



## HAPPENINGS IN AG

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

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### GENERAL CROP CONDITIONS

After excellent rains have covered most of the area over the past two weeks crops are looking really good and responding well to the moisture. I know that there were areas in both Castro and Lamb Counties that had severe weather that damaged crops and pivot systems. Otherwise, the rains were more than welcomed and as I mentioned have really perked up a lot of these planted crops. Producers are especially grateful as most pivots have stayed parked for a good part of the growing season. In the insect world things have been really quiet with very little insect pest activity to report in corn, cotton or grain sorghum. I guess our biggest pest problem to date have been weeds. Many producers have not

been able to get into fields over the past few weeks to make Glyphosate applications and the weeds have taken advantage of the rain events as well. Keep in mind that smaller weeds are much easier to control than those large ones you can see flying down the highway at 70mph. At that point you could be a little late. We have noticed lots of small pigweed coming up after all of this rain in cotton fields so again be sure that you get into that field and treat sooner than later.

Program cotton fields are looking much better as program fields are all squaring with most fields having 6 to 7 fruiting nodes. Square sets are excellent in all program fields ranging from 85% to 98%. Square loss that has occurred is in most cases attributed to climatic conditions and not insect induced. We have been seeing quite a bit of foliar disease lesions on the leaves of cotton plants. If you will notice however the new growth looks healthy and the plants will be just fine. The cooler wet weather caused the majority of these foliar diseases but I do not recommend any sort of fungicide applications at this time. Weather models are predicting hot dry weather for the next several days and beyond depending on which model you look at. Overall the cotton crop is looking better. I know that many producers are concerned about the maturity of the crop but other than that I think we are in good shape in most areas of the two counties.

Corn fields are really looking good at this point of the growing season. The cooler weather over the past couple of weeks along with the rain has led to some really good looking corn fields. On the flip side of that cool weather and wet conditions are the foliar diseases “complex”. I say complex because we are seeing rust, some grey leaf spot as well as other foliar diseases. Now pay close attention. Again I do not recommend fungicide applications at this time due to the predicted weather patterns. Foliar diseases in either crop do not flourish in 100+ degree temperatures. If weather patterns change and we get back to cool wet conditions we can address the foliar disease topic at that time. Otherwise, use that money on irrigation or nitrogen I think that would benefit your crop more at this time. Again I’m not saying there won’t be a need for fungicide applications, I’m simply saying the time isn’t right now. I have sent off corn leaves to the Amarillo Diagnostic Lab and Rust as well as Grey leaf Spot lesions have been observed by Extension Plant Pathologist Dr. Ron French. Dr. French also recommends holding off on foliar applications of fungicides at this time. Also don’t assume that all lesions are grey leaf spot. I think right now the point we need to drive home is that the weather will determine what these foliar diseases will do. At this time I don’t think that foliar diseases stand a chance against 100 degree weather. Start irrigation and don’t fall behind that is what I recommend at this time. Irrigation demands are picking up in both corn and cotton and so remember that although we have had good rains I think pivots need to get cranked up so that we don’t fall behind. Also Nitrogen applications need to be considered very soon. With cotton it would be best to have your total N available to the plant as it enters the bloom stage.

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## **INSECTS AND DISEASES**

### ***Cotton***

We have now shifted our scouting efforts from thrips to fleahoppers as a top priority. At this time cotton fleahopper counts have been very low in program fields. We have seen good beneficial insect numbers as well. Cotton fleahopper adults are about 1/8 inch long and pale green. Nymphs resemble adults but lack wings and are light green. Cotton fleahoppers move very rapidly when disturbed. The adult and nymph will feed on tender portions of the cotton plant and will feed on pinhead sized and small squares as well which causes these squares to abort or shed from the plant. To scout for fleahoppers examine the terminal area of the cotton plant to determine fleahopper pressures. Also determine the percent square set for a field by counting the number of fruiting nodes as well as the number of missing squares. Square set is important for making management decisions for the cotton fleahopper. Economic threshold for cotton fleahoppers is 25 to 30 fleahoppers per 100 terminals combined with less than 90% square set. In the second week of squaring, the economic threshold is 25 to 30 fleahoppers per 100 terminals combined with less than 85% square set. Remember that not all square loss is insect induced especially this year where environmental conditions have really been tough on young cotton. It is important to scout for the fleahoppers in order to make a good management decision. Making insecticide applications that are not warranted could lead to secondary pest outbreaks that would cause more of a problem.

### ***Corn***

Insect pest pressures in corn fields are very light at this time. Spider mite populations have been detected on leaves on the lower 1/3 of the corn plant in program fields. Populations are still light however, with hot temperatures and dry weather forecasted over the next few weeks I would definitely monitor spider mite populations. Last season we saw where mite populations built up very quickly and caused some damage for corn producers. So monitor populations very closely especially if any fields get into a period where moisture requirements are not met. I do have pheromone traps out around the county monitoring: Southwestern Corn Borer, Fall Armyworm, and Western Bean Cutworm flights. I will report trap counts next week. Trap counts for this week were very light for all species. I did receive a call late last week about some leaf miners infesting a corn field. We did inspect the field and did find the larvae that were causing the damage however, the infestation is not severe enough to treat and also the larvae are beginning to pupate so insecticide applications would not be justified. This is an isolated occurrence and has not been detected in any other fields at this time.

**Happenings in Ag is a publication of Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
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