



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

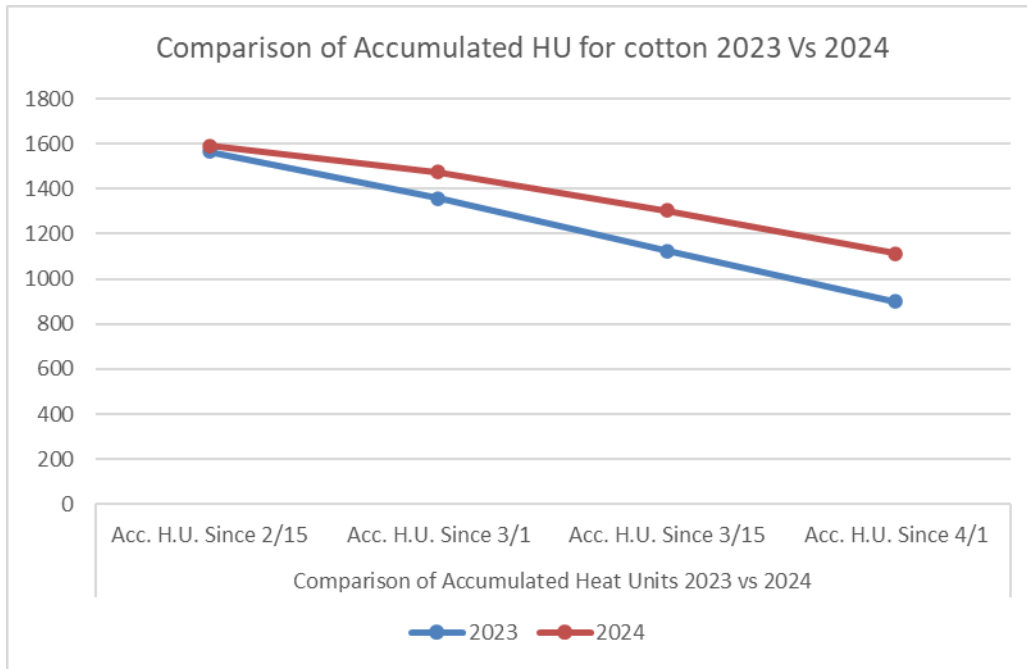
Volume XLVI

Issue 9, May 25, 2024

General Situation

Very hot and dry week in LRGV. Lots of cotton was being irrigated these last two weeks. Meanwhile grain sorghum comes closer to harvest time in next two weeks. Heat Units have been building up and for the later planting dates of March 15th & April 1st we are about 200 heat units higher than last year (2023), see graphs below.

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	1564.5	1356.5	1124.5	899.5
2024	1591	1473	1305	1114



Cotton

Another slow pest week in cotton as 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 look out for tarnished and verde plantbugs (adults and nymphs), especially as grain sorghum harvest starts in next couple of weeks as they are known for migrating out of sorghum into nearby cotton to feed on young immature bolls.

Grain Sorghum

In flowering sorghum in fields we checked around the Lyford area we were only seeing a couple of midge per ten plants which is below threshold, however in the San Benito area there were reports of a couple of flowering sorghum fields sprayed for midge. 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 going forward the thresholds 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.

We inspected several grain sorghum fields at the beginning of the week on Monday with false chinch bug damage. In sorghum fields around the Valley circular shadows/streaks were being noticed in the fields and upon inspection it was identified as false chinch bug damage as they caused a discoloration (black speckling) on the sorghum seed. Early in the week we were finding false chinch bugs present but only moderate to low populations (10-20 per head), we never found them at threshold which was great. Then as the fields continued to have the seed harden upon inspection towards the end of the week on Thursday & Friday they seemed to have left the fields and were not present, this



Figure 29. False chinch bugs



Figure 3: Field with spots that had false chinch bug feeding, notice the circular/streaks shadows in field

may be due to the seeds being harder for the false chinch bugs to penetrate the food source or they simply cycled out. However, for those with soft dough sorghum monitoring for false chinch bug along with rice stinkbugs and headworms will be critical these next couple of weeks. 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. Insecticidal control recommendations are primarily pyrethroid insecticides.

Note that we will continue to monitor for false chinch bugs as they

have been reported in sorghum fields up in the coastal bend and in Victoria County areas by colleagues.



Figure 4: False chinch bug adult being stabbed & eaten by lacewing larvae (photo taken by Sekula)



Figure 5: Sorghum with speckling discoloration from feeding by false chinch bugs.

Sesame

Sesame is looking great as many fields are almost done with pod development and blooms are towards the very tops of the plant. Scouting in sesame this week we found only a couple of tarnished plantbugs. Sesame continues to look clean and pest free for now, still no signs of sesame leafroller which is great.

Corn

This week I visited corn fields I previously checked a couple weeks ago concerning corn leafhopper populations. We are seeing adverse effects of the corn leafhoppers feeding: from bottom leaves dying off to more honey dew, discoloration (yellowing & reddening of leaves) and sooty mold as well as some damage to cobs. After inspecting behind a pyrethroid application in the RGV, I concluded that it failed to control the insects; likely due to insecticide coverage issues not being able to get the insecticide to the lower portion of the canopy.

We believe if your corn is in the brown silk stage, that the stickiness from the honeydew produced should not affect corn yield and that it will be dried down come harvest time were it should not be a problem. For corn in “green silk stage” still, if you have an abundance of these corn leafhoppers present producing large amounts of honey dew, you might want to consider treatment as it could affect the development of your corn, as seen in Figure 7.



Figure 6: Adult corn leafhopper in corn

Due to the rarity of this insect being a pest in Texas corn, our knowledge base is very limited. We have no threshold developed for corn leafhoppers in corn. There are a few insecticides labeled for use in corn that may prove effective. Alternative controls are being sought. We are working with local growers and crop consultants to learn more about this pest and how to manage it. The corn leafhopper has made its way up north Texas and has been identified in corn in Victoria County yesterday (May 24, 2024) by my fellow IPM agent Stephen Biles as we work together to figure out control methods.



Figure 7: Corn cobs affected by corn leafhoppers feeding, photos to the right & left.



Information from University of Florida Entomology on Corn Leafhopper biology can be found here: <https://erec.ifas.ufl.edu/fciig/frleadm.htm>.

More photos and information on corn leafhoppers available in Pest Cast 7 from May 10th:

https://southtexas.tamu.edu/files/2024/05/PestCast_7_2024.pdf

Proposed changes to Acephate insecticide labels:

The EPA is proposing changes to the labeled uses of Acephate. These changes include “The proposed mitigation is to cancel all uses except tree injection...”

Growers and other stakeholders are encouraged to comment to identify critical uses of acephate.

Acephate, Proposed Interim Decision

FR Notice: <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-09181>

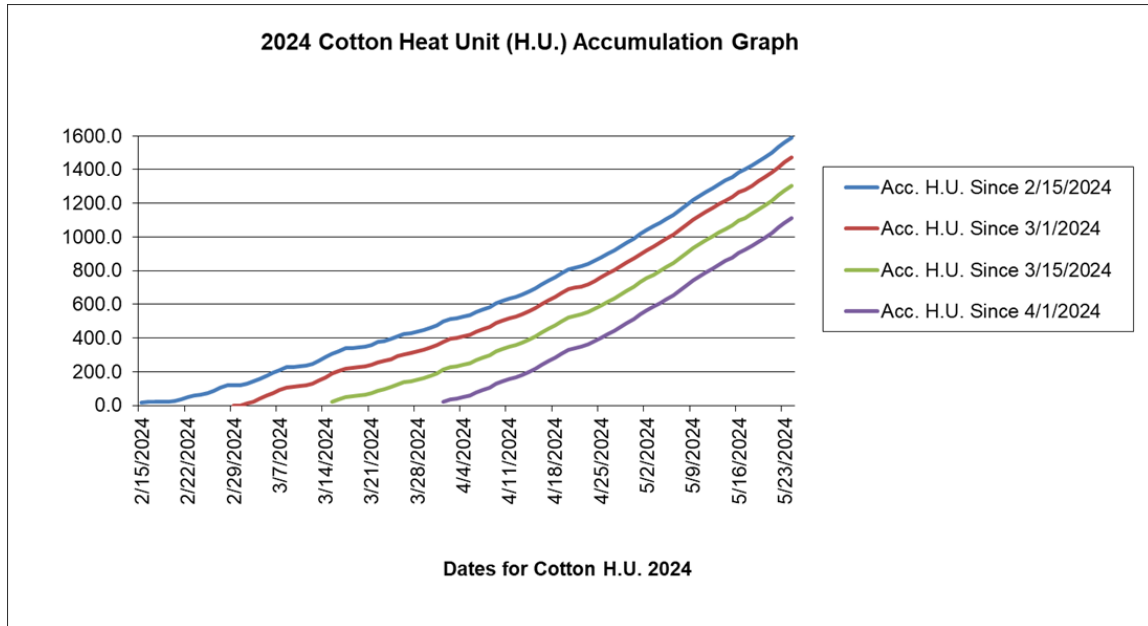
Docket: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0915>

PID: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0915-0069>

See more here at:

[20240509 PID Summary for Core Group and IPM Centers](#)

Comments are due July 1, 2024.



Thank You 2024 IPM Pest Cast Sponsors!

Diamond 

- *Anaqua Farms
- *Bayer-DeltaPine-Dekalb
- *Capital Farm Credit
- *Farmers Crop Insurance
- *Regal AG

Platinum 

- *BASF-FiberMax-Stoneville
- *La Feria CO-OP Gin & Supply

Gold 

- *Americot-NexGen
- *Cameron County Farm Bureau
- *Corteva
- *Hidalgo County Farm Bureau
- *Sesaco
- *Sun Valley Dusting Co.
- *Valley Co-op Oil Mill

Silver 

- *Adams Farms
- *Certis Biologicals
- *Frisby-Bell Gin Co.
- *Hargill Growers Gin
- *RGV Gin Company
- *Rob See Co.
- *Ross Gin
- *Rowland Dusters
- *Syngenta
- *Texas Farm Credit
- *Willamar Cotton & Grain

This Memorial Day weekend I'd like Thank all the Veterans who have served past & present, thank you and a Thank you for all those service men & women who gave their lives for this great country of ours so we may have the freedoms we have today, gone but never forgotten.

In loving memory of LCPL Dustin Michael Sekula, KIA April 1, 2004, Iraqi Freedom War.