

WEST
PLAINS
IPM
UPDATE

News about
Integrated Pest
Management in
Hockley,
Cochran, and
Lamb Counties
from
Kerry Sidors

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General Situation



Let me first say that we have now confirmed the presence of sub-threshold Sugarcane Aphid in **grain sorghum** in Hockley, Lamb and just yesterday Cochran counties. To-date I have not scouted a field which has exceeded the threshold of 50-125 per leaf average after looking at 40 leaves from 40 different plants (10 per quadrant) throughout the field.

Do not spray on presence alone. Let the numbers drive the decision to spray based on scouting and threshold. I am not seeing much activity from headworms, but scout this, midge and mites while looking at aphids. On the next page are two really good discussions on mites and midge from Drs. Bynum and Porter.

Peanuts are doing very well at this point with mostly excellent health of pods and foliage. Most everyone is doing a great job of staying on top of weeds and irrigation. As we move into mid and late August be mindful if weather changes to cooler and more moisture such as morning dews watch for foliar disease to develop.

Cotton is ranging from just beginning to bloom with 8 nodes above white flower to physiological cut-out with 5 or fewer nodes above white flower. The latter should hit the target of forming that last boll between August 15-20 and blooming out the top. Some fields have been impacted by fleahoppers and Lygus over the last few weeks. Continue to scout for these pests.

Spider Mites In Grain Sorghum

By Dr. Ed Bynum, Extension Entomologist, Amarillo

When we begin talking about spider mites it is usually about infestations on corn. But, spider mites also infest sorghum. The two most common species are the Banks grass mite and the twospotted spider mites. Their biology, life cycle, feeding damage is the same on sorghum as it is corn. Mites begin on the underside of the leaf in the lower portion of the sorghum canopy. As populations increase feeding damages a greater portion of the leaf area and can kill entire leaves. Control decisions should be considered when 30 percent of the leaf area of most sorghum plants in a field show some damage symptoms from mite feeding. Only two acaricides (Comite II and Onager) are registered for spider mite control on grain sorghum.

For Comite II the application rate is between 24 and 36 fl. oz. per acre. The recommended application volume for ground application is a minimum 20 gpa and aerial application a minimum 5 gpa. Only 1 application per season is permitted. Comite II is phytotoxic to some sorghums and the pre-harvest interval is 30 days for silage and 60 days for grain.

The use rate for Onager is between 10 and 24 fl. oz. per acre. Ground application is recommended at 15 to 20 gpa and a minimum of 5 gpa for air application. Only 1 application per season and the total amount per season is 24 fl. oz. per acre. The pre-harvest interval is 30 days. There is no distinction on the label for grain or silage pre-harvest interval.

Just as for corn, spray coverage is important to the performance of these two acaricides. So the minimum application volume should be used. Applications of pyrethroid insecticides for headworms, stinkbugs, and sorghum midge will also flare spider mite populations by removing natural predators.

Sorghum Midge

By Dr. Pat Porter, Extension Entomologist, Lubbock

This year a lot of sorghum was planted earlier than normal in order to avoid the potential worst problems associated with sugarcane aphid. (Congratulations if you employed this IPM practice! It seems to be paying off now that sugarcane aphid is firmly established in Southern High Plains counties.) In general, sorghum that completes bloom before August 4th or so in our part of the Southern High Plains will escape economic midge damage. However, some of this early sorghum and the abundant Johnsongrass can serve as early hosts for midge and give later populations a head start. It is too soon to know what midge populations will be like this year, but on balance we have plenty of egg-laying hosts in the system.

As I started this article I saw an excellent summary from Angus Catchot and Jeff Gore at Mississippi State University. This article is so good that I am going to link to it as most of what I would have written about sorghum midge: it contains recognition, biology, scouting information and control suggestions: <http://www.mississippi-crops.com/2015/07/18/scouting-for-sorghum-midge-with-confidence/> .

One key point about sorghum midge is that it lays eggs in blooming sorghum only on the day the anthers are visible. However, it takes several days for a sorghum plant to flower from the top of the panicle to the bottom and, due to uneven flowering across the field, it may take a week to ten days for the field to complete pollination. Adult midges (tiny flies) live about one day, but there is continual re-infestation of the field each day, so low midge numbers on the first day of flowering might be high midge numbers in subsequent days. And overall midge numbers in the system increase as August progresses.

Sampling should be done in mid-morning, or after temperatures have reached 85 degrees. The treatment threshold depends on sorghum panicles per acre, midges per panicle and cost of control. The threshold calculations can be found in [Managing Insect and Mite Pests of Texas Sorghum](#) on page 19 - 20.

Insecticide selection has changed because sugarcane aphid is present in many area sorghum fields. Our management recommendations prior to sugarcane aphid were pyrethroids, Lannate, Malathion and Lorsban. Unfortunately, all of these insecticides kill beneficial insects, the same insects that help slow down the sugarcane aphid. And, to make matters worse, they don't do a good job of killing sugarcane aphids. So the net result of using them might be to help sugarcane aphids rapidly increase in the field. **However, it is important to treat midge if it reaches threshold; do not forsake a needed midge treatment out of fear of what might happen with sugarcane aphid.**

As a practical matter, scout the field carefully to determine whether there are sugarcane aphids present. If so then you can still use the insecticides listed above, but consider adding Transform or Sivanto (for sugarcane aphid) if you think you need to. Or be prepared to come back with Transform or Sivanto later. Not all midge insecticides will risk flaring sugarcane aphid; Blackhawk has just received a 2ee label on sorghum for midge control and should be used at 1.5 - 3.0 oz per acre. I do not have direct experience with this spinosad product, and in fact have not seen the new label, but Dow says it will work and they stand behind its performance for full control.

I am not sure that we will have an increased midge problem this year, especially since all bets are off due to the very wet spring and early summer. However, I wanted to provide some information on making midge control decisions in light of sugarcane aphid.

Private Pesticide Applicators Training

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will offer the required private Pesticide Applicators Training (PAT) in Levelland on August 27. This training is required by Texas Department of Agriculture before taking the exam for obtaining the license. A private pesticide applicator is a person who uses or supervises the use of a restricted-use or state limited-use pesticide or a regulated herbicide for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity. This license is not for those receiving monetary compensation for a pesticide application.

To participate in a training individuals must call 806-894-3150 by 3pm the day prior (Wednesday) to the training on August 27 in Levelland. The trainings will begin promptly at 1pm at the Extension Offices (see addresses below). There is a \$60 fee for training materials. This is only the training; testing will be conducted at a separate time and location.

Future PAT Trainings:

- August 27 Levelland Extension Office 1212 Houston Street
- September 24 Littlefield Extension Office, Courthouse, Room B-5
- and October 22 Morton Extension Office 200 W. Taylor Avenue

Texas A & M AgriLife Extension seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities for any educational meetings. Please contact us to advise us of the auxiliary aid or service that you will require a week in advance of trainings.

See You On The Radio

IPM Radio Program Aglife 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, Cochran, and Lamb Counties.

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