
INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT – MAY 7, 2009 - VOLUME 5 – ISSUE 2

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Integrated Pest Management

While most people in agriculture are familiar with the term Integrated Pest Management (IPM), it is good to remind ourselves of its meaning. IPM or Integrated Pest Management is a strategy of managing pests that is designed to meet an individual's production goals in the most economically and environmentally sound manner possible using a combination of control tactics.

IPM is a systematic, information-intensive approach which depends upon an understanding of the entire production system. It strives to use several complimentary tactics or control methods to manage pests, which makes the system more stable and subject to less production risks. IPM focuses on tactics that will prevent or avoid anticipated pest problems rather than remediate problems once they occur.

Grain Sorghum and Corn

We have found a field with **sorghum downy mildew** in Victoria County. While there is nothing that can be done about the disease in the current growing season, crop rotation is the best method of reducing the levels of disease in the future.



Fall Armyworm
Pictured by Stephen Biles

Insect pests seen on sorghum and corn include **chinch bugs** and **fall armyworms**. Most fields are beyond the damage window of chinch bugs and while fall armyworms may chew up the leaves, they are not yield limiting at this time unless they chew out the growing point of the plants. Fall armyworms can be identified by the inverted "Y" on their head or the four dots on their rear that form a square.

Control of fall armyworms in whorl stage corn or sorghum is very difficult since the worm is inside the plant.

Soybeans

Soybean fields range from 2-3 trifoliolate to bloom. Yes, I have seen a field with blooms.

Insect pests of soybeans are usually restricted to stink bugs but other insects may be found. We may start to



see **three-cornered alfalfa hoppers** in soybeans. This insect can be found in soybean fields from the seedling stage through maturity. During the seedling stage its feeding causes girdled main stems; in later growth stages petioles are girdled. Plants damaged in early growth stages may not be noticed until they are much older and heavier. Because of the damaged stems, plants may lodge when stressed by wind, rain or cultivation equipment. The restricted flow of nutrients in girdled plants can reduce the number of pods produced. However, this type of damage rarely reduces yield because healthy plants adjacent to damaged plants compensate by producing higher yields. This is a phenomenon known as “plant stand compensation.” Main stem girdling is difficult to prevent with insecticide applications. **A better management strategy for this type of damage is to manipulate seeding rates in order to obtain at least six undamaged plants per foot of row.**

Stink Bugs can be a yield and quality reducer from bloom to mature bean. Scout for stink bugs in soybeans once or twice per week beginning at bloom (R1). Treatment is justified when stink bugs exceed 36 bugs per 100 sweeps. For **Red-banded stink bugs** lower the treatment threshold to 24 bugs per 100 sweeps.

Cotton

Cotton maturity ranges from seedling to pinhead square. **Thrips** have been found in populations ranging from 0-6 per plant and should be treated when the thrips populations exceed the number of true leaves. I have also seen **aphids** in a few fields. Early season aphids rarely cause yield losses. If you find aphids, I suggest waiting 3-4 days and check the field again. We also found high numbers of lady bugs (convergent and *Scymnus*) and syrphid flies. These predators will eat many of the aphids and will likely prevent the need for an insecticide application.



Cotton Scymnus Lady Bug



Syrphid Fly

SOME OF YOUR SUPPORTERS FOR THE IPM PROGRAM

Hlavinka Equipment Company - Moreman Community Gin - South Texas Cotton & Grain - Farmer's Coop of El Campo
Helena Chemical Company - Danevang Farmer's Coop, Inc. - Sorghum Partners/Milo Genetics



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