

WEST
PLAINS
IPM
UPDATE

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

July 1, 2015

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Current Situation

The weather has been more conducive for crop survival and progress the past couple of weeks. I trust everyone has their acres on track to take advantage of the growing season we have remaining.

Cotton ranges from 5 true leaves to 12 true leaves with 5 1st position squares. On average, a majority of cotton acres are just now entering the squaring stage at 7-8 true leaves. So those more advanced acres with 5.5 squares we can anticipate going into bloom with an average of 8 nodes above 1st bloom. This would indicate we could see some of our very first blooms in about 12 days (July 12). This will be the exception. With the majority of cotton acres just now beginning to square we can anticipate first bloom after July 25th. Remember, we make cotton in August!

Insects continue to be very hard to find on the field crops. I am finding lygus, fleahoppers, grasshoppers, saltmarsh caterpillars, and a few others in all sorts of weed hosts outside of fields. So be vigilant, and scout weekly.

Corn and grain sorghum have continued to make excellent progress. On the next page is an excellent discussion and management information on the Sugarcane aphid in sorghum. It is very near by now, and we need to really watch fields closely. Irrigation is in full swing now in corn with the higher temps and less frequent rain events. The early corn is just past pollination mostly and beginning to fill ears. Late planted grain is mostly up to a stand now.

Peanuts are doing very well. Most all acres are now blooming and just beginning to form pegs. Irrigation should be going here as well.

Weeds in all crops have been the pest of concern. Just remember the longer you wait you limit yourself on products to choose from and they generally are more expensive. There are too many scenarios to cover on weed management. Please call if you have questions.

Priorities for the next several days:

1. Stay on top of weeds.
2. Get fertility program going and match it up to potential.
3. Scout for square robbing insects in cotton.
4. Scout for Sugarcane aphid in milo.
5. Protect developing peanut pods from disease 60 days from planting.

SUGARCANE APHID AND WHORL STAGE SORGHUM ON THE SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS

TOMMY DOEDERLEIN, PAT PORTER, BLAYNE REED AND KERRY SIDERS

Sugarcane aphid arrived early in south Texas this year but its northward expansion was apparently slowed by the record rainfall. However, in the last two weeks it has made a rapid advance and was found in Lubbock County on June 29th. This is two months earlier than the August 27th, 2014 first detection by Blayne Reed in Floyd County. Last year's late arrival allowed us to avoid making insecticide applications. While it is still too early to guess how severe the problem might be this year, we would like to provide some information on management practices prior to boot stage.

When on whorl stage sorghum, sugarcane aphid can result in near total yield loss because it destroys leaf cells that provide nutrition to keep the plant growing, exert the panicle and fill the grain. The worst case is a heavy sugarcane aphid infestation on whorl stage plants. Later infestations on headed sorghum are somewhat less of a problem and may only result in minor yield losses and harvest difficulties due to honeydew accumulation.

Early detection is the key to successful sugarcane aphid management. All fields should be scouted weekly from shortly after emergence until one week before harvest. If sugarcane aphids are not found in a field then the weekly scouting should continue. If sugarcane aphids are found then the scouting should occur twice per week. The doubling of the scouting interval is because of the rapid reproduction of the aphid. As Angus Catchot, Entomologist at Mississippi State University, put it, "This is the first pest I have seen that can go from 'barely there' to 'Oh my God' in five days.

Sugarcane aphids are easy to differentiate from the other aphid pests of sorghum and there is a recognition guide posted here: <http://txscan.blogspot.com/2015/02/recognizing-sugarcane-aphid.html> .

The treatment threshold is an average of 50 – 125 aphids per leaf on whorl stage plants. Research in Texas has shown that an average of 250 aphids per leaf is around the break point where yield declines equal the cost of control, but this many aphids can cause a honeydew and sooty mold problem. The goal is to apply the insecticide soon enough to keep the aphid numbers below 250 per leaf. Quick action is needed when fields reach the economic threshold, so don't delay in pulling the trigger. The treatment threshold is the same for susceptible sorghum and the "resistant" or "tolerant" sorghum hybrids; once threshold is reached then insecticides should be applied as soon as possible. Blayne Reed, Extension Agent in Hale, Swisher and Floyd counties, is leading our 2015 research on how the "resistant" hybrids withstand sugarcane aphid. It is far too early to say anything other than, from a management perspective in 2015, expect resistant hybrids to perform in line with susceptible hybrids. The so-called resistant hybrids should be scouted like susceptible hybrids and sprayed like susceptible hybrids.

There are two good insecticides available; Sivanto and Transform. Expect each product to provide around 10 days of control. Be sure to visit the field 3 – 4 days after the application to make sure the insecticide is

working. If a follow-up application is needed after 10 days then rotate to the other insecticide. Insecticide rotation is critical for resistance management; aphids are extremely dangerous as far as resistance because they are genetic clones (no sexual reproduction and mixing of resistance and susceptibility alleles). If the mother has resistance alleles then the offspring will have the same resistance alleles; if the mother survives the dose then the progeny will survive the dose, and so will all of their progeny and their progeny across generations and growing seasons. The only way to kill these resistant insects is with the other insecticide. Insecticide rotation is the key to preventing resistance, and aphids are exceptionally adept at becoming resistant.

It is important to preserve beneficial insects – they won't prevent sugarcane aphid from reaching threshold on the High Plains (yet), but they will slow the aphid down. There is evidence from the Gulf Coast that, after three seasons of the aphid and the beneficial insects coexisting, the beneficial insects are starting the season in high enough numbers to exert a significant amount of control on the aphids. This is not the case in the High Plains; our beneficial insects have not had the chance to arm up against the aphids and we don't have enough of them to keep aphid populations under control. But we do have enough of them to slow the aphids down and perhaps avoid an additional insecticide spray later in the season. The best way to help the beneficials is to avoid pyrethroid and organophosphate insecticide applications; use Sivanto or Transform and let the beneficials live. We have a new publication called: *Insecticide Selection for Sorghum at Risk to Sugarcane Aphid Infestations, 2015*.

(http://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2015/06/Insecticide_Selection_Sugarcane_Aphid_2015.pdf). This publication discusses insecticide choice for sugarcane aphid control and insecticides to use on other pests in fields that have sugarcane aphids in them. Other sugarcane aphid resources available at <http://www.texasinsects.org/sorghum.html>. We have established a statewide sugarcane aphid news website at <http://txscan.blogspot.com>.

We don't know what to expect in 2015 as far as sugarcane aphid. All we know for sure is that it has arrived two months earlier than last year and is now threatening whorl stage plants. We encourage weekly field scouting until the aphids are found and then twice-weekly scouting thereafter. Apply insecticides when there are 50 – 125 aphids per leaf and use either Transform or Sivanto. Check to make sure the insecticide worked and, if an additional application is needed later, be sure to rotate insecticides in order to prevent resistance.



Private Pesticide Applicators Training

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will offer the required private Pesticide Applicators Training (PAT) in Morton on July 23 and again on August 27 in Levelland. 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 806-266-8858 by 3pm the day prior (Wednesday) to the training on July 23 in Littlefield. 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:

- July 23 Morton Extension Office 200 W. Taylor Avenue
- 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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