474	1242	1017
2024	1757	1639	1471	1280

### Cotton

Clean week in cotton, as majority of cotton in LRGV is in cutout stage, 3-4 NAWF and blooms at the tops, other cotton is at 6-8 NAWF as all cotton is in full bloom with mature bolls on bottoms and plenty of dime sized bolls. We only picked up on a couple of lygus bugs (tarnished plantbugs) while sweep netting. As we go forward, we will need to be on the lookout for tarnished and verde plantbugs (adults and nymphs), especially as grain sorghum harvest continues into June as they are known for migrating out of sorghum into nearby cotton to feed on young immature bolls.



Figure 1: Blooming cotton in Hargill, Texas.

### Grain Sorghum

In flowering sorghum, we were picking up on 8-12 midge per head, so please check flowering sorghum and treat accordingly as it is critical for seed production. We did receive reports of flowering sorghum being treated for midge this week across the Valley. Sorghum midge are very tiny, they look like small orangish/red mosquitoes that are the size of gnats. Sorghum midge will inject (lay) their eggs into flowering sorghum and when the eggs hatch the midge larvae start to feed from the inside of the kernel destroying the developing seed. Threshold for sorghum midge is 1 per head, and the later part of May into June will be critical to continue to monitor for midge from morning till 2pm in flowering sorghum.



Figure 2: Sorghum midge laying eggs in flowering sorghum.

For soft dough sorghum we were finding 15-20 headworms (corn earworms & fall armyworms) per 10 heads, so averaging 1-2 per head, seeing mainly 4-6<sup>th</sup> instars, so fairly big headworms about 1 inch in

size. We were mainly finding corn earworms and using the white beat bucket as they are pretty well camouflaged on the head if just simply inspecting head with your eyes, its best to beat them into bucket for true count. The threshold for head worms is 1-2 larvae per head and the threshold for rice stinkbugs is 0.5-1 per sorghum head depending on the planting population. We saw a little bit of rice stinkbug activity present this week but nothing of concern as majority of fields are already in hard dough stages.

Again, this week we found a few false chinch bugs and their damage mainly in hard dough sorghum across the valley. The action level for false chinch bug is 140 bugs per grain head when infestation begins at the milk stage of grain development until hard dough. We did see that the McCook area had alarming numbers of false chinch bugs present, the most I have seen so far in the Valley as they caused damage in the soft dough stage ruining the seed causing empty seed capsules as it turned over to hard dough this week. The false chinch bugs were also lingering in the fields instead of leaving after it turns to hard dough like we have seen in other portions of the Valley. False chinch bugs preferred hosts are of the mustard weed group and when those weeds dry down or are killed via herbicide, they will migrate to nearby fields such as sorghum to feed. Insecticidal control recommendations are primarily pyrethroid insecticides.

For more detailed information on false chinch bugs please click on the two links below from Kansas State Extension as it explains the biology, and their preferred hosts. I found these two links below quite helpful.

[FalseChinchBug \(k-state.edu\)](https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/false-chinch-bug-kansas-crop-pests_MF3047)

[https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/false-chinch-bug-kansas-crop-pests\\_MF3047](https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/false-chinch-bug-kansas-crop-pests_MF3047)

### Sesame

Again, this week sesame is looking great as many fields are almost done with pod development and blooms are towards the very tops of the plant. We are only picking up on a couple of tarnished plantbugs, but overall, very clean and no pest concerns at this time.

### Corn

This week I visited more corn fields I previously checked three weeks ago concerning corn leafhopper populations. I am finding that in some fields the corn leafhopper populations have naturally decreased and that the honey dew and stickiness is drying down and should not be a problem at harvest time. Also, the corn I husked in these fields that had high corn leafhopper populations at brown silk stage and on, their corn is fine and seems not harmed by their consistent feeding on the corn plants leaves.



Figure 3: Corn earworm on soft dough sorghum head.

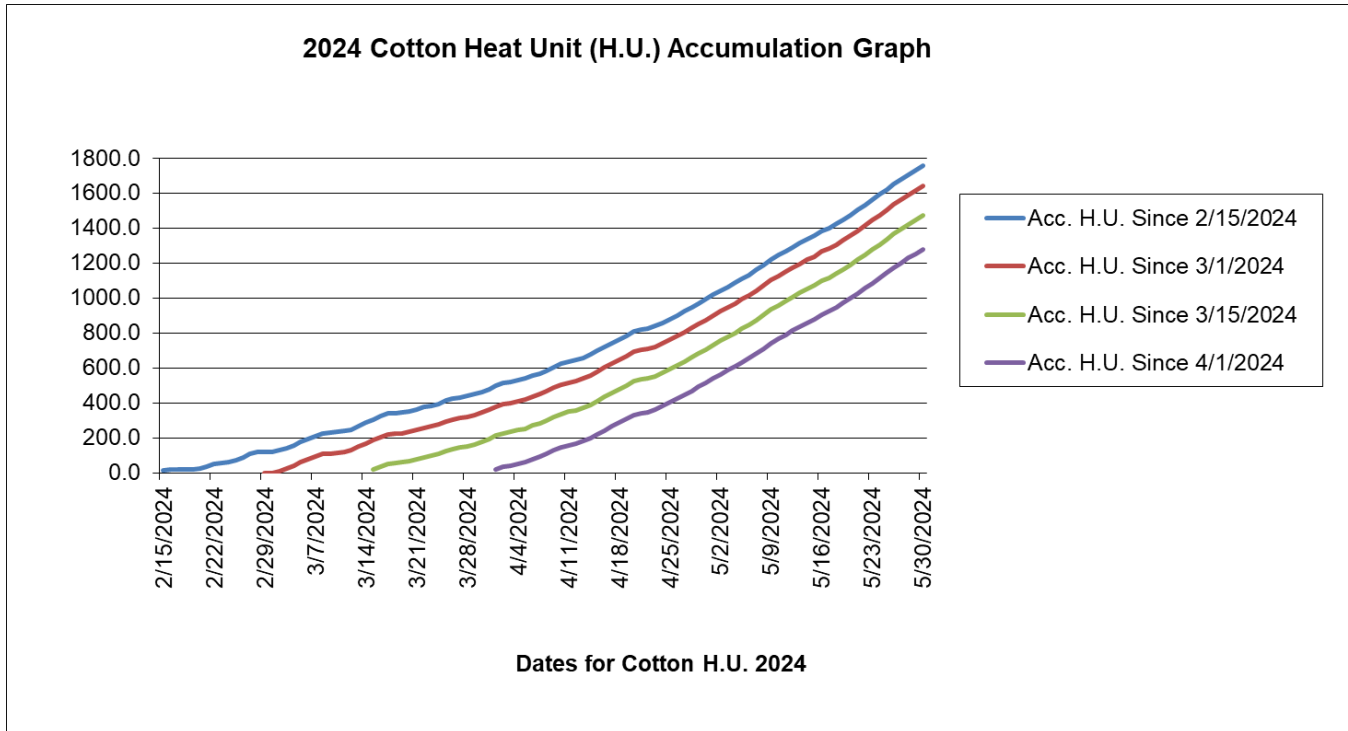


Figure 4: False chinch bugs on hard dough sorghum



Figure 5: Corn leafhoppers on corn.





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