Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

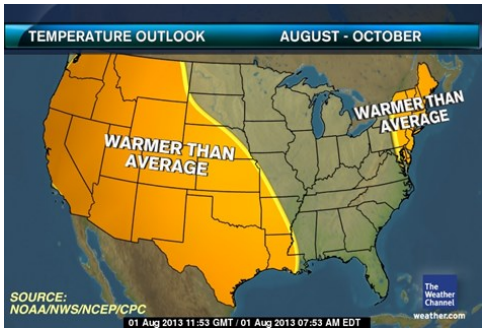
Plains Pest Management

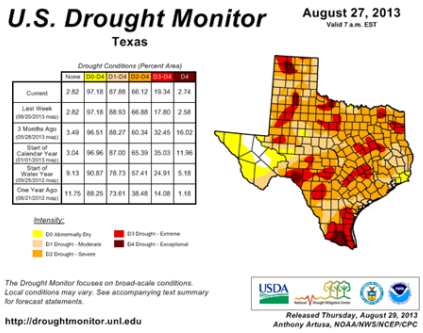
August 30, 2013

General Status

Despite many pest alerts, warnings, almost(s), and be on the lookout for(s), the 2013 growing season has been almost pest free so far. Our cotton and sorghum fields look it too, if the field has avoided the numerous weather events, the weed obstacles were removed in time, and the few pest problems we had were treated in a timely fashion. Our cotton has come through 'crunch time' with some phenomenal boll loads but still needs heat units and there remains limited deep moisture to finish out on. Our area's 'planed' corn looks about average, likely due to the drought factor and lack of deep moisture at key developmental stages. Falling short of an additional rain, the weather this last week has been ideal for grain development while cotton is still getting those needed heat units.

As we look around the corner into September, there are several factors to keep us on our toes. Our late and slightly behind average stage fields are progressing well, but concerns about having enough heat before frost are plentiful. Just how much and how long to irrigate our cotton this season as we finish it out are prominent concerns and need to be answered field by field. The typical Lepidopteron pests, with just a few stubborn Lygus populations, are making one last late push to make nuisances of themselves. I would expect that several sorghum and some late corn fields will need to be treated for headworms and / or FAW (fall army worm). Spider mites are still a concern for most corn and sorghum fields, and it remains unknown just what impact the sorghum midge will have upon our late sorghum.





	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	2.82	97.18	87.88	66.12	19.34	2.74
Last Week (08/20/2013 map)	2.82	97.18	88.93	66.88	17.80	2.58
3 Months Ago (05/28/2013 map)	3.49	96.51	88.27	60.34	32.45	16.02
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2013 map)	3.04	96.96	87.00	65.39	35.03	11.96
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	9.13	90.87	78.73	57.41	24.91	5.18
One Year Ago (08/21/2012 map)	11.75	88.25	73.61	38.48	14.08	1.18

Weed Issues

A few weeks ago I shared some of my observations from one of David Graf's, CEA – Swisher, weed spot spray demonstration trials. Here is a condensed version of David's final results from those demonstrations:

Chemical	**Sharpen**	**Gramoxone**	**RU + banvel**	**Liberty**	**banvel**	**Roundup**	**Starane**
% control	**94**	**76**	**75**	**62**	**43**	**0**	**0**
# Plants Treated	50	50	20	50	30	30	50
# Plants Controlled	47	38	15	31	13	0	0
<50% leaf burn	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
>50% leaf burn	0	6	0	19	0	1	0
Wilting @ 14 DAT	3	3	5	0	17	2	50
No notable response	0	0	0	0	0	27	0

Cotton

Our program cotton fields ranged in stage from absolute cut-out to 5 NAWF this week. A few cotton fields have developed passed economic insect damage, but the vast majority are a week to ten days away from reaching that stage, heat unit accumulation and harvestable boll development depending. The handful of our truly late fields that can still be measured in NAWF are now a major concern. Although these fields look very good today, there is an unknown freeze date looming just over the horizon. Even calculating for an average freeze date and heat units, any blooms produced this week are not expected to have time to mature into harvestable bolls. An early freeze could wreck these late fields without serious maturity management.

Our harvestable boll counts this week ranged from 5 to 14.7, with the vast majority of fields falling into the 8 to 11 range. If a boll has not reached the size of a quarter by August 30th, then I do not feel we can consider it as harvestable.

Cotton pests remained relatively quiet again this week. Bollworms seem to remain content to attack late corn and sorghum rather than settling for cotton again unless there is no other option in the area. We found one northern Hale County non-BGII field with 13,025 small bollworms and 7,199 eggs per acre that required treatment. This field was not near any corn. All other non-BGII fields were either below ET for bollworms or were in the vicinity of corn. To date, we cannot find bollworm eggs in cotton if corn can be seen from any given cotton field.

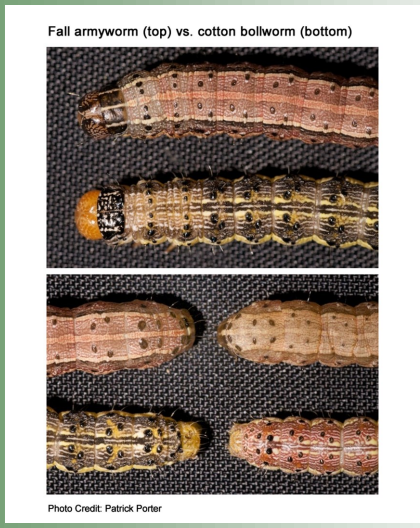
Lygus seem to have taken a back seat compared to the bollworms this week. We continue to find Lygus in pockets, but nothing nearing economic levels. The economic threshold for Lygus is something of a sliding scale as we move through the growing season. As harvestable bolls develop, they become less susceptible to plant bug damage, and in later fields, Lygus tend to feed almost exclusively on fruit that has little chance of maturing into a harvestable boll. A good ET for cut-out fields would be 1 Lygus per every 1 to 1.5 row feet with some visible boll damage. I do have a report from an area crop consultant who needed to recommend treatment for a Lygus population in southwestern Hale this week.

Corn

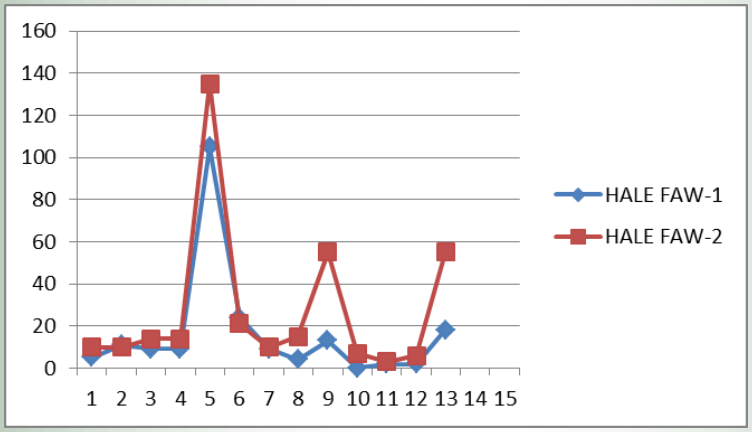
Our program corn this week ranged in stage from green silk to 35% moisture line down with the majority of older corn reaching full dent and most late corn showing brown silks. The search for FAW in the late corn and spider mite evaluations were our largest concerns this week.

I am pleased to report that, at least in our program corn, the mite population has crashed. In several fields we were concerned about mites reaching ET, but instead had difficulty finding living mites. Fungal disease and six-spotted thrips look to be the primary cause. Even so, the threat of mite problems remain for most older corn and all late corn, especially if we have FAW problems.

Monti Vandiver, EA – IPM Palmer and Bailey, and Dr. Pat Porter, District 2 Extension Entomologist – Lubbock, are reporting high numbers of FAW in late corn in their areas. The following is an excerpt from the August 30, 2013 FOCUS; "There is not much that can be done once fall armyworms are in the ear, but late corn that is just tasseling should be scouted and treated promptly if necessary. We don't have economic thresholds for fall armyworm but we do know they can do an awful lot of damage. The July 5th edition of FOCUS discusses our research on yield loss to fall armyworm and optimal spray timing."



I spent a considerable amount of time thoroughly scouting our program's late corn acres this week and was unable to find FAW egg masses or 1st instar larva in the ears. I am still able to find large FAW larva in area sorghum, and a few 'lagers' still in older corn. I also have limited reports of some young FAW populations along the Hale / Lamb County line. I am left to assume a few causes. One is that I am missing the larva despite my best scouting efforts. Second, the FAW are later in developing in and around all of our program's corn and sorghum for some inexplicable reason. Lastly, the populations in our area are lower and the FAW could be moving in soon, likely from the west much like the mites did. We need to remain on high alert for FAW this next week and Gary Cross', CEA – Hale, FAW trap catches were up this week. A large FAW egg lay remains a possibility.



Hale 2013 FAW traps

Sorghum

Our program sorghum ranged from late whorl to 'mid' – hard dough. Most of our earlier sorghum is moving from soft dough and starting to put on a touch of color while most of our late sorghum is around 25% bloom stage.

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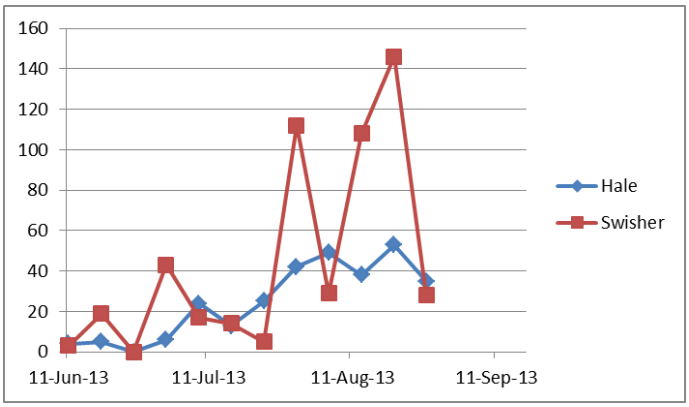
We're on the air…

"Tuesday's with Blayne" from 6:00—7:00 AM & from 12:30—1:00 PM on the 1090 Agri-Plex Report on 1090 AM KVOP-Plainview.

"IPM Wednesdays" from 1:00-2:30 PM on The Fox Talk 950 Ag Show. Fox Talk 950 AM - Lubbock.

Headworms, mostly consisting of bollworms, were our primary concerns this week for all fields with several requiring treatment. Headworms ranged from 0.08 to 2.3 per head following a large egg lay last week.

Midge is a major concern in sorghum blooming this late. It was rare to find a blooming field this week without midge, but we did not find any at ET. It could be that there is so many fields currently in bloom that the midge population could not cover all fields. The headworm (bollworm) egg lay and subsequent larval hatch this week overshadowed the midge as worms were more prominent than midge, even in blooming sorghum. Please see Managing Insect and Mite Pests of Texas Sorghum for thresholds and recommendations for these pests.



Spider mite populations in sorghum have all but completely crashed, but seem to have been replaced by yellow sugar cane aphids on many fields' lower leaves and a scattering of Lygus feeding on maturing grain.

General Watch

It has been a good year for the spider population. While spiders are generally helpful as predators in our area crops, there are two poisonous species native to our region. I have had quite a few run-ins, reports, and questions about black widows and brown recluse lately. Black widows tend to take up residence in less trafficked areas by humans, but can include structures that still see lots of prey movement. Areas such as the back wall of a shed or well house, the open wheel of a long parked vehicle, or the idle stack of pipe are all prime sites for the black widow to set its web. Brown recluse prefer to be even more reclusive, hiding in stacks of wood outside or among long undisturbed linens or storage within houses. I have seen so many of these two poisonous spiders this summer, I rather expect to find them anytime I disturb any of these habitats. Both of these spiders only bite when they feel threatened. Be safe.

Please call or come by with any questions,

Blayne