



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 in the LRGV as many cotton fields were sprayed with defoliants and boll openers this week with leaves changing brown and falling off. We also saw some of the first cotton bales out in the fields as cotton harvest has officially begun for the LRGV and will continue through September. As always, each year cotton stalk destruction deadline is September 1st to render all cotton non-hostable and original stalks destroyed, whether they be completely defoliated, shredded with no regrowth, tilled under with no seedlings sprouted, these examples are all in compliance with the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Program.



Figure 1: Cotton bales harvested in Cameron County and cotton fields defoliated in Cameron County Texas 2023

Cotton

Main pests we were seeing this week in high populations are whiteflies and chilli thrips in cotton fields along the river. Chilli thrips populations are being managed to keep from premature defoliation in younger cotton.

Whiteflies need to be suppressed as well to avoid sooty mold growing on the sugars they excrete which could potentially stain the lint, open boll cotton while also inhibit plant growth. In the field edges where we were finding high populations of whiteflies,

we were also seeing a late infestation of cotton aphids on the upper leaves causing lots of stickiness from honey dew they secrete. We still have a few plantbugs (tarnished and verdes) active but for the most part their populations have tapered off. We are still seeing some leaf footed bug activity in some late cotton this week as well.





Figure 2: leaf footed bug in cotton



Figure 3: Chilli thrip damage in cotton, a bronzing effect along the plant veins as they feed, they are present on the leaf but too small to see in this photo.



Figure 4: Lots of adult whiteflies on cotton leaf feeding as well as chill thrips present but too small to see but you can see their damage done to the leaf, the bronzing color from feeding along plant veins on leaf

Grain Sorghum

Not too much activity in late grain sorghum. Mostly just high sugarcane aphid populations on leaves that need to be treated prior to harvest to keep combines from clogging up and breaking down due to the sticky honey dew secretions. Yields in sorghum have been fair this year as plants were very stressed and yield potential was not as high as in past years.



Figure 5: Sesame plants, sesame pod opened showing inside with seed.

Sesame

Sesame is progressing well throughout the Valley. Still no sign of leaf rollers, which is great. Most sesame has its potential pod load done as the plants mature. We are seeing whiteflies in sesame but there is not need for treatment as there are mirid bugs present eating them keeping populations in check and it has created this neat symbiosis where plant is not harmed.

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