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# PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS

Calhoun, Refugio & Victoria Counties

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VOLUME 10

ISSUE 1

April 11, 2014

## Grain Sorghum

The oldest sorghum fields I have seen are in the 4-leaf stage. In these fields, I am currently finding several different insects and other pests including **Yellow Striped Armyworms** and June Beetles. The armyworms (1 worm per 10-15 row feet) are causing the most problems now including defoliation and some plant death; but I don't think they are worth an insecticide application. I have not seen any published economic threshold on these worms in seedling sorghum; I think fields should be able to tolerate at least 1 armyworm per 3 foot without economic loss.

The June Beetles I found were dead, but they could have been laying eggs in the soil which will hatch into white grubs that feed on plant roots. Seed treatments should maintain control of the white grubs.

## Insect Warning

Several aphids we should be on the lookout for include Sugarcane, Yellow Sugarcane and Corn Leaf Aphids.

Thus far, I have not found aphids in newly planted sorghum. However, I have found both sugarcane and Yellow Sugarcane aphids on Johnsongrass in the Victoria area. These aphids can kill or stunt sorghum plants.

Attached is an Extension Publication on "Sugarcane Aphid: A New Pest of Sorghum." I encourage you to become familiar with this insect.

## Sorghum Downey Mildew

In the past few years, SDM has been found in sorghum fields in Calhoun, Victoria and Refugio. As your sorghum fields emerge, I encourage you to look for signs of sorghum downey mildew. This disease is easiest to detect in sorghum fields before they get too tall.

Attached is an Extension Publication on Sorghum Downey Mildew Symptoms.

The systemic, yield-limiting phase of the disease happens before the seedlings emerge. Once you have a few true leaves, you can assess this phase of the disease. It won't increase during the season. It might even decrease, as some of the infected seedlings may die.

A race of this disease has developed resistance to the fungicide seed treatments we use to control it but there are also sorghum hybrids that are resistant to the disease. Management of SDM is accomplished through crop rotation and planting resistant sorghum hybrids. If you find SDM in one of your fields, the damage is done and additional fungicidal application will not affect yield.



Yellow Striped  
Armyworm



June Beetle

## **Cotton**

Cotton is emerging and should be monitored for thrips and aphids. Thrips will be more damaging to cotton during periods of cooler temperatures which slow growth of the plants.

## **Corn**

Corn should be monitored for chinch bugs. Seed treatments usually provide adequate control of Chinch bugs but if treated seed was not used, or the seed treatment does not provide adequate control, the only way to achieve control of chinch bugs is with a directed application using multiple nozzles per row and application volumes in excess of 25 gallons per acre.

## **Soybean**

The primary insect pest of seedling soybeans is the 3-cornered alfalfa hopper. The nymphs of this insect will girdle soybean stems before the plant reaches a height of 12 inches. After the plant is taller than 12 inches, the nymphs can girdle leaf petioles and pods. Injury caused by 3-cornered alfalfa hopper is usually not seen until later in the season when the plants fall over.

Manage this pest by planting a population to obtain a final plant stand of 6-8 plants per foot.

## **Mid-Coast IPM Program**

The Mid-Coast IPM Program will conduct activities in Calhoun, Refugio and Victoria Counties. These activities will include applied research projects on pest management and crop production issues identified through contacts with producers. The primary crops of interest are Corn, Grain Sorghum, Cotton and Soybeans, but issues in other crops will be investigated as they are identified.

If you have a topic you would like to have me look into, call me at 361-920-1138.

## **IPM Newsletter**

Anyone wishing to receive this newsletter can be added to the email list by contacting my office at 361-552-3324 or [biles-sp@tamu.edu](mailto:biles-sp@tamu.edu) .

## **Support for the 2013 IPM Program comes from the following:**

Woodsboro Farmer's Cooperative  
Moreman Coop  
Hlavinka Equipment  
Numerous Producers

South Texas Cotton and Grain Association  
Helena Chemical  
Welfab