

Plains Pest Management Newsletter__

News About Integrated Pest Management in Hale & Swisher Counties

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Newsletter 1

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COTTON

Cotton has made rapid progress despite high winds, hail and rain over the past month. Currently hot dry conditions exist, with some growers now starting center pivots. Even with deep moisture still present it is important to keep plants healthy and actively growing with irrigation until roots grow down to deeper moisture. This past week cotton has ranged from cotyledon stage to 6 true leaves. Many fields range from 2 to 4 true leaf stage.



Early cotton foliage was damaged by high winds (60 mph +), blowing sand and some hail. Most fields have now recovered from their damage, but are now experiencing damage due to thrips migration from wheat as it dries down for harvest. Thrips populations have been highly variable. Factors influencing populations and damage have been proximity to wheat or pasture areas, type of pre-plant insecticide used (seed treatment or soil applied), environmental conditions and growth stage as migrations occurred. Recently counts have ranged from 0.4 thrips per plant up to 7 thrips per plant. Some of the high counts fields have been ones where no early insecticide was used or where seed treatments have not lasted. As thrips reach an average of one thrips per true leaf, foliage applications may be initiated. Sometimes with excellent growing conditions one thrips/leaf



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may not cause significant gnarling of leaves. This year, with wind and sand damage that occurred earlier , one thrip per leaf or less has caused significant foliage damage. So with this in mind, evaluate damage to the newest leaves in the terminal area along with thrips counts. If cotton is in the one to two leaf stage an application for control may be needed if counts are less than one thrips per leaf, especially in fields with foliage damaged by blowing sand.

Foliar treatments often used in our area have been dicrotophos (Bidrin®), dimethoate and acephate (Orthene®, and Acephate®) .

Other pest reported in the area have been cotton aphids, false chinch bugs and beet armyworms. So far these have only been occasionally observed and not widespread.

SORGHUM & CORN

Corn is growing rapidly with many fields now about 24" in height. Sorghum ranges from just planted to about 12 inches in height.

Banks grass mites have been observed in small colonies along field margins next to wheat. Some of these colonies have had Western flower thrips feeding in them , which has eliminated the

colony in some cases.

Western flowers thrip have been abundant along field margins adjacent to wheat. Lower leaf damage has been observed which sometimes looks like mite damage. As corn grows the thrips populations spread over a larger area and damage by thrip becomes less noticeable.



F a l l armyworms have been observed in sorghum and non-Bt corn. In some corn the fall armyworm has already competed feeding and moved to the soil to pupate. Do not over react to foliage feeding in the whorl stage, unless larval populations and growth stage could lead to “dead heart”. This means the larvae have fed into the growing points deep inside the whorl.

Mesquite Cutworms

Many moths have been observed in area fields, most of which are the mesquite cutworm (*Melipotis indomita*). These moths are a pest of mesquite and commonly migrate through our area this time of year. They can be quite a nuisance as they are attracted to lights around homes.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Court of Texas Cooperating

We will seek to provide reasonable accommodations for all person with disabilities for any of our meetings. We request that you contact Texas AgriLife Extension (806)291-5274, as soon as possible to advise us of the auxiliary aid or service that you will require.

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