



HAPPENINGS IN AG

News about Integrated Pest Management for producers in Castro and Lamb Counties.

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GENERAL CROP CONDITIONS

Temperatures over the past week have pretty much dominated any topic of conversation. Temperatures near the century mark have been welcome for cotton producers but not so welcomed from corn producers. In both cases however, pivot systems or irrigation systems in general are in full throttle or should be if they aren't. Although we need the heat units for cotton production it sure makes irrigation requirements increase especially as cotton has moved into full bloom in most cases. As far as corn producers this heat has started to take it's toll on many corn fields. It's been interesting reading newsletters from counties to the south of us as they have been writing about cutout for cotton fields. We are not

anywhere near cutout in any program fields and I would suspect that most cotton fields in our area are still sitting at 7-9 nodes above white flower. Irrigation is the key at this point of the game and so producers need to be sure to keep up with irrigation requirements. I would also like to remind everyone that we will soon begin to see some fruit shed. Remember this isn't always insect induced and more times than not it is just the plant adjusting fruit load. There is no way that a cotton plant in our area can hold 100% of the fruit load that it has. Now we can only hope that it is shedding smaller squares and not the money bolls. I think the take home message is: don't be alarmed if you see small squares or even bolls lying in the furrow and you can't find any insect pest. The bigger problems come after insecticide treatments are made without justification. Depending on the insecticide used aphid infestations could blow up and cause more problems. Program cotton is all blooming with 7-9 nodes above white flower. For the most part I think a lot of this cotton has good yield potential but unfortunately for us we have to sit and wait to see how long this heat continues. I think everyone remembers what happened in 2008 when we just didn't get any heat in August and September. If we can continue to receive heat units in August and September I think we have potential for a good cotton harvest. Corn continues to progress well with all program fields now in the tassel stage with the majority of program fields in the roasting ear to dent stage. I have noticed an increase in foliar diseases in many program fields but I feel like they should have little effect on yield at this point in the game. Keep in mind that irrigation is still key in corn as well.

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INSECTS AND DISEASES

Cotton

The broken record plays on. Again not a whole lot going on in program cotton fields in the form of insect pests at this point. We continue to hunt for bollworm eggs or larvae and have not come across a single one in any of our program fields. Agents around the area are reporting similar results at this point. I still feel like we're a little early for our bollworm run and think it will come around in the coming weeks. Continue to scout for eggs and small larvae in cotton fields. Break the field up into 4 quadrants and scout 5 consecutive plants per quadrant. This gives you a good sample of the field and helps when finding "hot spots" in the field. Now this is important because I have been in fields where you may find 5 worms or eggs in one site but then nothing in the rest of the field. If you base and insecticide application on just one site you could be a little early on your application. So be sure to get a good sample of the field. We did detect some lygus bug nymphs in a field located north of Spring Lake. This infestation was very light finding less than 1 bug per 10 sweeps. We also did beat sheet and were finding less than 1 bug per three ft. of row. Continue to monitor for lygus bug infestations and also keep in mind that lygus bugs will move into cotton fields when their host plants are disturbed for example if they are in roadside ditches, mowers could cause immigration into cotton fields or when alfalfa is laid down lygus bugs could migrate

into nearby cotton fields. If this is the case these lygus bugs could just hang out in your cotton field for a few days and right back out. So it might be a good decision to wait maybe a day or two and re-check a field before making an insecticide application depending on numbers of lygus bugs found and whether they are primarily nymphs or adults. If they are primarily adults there is a good chance that they could move right back out of the cotton field and into more of a suitable host.

Corn

Spider mites continue to be the dominant insect pest in corn at this time. However, southwestern corn borer egg lays are picking up across both Castro and Lamb counties. Spider mite infestations are very hit or miss in some cases predators are able to keep up and keep infestations down in other cases spider mites are moving up the plant very rapidly. At this point I would suggest that if you are finding spider mite colonies at or near the ear leaf without a good number of predators I would recommend a miticide application. As far as southwestern corn borers pick up scouting efforts and check three leaves below the ear leaf, the ear leaf, and two above for egg masses. The threshold for southwestern corn borers is 20% of plants infested with eggs or small larvae. Our pheromone trap counts have increased over the past week and egg lay in the neighboring fields have correlated well with our moth counts. I am attaching a link to EA-IPM Moni Vandiver's newsletter. In this newsletter he discusses a website that provides the trap counts for this entire region but also includes the Castro/Lamb trap counts. This is a web site that we encourage producers and consultants to visit and we would like any comments or suggestions from any of you. So for this week's trap counts check the website and let us know if it is valuable or not. <http://parmer-co.tamu.edu/newscat.cfm?COUNTY=Parmer&CatID=221>

Trap Counts:

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