



Row Crops Newsletter Brief and Crops Tour Follow-UP

The Fort Bend Row Crops Committee hosted the Fort Bend, Brazoria, and Waller Counties Crops Tour last Thursday. Although many folks were working hard to stay caught up with spraying and other field work because we anticipated a fair amount rain from Tropical Storm Cindy, we still had a great program. Although we did not get the rain we expected out of Cindy, we have gotten plenty to make up for it over the last 3-4 days. The information provided by Dr. Robert Bowling, Dr. Tom Isakeit, Dr. Muthu Bagavathianan, Dr. Don Renchie, Jeff Nunley, and our industry partners was great and I have some of the highlights below:

Pathology

- Dr. Isakeit spoke briefly on Corn and Sorghum disease potential highlighting that we did not see much Southern Rust at treatable levels in Corn and at this point it would not be economical to treat. He also discussed sorghum disease potential and recommended regular rotation, which everyone does a good job of doing. He continues to look at use of fungicide in Sorghum, but does not see a consistent economic return to consider fungicide application beneficial.
- In Cotton, Dr. Isakeit mentioned bacterial blight as one to watch. I have attached a publication that covers much of the detail – it is seed-borne, but can also survive on residue from infected crops. Outbreaks in susceptible varieties occur if weather conditions during the season are favorable for disease development, specifically, early-season rain that spreads the pathogen throughout the field, followed by heavy, wind driven rains that occur after canopy formation, with periods of high humidity and temperature. Fungicides are not effective against this disease. If you have a field you suspect has bacterial blight, give me a call and let me know so we can check it out.

Entomology

- Sugarcane aphid in grain sorghum: It has been hit and miss this year with many fields requiring insecticide application. Once sorghum is in hard-dough stage, which much around here is there or getting close, the damage potential is very low. However, you are still vulnerable to harvest loss due to honeydew accumulation in harvest equipment. With the recent hard rains, I would expect that any existing honeydew has been greatly reduced.
- The sorghum seed-feeding complex (worms, stinkbugs) was very active ~2-3 weeks ago (especially worms) and may be nearing a new generation. If you have sorghum in milk-soft dough stage, be on the lookout for worms and stinkbugs. Below are some links to a decision aid tool for assessing stinkbug and worm damage in sorghum – if you are on 40” rows, 13 feet of row is 1/1000th of an acre – to estimate number of heads per acre, count 13 row feet and multiply by 1,000.

Stinkbug – <http://bug.tamu.edu/apps/sorghumricestinkbug/index.html>

Headworm – <http://bug.tamu.edu/apps/sorghumheadwormcalculator/index.html>

- Cotton Bollworms have been observed in high numbers this year. Personally, in looking at some cotton varieties with earlier generation Bt traits, I have seen fields with quite a bit of damage and needing to be sprayed. I have attached a publication, "Bt Cotton" that details susceptibility of different caterpillar pests to each of the traits available in Cotton. Notice that even on the newest technologies, they are all rated a "2" meaning that they can periodically (described as rarely in the publication) require oversprays for bollworm. As we have seen less than desirable control with some pyrethroids this year, Dr. Bowling recommended using a product containing chlorantraniliprole (e.g. Prevathon, Besiege).
- Most cotton has a pretty good boll load and continues to put on blooms which may have some concerned about stinkbugs. Stinkbugs can be difficult to find, even when they are causing damage and so sampling for damaged bolls is recommended. Some details can be found at:
<http://cottonbugs.tamu.edu/fruit-feeding-pests/stinkbugs/>
A threshold of 20% damaged bolls is recommended.

Weed Technology and Laws and Regulations Updates

- I know it is late in the season and you may not be doing any additional over-the-top herbicide applications, but if you do make sure to follow the label requirements for tip selection, tank mixes, buffer zones, etc.
- More on following the label – The new 2,4-D and Dicamba products are not a "silver bullet" and weed control is best achieved when applied to young plants – spraying very large plants may not achieve desired control. I would also advise that if you have a field where you have sprayed 2,4-D and Dicamba products over-the-top this season and you have some waterhemp/pigweed that makes it through the application, for whatever reason, do your best to get out there and physically remove that weed – it is unlikely that in a single season or generation there will be resistance development, however it may not be far down the road and we need to try to preserve these technologies as best as we can for as long as we can.
- As we are nearing sorghum harvest, I have also attached the publication covering harvest aids and application timing in grain sorghum.
- Jeff Nunley covered several important topic – Two at the state level were decisions and potential precedent that was avoided regarding the Feral Hog bait, Kaput, and the proposed legislation to provide container and pesticide recycling and waste disposal – more on that at the end. Jeff also spoke about the combining of Boll Weevil management zones in the east and south, into a single East Texas Management Area where assessments will be on a per bale basis and paid automatically to the warehouse. Nationally, Jeff has been meeting with many other groups and with the new administration regarding the upcoming 2018 Farm Bill. We commend Jeff for his hard work and thank him for all of his efforts.
- Regarding Worker Protection Standards – They were updated by the previous administration and were supposed to go into effect January of this year. However, because there were not any clear guidelines, that has been delayed and we are still operating based on the old requirements. Some highlights can be found at:
<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/RegulatoryPrograms/Pesticides/WorkerProtection.aspx>

- We will be having a training later this week and hopefully I will be able to provide an update on what all you need to do to comply with worker protection standards.
- There was a bill in the Texas Legislature that would have provided funds through pesticide registration fees to provide for container recycling and unused pesticide disposal – It was vetoed. It might be beneficial to yourself and other ag producers if you consider contacting your state senator, representative, or the governor's office to ask that they consider taking that back into consideration during the special session that was called for in July

We would also like to thank the sponsors of the Crops Tour as their support allows us to offer programs like the Crops Tour, Winter Row Crop Meeting, and additional turn-row meetings at no cost to attendees. Please see the list of sponsors below and let them know you appreciate their support:

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South Texas Cotton and Grain
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We will be in the field for much of the rest of the summer, except for one week when I will be out of town so If you have any questions or think we may be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to call—I have provided a couple of numbers where I can be reached below. Thanks and take care,

John



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