

WEST
PLAINS
IPM
UPDATE

News about
Integrated Pest
Management in
Hockley and
Cochran
Counties from
Kerry Siders

August 28, 2014

Vol. 19 – No. 17

Current Crop and Pest Situation

COTTON Cotton has made good progress this month with generally +90 degree temperatures and mostly clear skies. In fact, we have averaged 18.7 heat units per day for the month of August. As I have stated before “we make cotton in August.” Scattered rains have been received this month but this was a very dry month for most everyone. There is a chance this week for rain and temperatures have already began to moderate some. I mention this because of my nervousness as we go into September. Pray for open sunny weather with an occasional gentle rain. We all know though that we can have some weather events which can undo all the hard work we have applied to our crops. Now I do not mean a hail-out, I’m talking regrowth, delayed maturity etc. So this said, and to my point... be careful irrigating into September unless it is through a drip system.

Insects in general have decreased across most area fields. I am not seeing the pockets of cotton aphids as I did a few weeks ago. Most of these were cleaned up by ladybird beetles, green lacewings, and parasitic wasps. Cotton bollworms are having a difficult time establishing in non Bt cotton right now, even the late planted fields do not have the pressure I would have anticipated. The late and/or growthy non-Bt cotton fields with three and more nodes above white flower, scattered throughout both Hockley and Cochran counties will need to be checked for another 10 days so. I am using 10,000 worms per acre threshold at this time. Lygus have not been much of a concern, but I am finding still some stink bug activity. Cotton fields which reached physiological cut-out (5 nodes above white flower) before August 10 have accumulated more than 400 heat units, and are safe from most insects other than cotton aphids. I plan on continuing to watch scouting program fields through September 12.

Final cotton thoughts This time of year I am often asked to estimate cotton yields for producers for reasons of curiosity, a bankers request for further funding, or just see how wrong the silly agent is. So I count bolls, establish a plant population and boll size for number of bolls to make a pound of lint, and crunch the numbers. Then I apply some realism into the final number. An example: a field has a plant population of 43,500 plants per acre; after counting a minimum of 20 plants I establish that there is an average of 8.2 bolls per plant; and I estimate that this descent irrigated cotton field has a medium to large bolls size of 320 bolls to make a pound of lint; so $(43500 \times 8.2) / 320 = 1115$ lbs of cotton lint yield. I look at the field consider the producers ability to take this crop to the gin and say “yes” this is 2.2 bale cotton. That is a realistic scenario. How can we use this to better our management?

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Okay, so let us now go through another scenario. We will plant to a stand 3 plants per foot or 39,208 plants per acre on every acre, consistently. We water, fertilize, control weeds, manage insects, utilize PGR's, etc. consistently and timely across the whole field. We use a variety which will set fruit at node seven and quit at node 14. It will have 2 bolls on node 7, 3 bolls on nodes 8 and 9, 2 bolls on nodes 10-12, and finally 1 boll on nodes 13 and 14. This is a total of 16 bolls. Now that seems like a lot, but it is very possible if managed properly and consistently. These bolls are also of a good size taking 300 bolls to make a pound of lint. So now let us calculate the yield: $(39,208 \times 16) / 300 = 2091$ pounds of lint per acre. Okay now, that is +4 bale cotton. We do have many producers doing that now, maybe not so much this year, but it is not unheard of in this day and time. I would say that this is not only being accomplished under drip irrigation, but also pivot irrigated cotton. I think another important point I must make about this situation of high yields is making sure it makes economic sense. It is important to know all costs involved with this high-end system. Make certain you do not exceed some point of diminishing returns when their primary goal is just high yield. My point here is that excellent, profitable yields are achieved by **consistency**. A consistent stand, consistent and necessary inputs, and finally achieving a consistent fruit load. What kills my calculations when a producer asks me to calculate yield for them are the inconsistent stand and inconsistent boll load. **If you want to better your profit margin through production be consistent, timely, and precise.**

GRAIN SORGHUM Midge has not been a factor so far this year, unlike what might have been expected. I am generally seeing a decline in worm pressure, but continue to stay vigilant and check. I am finding stink bugs though, which is not a common threat in sorghum for us. Aphids need to be monitored. Please contact me if you note anything unusual. The beneficial insect and arachnid numbers have been sufficient to help in reducing some of these pest populations. Keep scouting this late milo and call if you have questions.

PEANUTS Foliar disease risk has been high for the past few days. Consider protection through mid September.

My Priority List for September

1. **Wrap up irrigation on pivots ASAP, and drip over the next 20 days.**
2. **Make notes of which fields you notice cotton wilt symptoms, so that you might consider this in your selection of cotton varieties for next year.**
3. **Take soil samples for cotton root-knot nematodes. Much easier while we have soil moisture. This will help in determining degree of management for next year.**
4. **Make good notes of problem weed fields so that you can design an effective plan for next year.**

Upcoming Meetings:

September 3-4 Ag & IPM Agents out of office for Extension District 2 meetings

September 9th - West Texas Ag Chem Institute Conference, Lubbock

October 9 - Ag Awareness Event (4th graders) Mallet Event Center, Levelland

Pesticide Applicators Training

Required to obtain private pesticide applicators license from Texas Department of Agriculture

September 11 & 25, 1 PM, Extension Office - Levelland

Cost \$60. Please call the day before training to reserve your spot! 806 894-3159

See You On The Radio

IPM Radio Program Ag Talk on Fox Talk KJTV, radio 950 AM, on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 2:15 pm.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Hockley County Report on KLVT Levelland, High Plains Radio Network, radio 1230 AM, Wednesdays from 7:30 am to 7:45 am.

West Plains IPM Update is a publication of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service IPM Program in Hockley and Cochran Counties.

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