GAINES COUNTY IPM NEWSLETTER

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Mark Your Calendars-- August 24th Gaines County Ag Tour

General Situation

Cotton stages range from 5 to 10 Nodes Above White Flower (NAWF), with a majority of the fields averaging 7 to 8 NAWF. We have seen the NAWF drop rapidly in some fields. This is a good indication that the plants are stressed. Irrigation may not have been started back quick enough and the plants experienced some water stress.

Peanuts are continuing to peg and form pods. We have seen a few large pods in some fields. Several fields are loaded with pegs and pods and it will be a challenge to keep up with the irrigation demands of this crop. Growers need to make sure that they do not get behind on their irrigation.

Verticillium wilt incidence has increased in cotton fields and we are starting to see evidence of Verticillium wilt in peanuts.

Bollworms in Peanuts

Anyone scouting peanuts will not have to look hard to find bollworms and yellow striped armyworms in the foliage. Both of these pests are feeding on the leaves and causing noticeable leaf loss. Worm counts range from 0 to 4 per foot of row, with several fields averaging around 1 bollworm per foot of row. We have not observed any fields that warrant an insecticide treatment. Most of the worms that we found this week were 1 inch or larger and are fixing to cycle out. This means that we may get another heavy egg lay within the next two weeks.

Peanut plants can tolerate extensive foliage loss before there is a significant yield loss. Spanish and Valencia peanuts can tolerate approximately 6 to 8 medium to large larvae per foot of row. Runners and Virginias have more foliage area and can tolerate 10 to 12 worms per foot of row. Be sure to scout your fields to determine if an economically damaging population is present. If chemical control measures become necessary, apply when worms are small. After insecticides are applied be sure to continually monitor the field for secondary pests such as spider mites.

Bollworms in Cotton

Bollworm egg lays have decreased significantly over the last two weeks and a majority of the worms that we are currently finding in non-Bt cotton are 1/2 inch

(medium size) or longer. Insecticides applied to 1/2 inch long worms are only moderately effective.

Currently, we are finding 0 to 5 eggs per 100 plants in non-Bt cotton. Small worm counts range from 0 to 5 worms per 100 plants. Medium to large worm counts range from 0 to 10 worms per 100 plants. I am expecting the egg lay to gradually increase over the next 2 weeks. So be sure to scout all non-Bt fields to pick up eggs and small larvae.

We have found an occasional bollworm in Bt cotton, but we have not seen any significant damage.

Cotton Aphids

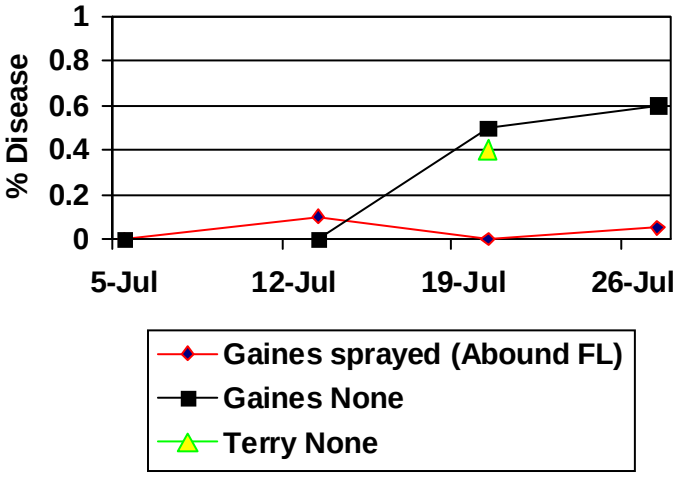
Cotton aphids are present in most fields; however, a majority of the populations are starting to dwindle due to the heat and beneficial insects. We are finding several ladybird beetles, green lacewings, and spiders. Scouting fields every three to four days will help you to determine if aphid populations are increasing or decreasing. Be sure to scout the whole field and do not focus solely on the hot spots. Sample leaves from the top portion of the plant and the middle portion of the plant, and determine the average number of aphids per leaf. The threshold for aphids is 50 aphids per leaf.

Peanut Pod Rot

Pod rot is starting to show up in more peanut fields. Most of the pod rot thus far has been caused by Rhizoctonia, but we are also picking up some pod rot caused by Pythium. Pods infected with Pythium usually have greasy dark brown-black lesions and pods may have a wet loose white fungus mat. Whereas, pods infected with Rhizoctonia have a drier dull dark brown lesion.

Figure 1. Pythium pod rot on the left. Rhizoctonia pod rot on the right.

The graph on the left represents the percentage of disease pods in a Gaines County field that has plots sprayed with Abound and plots that have not been sprayed with Abound, and a Terry County field that has not be sprayed with Abound.



There is almost no pod rot where the Abound was applied. We are seeing approximately 0.6% pod rot where the Abound was not applied.

Early Leaf Spot in Peanuts

Figure 2. Early Leaf Spot

Early leaf spot is increasing in some peanut fields. Below is information on early leaf spot management provided by *Dr. Jason Woodward in the July 28, 2009 edition of Peanut Progress.* Applications of Abound for pod rot will have some activity on leaf spot; however, leaf spot control may be reduced if applications are made in the rain or followed immediately with irrigation to maximize pod rot control. Initial symptoms of leaf spot generally occur in the lower canopy and consist of small, chlorotic flecks on the leaf surface. As the disease progresses lesions become evident throughout the canopy. Chemical burns can often be confused with leaf spot. The production of microscopic spores within the lesion can be used in the diagnosis of leaf spot. Spores from the lesions are disseminated by wind, rain, or irrigation. New lesions from secondary infections appear after 10 to 14 days after infections occur.

Solenopsis mealybug or cotton mealybugs

Figure 3. Immature cotton mealybug. Size ~ 3mm

Earlier this week we found a small area in a cotton field that had a few cotton mealybugs on the underside of the cotton leaves. There was no noticeable damage to the plants. However, this is a major pest in many parts of the world. They start on the root and then move to the foliage. The adults are about 5mm long. Give me a call or bring some samples by my office if you find some in your fields. At this time we are not recommending that any insecticides be applied, we would just like to closely monitor this pest.

Nematodes

The impact of cotton root-knot nematodes is very evident in a lot of cotton fields this year. I have seen severe stunting, which will likely impact yields. Cotton root-knot nematodes will continue to be a major player in these fields as long as there is a suitable host. Rotation to a non-host such as peanuts will help to reduce your cotton root-knot nematode populations. Small grains will also have an impact on your nematode populations. If you decided to plant cotton in these fields in 2011, then be sure to choose a variety that is nematode tolerant and use an at-planting nematicide. Below is a picture of a tolerant variety and a susceptible variety.

A picture of the same trial was included in the June 25 Gaines County IPM Newsletter. As you can see, the differences in plant height are even more evident.

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