



## 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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### General Situation

Temperature down in the Valley has been moderate with last few days in the high 80s and nights in the high 50s. Wind speeds were very high last week but this week have calmed down allowing growers to get into fields to make herbicide, fungicide, and nutrient foliar applications where needed. Many growers have been cultivating and applying fertilizer to crops that needed a dose after the heavy leaching of nutrients from the soil due to the excess of rain received March 26-27<sup>th</sup>, (about two weeks ago). During the rain downpour the Valley received total approximate rainfall of 15-27 inches with some areas receiving up to 30 inches in total for the two days. The bulk of the heaviest rainfall was received in Cameron & Willacy counties where unfortunately some fields of corn, cotton, and sorghum were lost. We still have fields in these two counties with standing water. Estimates of total crop damage are very hard to gauge with some areas fairing better than others but looking at all the row crops as a whole, I'm estimating about  $\approx 15\%$  - 25% damage to "the overall" row crops in the LRGV, again this is just my estimate.

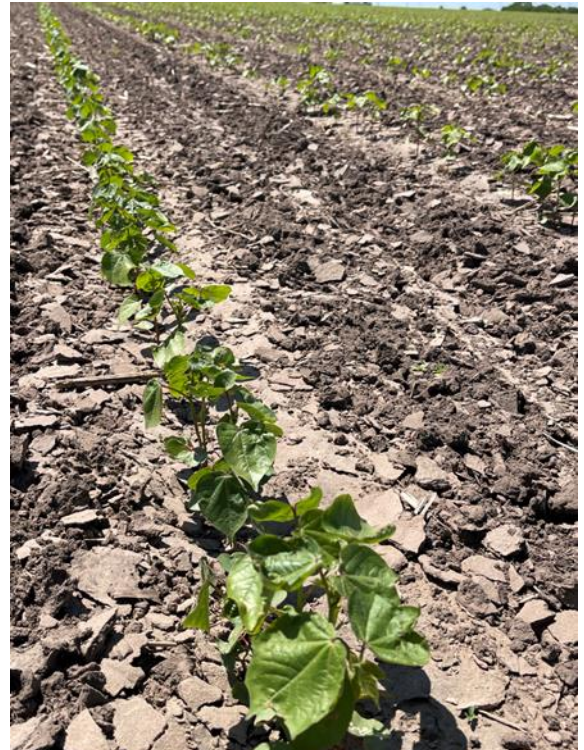


Figure 1: 5 true leaf squaring cotton (Willacy County)

### Cotton

According to the Texas Boll Weevil Association we have 55,880 cotton acres that were planted and they are estimating that approximately 35% ( $\approx 19,558$  acres cotton) of this acreage was lost or died due to the rain storm.

We have 1-2 true leaf cotton along the river that is seeing some heavy early season thrips pressure as of this week due to onions that are being harvested or destroyed and thrips migrating from those fields into young cotton to feed so be mindful of this and treat accordingly. In other areas to the north seeing a lot of 5-8 true leaf cotton that is just starting to square and is looking very clean of pests right now in Cameron and Willacy counties.

### Sorghum

We have a lot of vegetative sorghum, stages V3-V8 as of now. I have not picked up on any sugarcane aphids yet, which is good. I am seeing a little



Figure 2: Early season thrips pressure on cotton

bit of corn leaf aphids (the blue ones) in the middle of the whorls in some sorghum but that's good because ladybugs and other beneficial predators are starting to migrate in to feed on them and will be present for when we do start to see some sugarcane aphids come later in season.

### Corn

For those corn fields still standing, they really benefited from the rain we received and have taken off in height. Corn is still in the vegetative stages, V10-V14 as of now. I have been monitoring for corn leafhoppers each week and as of this week I have **Not** found any corn leafhoppers in commercial corn. Yesterday I found 2 adult corn leafhoppers out of 1,000 plants vacuumed in "volunteer corn" that has come up after the recent rains. Please destroy all



Figure 3: Double row Corn in vegetative stages

"volunteer corn" to eliminate refuges where they can feed and reproduce. About 95% of all corn in the Valley is past the critical feeding stages of VE to V8 where feeding from the corn leafhopper can cause the most damage. Corn leafhopper populations will continue to be monitored for throughout the remainder of the corn growing season.

### Sesame

Growers were planting sesame this week with more to be planted next week and once it emerges, we will start monitoring for that crop as well.

### Audio Update for South Texas IPM in row crops & Corn leaf hopper updates

For those who would like to sign up, you will be receiving weekly corn leafhopper updates and weekly updates on LRGV row crops and Costal Bend areas. We hope that you will follow this link and sign up: <https://www.texasinsects.org/south-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!

**Thank you, Pest Cast Sponsors Past & Present.**





**Figure 4: Cotton (top), Corn (middle), & Sorghum (bottom) fields destroyed from the March 26-27th rains, photos taken on April 7th, one week after the rainstorm, in Cameron & Willacy Counties.**



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### Additional Resources please visit:

<https://southtexas.tamu.edu/programs-and-services/ipm/>

#### Corn leafhopper Resource , Ento – PU- 229:

<https://southtexas.tamu.edu/files/2024/10/ENTO-PU-229-Corn-Leafhopper-and-the-Red-Stunt-Disease-Complex.pdf>

If you would like to sponsor the LRGV IPM Program & Pest Cast this 2025 season or any additional questions regarding our row crops in the Valley please contact me, contact information below:

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