

PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 5

MAY 2, 2012

Pest Management News is published during the crop production season to discuss IPM practices in corn, grain sorghum, cotton and soybeans. In order to continue to receive this newsletter, contact me via phone, mail or email. The preferred method of delivery is email; if you can receive the newsletter by email send me a message to biles-sp@tamu.edu.

Corn

Corn maturity ranges from V8 to silking. The insect pest to watch for in corn is the sugarcane borer. Most borer damage to corn along the Gulf Coast has been caused by the Mexican rice borer and sugarcane borer.

These borers typically attack corn both before and after tassel. They feed on the leaves for a short time before boring into the stalks. Sugarcane borer can cause whorl damage, stalk tunnels, shank damage and grain-feeding injury. Yield losses are thought to be minor unless stalk lodging occurs, but Texas AgriLife Extension and AgriLife Research personnel are re-examining this concept and are working to develop economic thresholds.

Sugarcane borer damage to kernels may cause a red coloration that makes the grain unmarketable for some purposes. Bored stalks most frequently fall during ear filling or ear maturation and lodging is often associated with high winds. The stalks may break at any point and usually do not break near the soil level as with southwestern corn borer infestations.

Control is most successful when fields are scouted closely and treated before larvae bore into stalks. Bt corn for stalk borers will control these insects. Insecticides may be considered in non-Bt corn when more than 20% of plants have sugarcane borer egg masses on the leaves.

Grain Sorghum

Grain sorghum fields range from small seedlings to near flag stage. Insect pests have yet to be found to be causing damage to sorghum fields. The crop will enter the damage window for sorghum midge at bloom.

Sorghum Downy Mildew was observed in two fields in the Austwell area. This is not a cause for alarm, as the infection rate is very low. However, I will meet with Dr. Tom Isakeit next week at the field sites so he can sample the diseased leaves to take back to his lab for pathotype determination.

We detected SDM resistant to fungicidal seed treatment control in Victoria County several years ago. If the resistant pathotype is found in your fields, the best management practice is rotation out of sorghum for two years.



Cotton

Cotton fields range from 2-3 leaf cotton to 1/3-grown square. We are finding high thrips populations in most cotton fields. Insecticidal seed treatments will protect the seedling for 21-28 days after planting. Fields with fewer than 6 true leaves should be inspected for thrips and treated if thrips populations exceed 1 thrips per true leaf on the plant. As growing conditions improve with temperatures in the 80s, the plants can tolerate higher numbers of thrips per plant.

Squaring cotton should be monitored for cotton fleahoppers. Adult fleahoppers are about 1/8-inch long and pale green. Nymphs resemble adults but lack wings and are light green. Cotton fleahoppers will cause economic losses to cotton fields when the populations exceed 10-15 cotton fleahoppers per 100 plants. However, recent research has shown that high field populations in the first week of squaring did not cause yield losses.



In 2010, high populations occurred in a field trial near Port Lavaca where treatments were made in various combinations of the first three weeks of squaring. No yield differences were found between plots treated weeks 1, 2 and 3 and plots treated only weeks 2 and 3.

Table 1. Lint yield of insecticide timing treatments for control of cotton fleahopper. (Calhoun County, 2010).

Week of Insecticide Treatment Timings	Total Lint Yield (lbs/A)
Untreated	630.5
Week 1 Only	572.3
Week 1, 2 and 3	762.4
Week 2 and 3	760.9

Soybeans

Soybean fields are in the early vegetative stages of maturity. These fields should be monitored for the three-cornered alfalfa hopper (3-CAH). This insect does most of its damage before the crop is 10 inches tall. The 3-CAH causes damage by girdling the stems of young plants. These plants usually continue to grow but lodging may occur later in the season. The treatment threshold for insecticidal control before bloom is when the infestation has reduced the number of non-girdled plants to 6 or fewer per row foot and insects are still present.



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2012 CROP TOUR SCHEDULE



JUNE 13, 2012

REFUGIO COUNTY

For information call 361-526-2825

JUNE 19, 2012

CALHOUN COUNTY

For information call 361-552-9747

JUNE 20, 2012

VICTORIA COUNTY

For information call 361-575-4581