



## 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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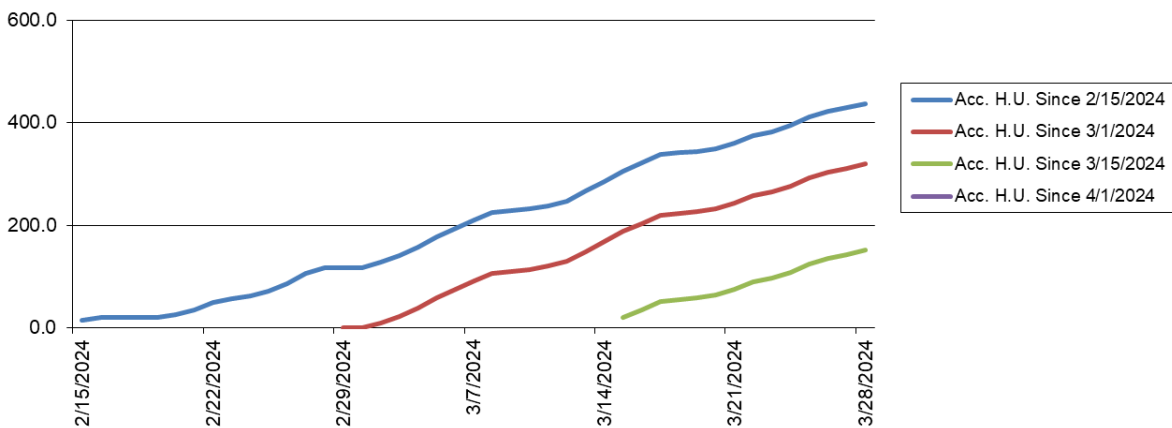
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### General Situation

Welcome back everyone. Growers have been back in the fields planting corn and sorghum since mid-February, then after switched over to cotton. Initially we started the year out in a severe drought and many water restrictions have been in place throughout the LRGV and even though we have received some rainfall these last two months, it continues. We received a timely rainfall February 16-18<sup>th</sup> that helped provide some much-needed moisture bringing majority of the valley anywhere between 1-3 inches it just depended on where you were located and after it dried up planting really took off after that. Then a couple weeks ago we received another slew of slow rains, drizzle mainly that accumulated after 3 days or so giving some areas anywhere from half an inch to 2-3 inches in isolated areas of the Valley. For our Heat Units accumulated this year (2024) we are about 30% lower than at this time last year. Our daily temperatures each day have been averaging out to about the mid-80s with a couple days in the last two weeks reaching 90, and our nights have been averaging out to about 60. We have been receiving lots of high winds at 20-30 mph each day lately which if continues will quickly dry up the soil moisture we have.

**2024 Cotton Heat Unit (H.U.) Accumulation Graph**



Dates for Cotton H.U. 2024

**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	Acc. H.U. Since 4/1
2021	378	288	157	
2022	262	199	123	
2023	627	419	187	
2024	438	320	152	

## Cotton

According to the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication program as of Wednesday March 27th we have about 105,237 acres planted cotton and still might have another potential 5,000 acres to be planted in the next few weeks. We have lots of cotyledon cotton that just emerged this week, majority of the cotton I scouted was in the 2-4 true leaf stages and we also have a handful of cotton just starting to square across the LRGV. We have been scouting the last two weeks and all the cotton looks clean of pests thus far in the early growth stages. The only pest I've picked up on or noticed this week was a couple of winged cotton aphids making there way into cotton fields. Also, we saw some severe sandblasting damage done to cotton in Cameron and Willacy counties east of HWY 77 that might need to be replanted. We also noticed some possible herbicide uptake damage/effects to some cotton seedlings in some areas, but they should be good and able to grow out of it, other than that was a very clean week in cotton. Our county Ag agents (Marco Ponce & Vidal Saenz) were able to plant a cotton variety trial yesterday with grower Will Goad in Cameron County and another cotton variety trial earlier in the month with Balde Gonzales. We will send out plot maps soon in case anyone wants to go out and see the different cotton varieties planted for these cotton replicated variety trials. A special thank you to our cotton growers (Will Goad & Balde Gonzales) for facilitating us in planting and growing these cotton variety trials.



Figure 1: 2-4 true leaf cotton growing in LRGV.



Figure 2: Cotton variety trial being planted by grower Will Goad in Cameron County

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

105,236.8 cotton acres reported and being serviced. There are a few Producers still planting cotton with an expected potential of 5,000 additional cotton acres to be planted. Crop stages range from just planted to already squaring and in some areas receiving initial malathion treatments due to current weevil catches or historical data. Of the current cotton acreage planted it is important to consider the challenge of this acreage being planted over 1,664 individual fields. Each of these individual fields has to be visited weekly and each trap location has to be visited and serviced. In addition to the current cotton acreage the Foundation's personnel also monitor all carry-over acreage that was in cotton for the 2023 growing season. This is an additional 116,583.2 acres over 2,285.4 individual fields serviced weekly. Within all this acreage are 34,289 individual boll weevil traps that again are serviced weekly. For these reasons it is very important that Producers monitor their fields planted in cotton for the 2024 growing season and if traps are not deployed around perimeter of cotton acreage, they should contact the local Boll Weevil office and report so acreage can be monitored. This year is very important that no acreage is left without monitoring since the boll weevil catches are historically low as we strive towards eradication. Access around the entire perimeter of all cotton acreage is crucial to



ensure good detection and timely control methods applied. Currently there have been twelve weevil catches reported since January 1, 2024, with all catches reported in the far west area of current year's cotton acreage.

### 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. 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 at booting stage and V7 stages along the river but no populations of concern yet as well. Two grain sorghum variety trials were planted last week of February by our Ag County agents. One grain sorghum variety trial with grower Ana Copeland, led by Ag agent Georgina Macias planted in Willacy County. Also, another grain sorghum variety trial planted by Chuck McCutchen, led by ag agent Marco Ponce in Cameron County. A special thanks to our growers Ana Copeland and Chuck McCutchen for facilitating these sorghum variety replicated studies. We will have plot maps available soon and send them out as well for these sorghum variety replicated trials in next couple of weeks.



Figure 3: Grain Sorghum growing in LRGV.



Figure 4: Corn leaf aphids in sorghum whorl.

### Corn, Sesame, & Sunflowers



Figure 6: Sunflowers growing in McCook.

Lots of corn in the LRGV growing, as we have all stages coming up from V1 to VT & R1. In the McCook area the sunflowers looked good and clean of any pests as they are in the vegetative stages right now. We have sesame being planted now and saw some seedling sesame coming up this week. Some sesame that was planted before the recent rains was struggling to break through the crusted ground and might need to be replanted but many fields were looking good. We also planted a sunflower variety trial with grower Mike Hudsonpillar, facilitated by me and Vidal Saenz (Hidalgo County Ag agent). Thank you, Mike, for

facilitating this sunflower replicated variety trial, we will have results available for everyone at the end of the season.

### Audio Update for South Texas IPM in row crops

We started the weekly audio update for South Texas IPM in row crops today, first text for this went out this morning for those already signed up. For those who would like to sign up, it's 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->



Figure 5: Sesame growing in the LRGV.

[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. Let's make this a great growing season as always. 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](mailto:Danielle.sekula@ag.tamu.edu) or phone (956) 968-5581 as we are taking donations via check & credit card and I will gladly add you to the Sponsorship page right away. Also Sponsors please check the Sponsor page to make sure I put you in the correct category and wrote your company name correctly as I do make mistakes and appreciate feedback so I can correct as needed. thanks**

**SPONSORS again Thank you so much for your continued support over the years, this is my 12<sup>th</sup> 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 2024 IPM Pest Cast Sponsors thus far!

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