

## WEST PLAINS IPM UPDATE

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



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Partners with Nature

### Current Crop and Pest Situation

The **cotton** has made good progress with generally +90 degree temperatures and clear skies. In fact, we have averaged 18.6 heat units per day for the last 30 days. As I have stated before “we make cotton in August.” Scattered rains have been received over the last few weeks but this was a very dry month for most everyone. There is a chance of rain this weekend with cooler temps going into next week. Okay so I aspire to be a weatherman. However, I mention this only 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...I would rather err on the side of being dry than too wet. Be careful irrigating into September unless it is through a drip system. On the other hand don not think for a moment that it was wrong to water this last week with the hot temps. I only caution you as we move further into September.

As far as pests are concerned I am not seeing much in cotton. Some Kurtamathrips in some stressed dryland or irrigated edges; an occasional pocket of cotton aphids; and a few fields with lingering grasshoppers near rangeland.

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 will continue to watch scouting program fields through September 14 and alert you if the need arises.

In **grain sorghum** the worms are the primary concern still. Some fields have needed to be treated for head worms. Pressure has lightened considerably over the last couple of weeks but continue to keep watch for awhile longer.

## Final thought

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 the art of realism into the final number. An example: a field has a plant population of 46,519 plants per acre; after counting a minimum of 50 plants I establish that there is an average of 6.74 bolls per plant; and I estimate that this descent irrigated cotton field has a medium to large bolls size of 330 bolls to make a pound of lint; so  $(46,519 \times 6.74) / 330 = 950$  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 bale cotton. That is a realistic scenario.

How can we use this to better our management? Okay, so dream with me here. 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 six and quit at node 13. It will have 2 bolls on node 6, 3 bolls on nodes 7 and 8, 2 bolls on nodes 9-11, and finally 1 boll on nodes 12 and 13. 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. Wow. That is +4 bale cotton. Ladies and gentlemen we are producing that right now. You say who? No names. Sure it is on mostly drip, but it is also being done on pivot irrigation. Okay do not think for a moment that I am saying that this is what you need to be doing is producing 4-5 bale cotton. In fact, some who may be doing this have reached a 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.***

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# TEXAS A&M AgriLIFE EXTENSION



## FIELD DAY SEPTEMBER 26 9 - 11 AM

Meet at Mike Henson's drip irrigated field on FM 1585 between Hawk and Hummingbird Roads, northside.

View Extension RACE Cotton Variety Trial, visit with Dr. Mark Kelley, Extension Cotton Agronomist, visit with seed company reps, and receive a TDA CEU.

