

PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 6

MAY 11, 2012

Pest insects I have seen this past week include: thrips, cotton fleahoppers, corn leaf aphids, sorghum midge, rice stink bugs, and three-cornered alfalfa hoppers.

Cotton

Cotton fields range from young seedlings to 1/2 grown square. Most fields are beyond the damage window for **thrips** to be yield limiting but squaring cotton should be inspected for cotton fleahoppers. I found field populations of **cotton fleahoppers** ranging from 0 – 58 fleahoppers per 100 plants.

I would not treat fields in the first week of squaring. We have research that shows treating in the first week of squaring does not increase yields. Treatment should be considered after the plants have three fruiting sites when populations exceed 10-15 fleahoppers per 100 plants.

Grain Sorghum

Maturity of sorghum fields range from 3-5 leaf sorghum to bloom. I have seen corn leaf aphid in the whorl of plants in some sorghum fields. This dark bluish-green aphid is oval-shaped, with black legs, cornicles and antennae.

When feeding, **corn leaf aphids** suck plant juices but do not inject toxin as do greenbugs and yellow sugarcane aphids. The most apparent feeding damage is yellow mottling of leaves that unfold from the whorl. This insect rarely causes economic loss to sorghum. In fact, they can be considered helpful. Beneficial insects such as lady beetles are often attracted to feed on corn leaf aphids. When corn leaf aphid numbers rapidly decline at sorghum heading, the beneficial insects are present to suppress greenbug and other insect pests.

In fields that have begun to bloom, sorghum heads should be inspected for **sorghum midge**. The adult sorghum midge is a small (< 1/8 inch), orange-red fly with a yellow head, brown antennae and legs and gray, membranous wings.



Scout fields in the morning when the temperature warms to approximately 85° F. Because adult sorghum midges live less than 1 day, each day a new brood of adults emerges. Sampling must be done almost daily during the time sorghum grain heads are flowering.

Sorghum midge adults can be seen crawling on or flying about flowering sorghum grain heads. The simplest and most efficient way to detect and count sorghum midges is to inspect carefully and at close range all sides of randomly selected flowering grain heads.

Inspect plants along field borders first;



Sorghum Midge

particularly those downwind of earlier flowering sorghum or Johnson grass. If no, or few, sorghum midges are found on sorghum grain heads along field edges, there should be little need to sample the entire field. If you find more than one sorghum midge per flowering grain head in border areas of a sorghum field, inspect the rest of the field. Sample at least 20 flowering grain heads for every 20 acres in a field. For fields smaller than 20 acres, sample 40 flowering grain heads.

Economic Thresholds for Sorghum Midge for a range of factors					
Control Cost (\$/acre)	Crop Value (\$/cwt)	Flowering Heads per acre			
		20,000	45,000	60,000	
\$ 5	\$ 9	0.92	0.41	0.31	
\$ 5	\$ 10	0.83	0.37	0.28	
\$ 5	\$ 11	0.76	0.34	0.25	
\$ 6	\$ 9	1.11	0.49	0.37	
\$ 6	\$ 10	1.00	0.44	0.33	
\$ 6	\$ 11	0.91	0.40	0.30	
\$ 7	\$ 9	1.29	0.57	0.43	
\$ 7	\$ 10	1.16	0.52	0.39	
\$ 7	\$ 11	1.06	0.47	0.35	

Sorghum Downy Mildew

Dr. Tom Isakeit confirmed sorghum downy mildew in Refugio County this week. This disease is probably resistant to seed treatment fungicides for its control and should be managed by cultural practices and resistant hybrids. The next pages have more information on Sorghum Downy Mildew and its management.

	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

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