

Panhandle Pest Update



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Thrips, Thrips, Thrips, and More Thrips

If you've been outside it is no surprise to you that thrips can be everywhere and in extremely heavy numbers. I was at Etter on Wednesday morning while winds were calm and my summer workers and I were over-run by thrips. But, on Thursday while at different fields in Bailey and Parmer Counties the thrips were not actively flying around like at Etter.

Undoubtedly, regardless where your at, cotton fields need to be inspected for thrips and damage. Even if cotton had a seed treatment the heavy thrips pressure may even be damaging cotton now. Data has shown seed treatments will provide protection from thrips for 18 to 21 days following planting. As the seed treatment lose its effectiveness immature thrips will be found feeding on the leaves and in the terminal. Cotton without these seed treatments are unprotected from thrips and may already be heavily infested and damaged. Even if cotton is damaged continue to scout for thrips and if thrips numbers are above the threshold level then an application is still warranted to prevent further damage.



Normally, the treatment threshold is when there is one thrips on cotyledon stage cotton and then one thrips for each true leaf. But with heavy thrips numbers and cotton being stressed from hail, wind, sand, and dry conditions the threshold level may need to be reduced for cotton with fewer than 5 true leaves. Monti Vandiver, IPM extension agent for Bailey and Parmer county, worked with Dr. David Kerns, previous cotton entomologist, on thrips thresholds and found that when cotton were under environmental stress the threshold needed to be reduced to 0.5 thrips per true leaf.

We've learned that is critical for cotton to be protected from thrips the first two weeks after emergence. But with the number of thrips I saw on Wednesday, cotton could be under heavy thrips pressure and they may be causing extensive even if it is after this two week period. So, what options do we have now to protect cotton if the protection from a seed treatment is wearing off and/or thrips numbers are above the threshold level. And, how effective are the insecticides that are available for foliar treatments. The products we currently rely on are acephate, Bidrin® 8EC, and dimethoate. These products provide quick knockdown of the thrips but each has a very short residual activity. Out of the three products, acephate has the longest protection but control is just 5 days. A product which recently received a registration for thrips on cotton is Radiant® SC from Dow AgroSciences. The residual activity is reported by the company to be 10 days, but the per acre cost will be something to consider when selecting a product for controlling thrips.

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