

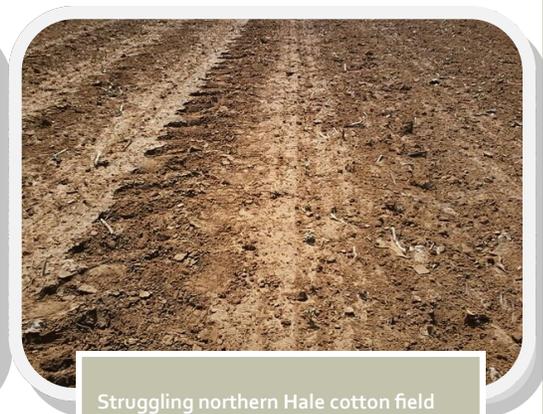
JUNE 10, 2016

General Status

I am not sharing any secrets when I state that it has been a frustrating week. With the market situation as depressed as it is, we really needed an easy button to get these summer crops off to that critical good start. At the very least we needed a few things to work in our favor. It would seem that May and the first few days in June had other plans. For most of our program cotton fields, and a few other crops, it seems everything tried to stack against us. It is hard to imagine a more delaying and detrimental May for cotton establishment. We have had two rounds of extended cold temperatures with wet and damp conditions fueling chilling injury and seedling disease. These delays gave a moderate population of wireworms some extra time to make their added damaging mark on the crop. Even the southern areas of Hale County, with the majority of fields in conventional tillage and a little better soil temperatures, seen at least some of these issues.



Struggling southern Swisher cotton field that might just make it.



Struggling northern Hale cotton field that is not likely to survive.

Add to that a thick crust and some nasty winds that kicked up before many of the fields could support or get a tractor with a sand-fighter there in time, and we have a lot of blown out and wind/sand damaged fields with plenty of seedlings that gave out before they could emerge. Then of course there are many other fields which had conditions that delayed planting until June and the insurance cutoff date or a few days later. While there are exceptions with cotton stands in great shape, we have spent most of our time this week determining if cotton fields are strong enough to keep and deciding if it was indeed too late for cotton this year. Both options seem a little foreboding today.

Unless once under water in a low laying area of the field, our planted corn and sorghum seems to have fared this rough early season better. While plant diseases are easy to find, especially in corn, the moisture has been welcome to these crops and with the temperatures we had later in the week, the disease pressure looks to be diminishing.

Cotton

Our youngest program cotton field is at a finally and hurriedly planted seed at swell stage while our oldest is at a sickly 2nd true leaf stage with most fields hanging on at cotyledon to first leaf. Our non-wind blown out stand counts have ranged from an unacceptable for irrigated 15,128 plants per acre (PPA) up to a not too much set back 44,714 PPA. The majority of the fields we are keeping as cotton fields are ranging between 25,000 and 34,000 PPA.

As a general rule, I like to use 31,000 PPA as a bare minimum standard for profitability but healthy cotton plants can and usually do make up yield and maintain profitability with up to 1 foot gaps between plants if the gaps are not too common across the field. When debating keeping a cotton field with these low populations, the health of the surviving seedlings and their ability to recover quickly must be paramount. Even with a higher plant population, if the seedlings will not recover quickly due to whatever factor(s) they are ailing from, they will not prove profitable. While gaps in the field, healthy seedlings recovering quickly can produce yield, stripping ease will be a different matter altogether.

The early season pests are not easing any pressure off of our young and struggling cotton. The thrips population seems at least average this season as they move out of the area wheat. Following the two recent below average thrips pressure years in 2014 and 2015, the 'average' 2016 seems quite high, especially if the field is in the vicinity of wheat currently drying down for harvest. Our highest thrips population comes from a field in central Swisher County with 6.15 thrips per true leaf stage that had wheat on all four



Photo showing adult and larva thrips under magnification.

sides of the field while our lowest comes from southwestern Hale with 0.02 thrips per true leaf stage which had no wheat in sight. Most of our fields are ranging between 0.89 thrips per true leaf stage and 2.2 thrips per true leaf stage. I should also mention that we are



Swisher cotton seedlings showing moderate thrips damage from continual adult re-infestation. No thrips larva were found here. 5.16 thrips per true leaf stage over working the seed treatment.

seeing very few larval thrips. This means our seed treatments are holding up fairly well and proving to be money well spent, but the thrips population is large enough to be continually re-infesting our young fields with new adults. With the economic threshold for thrips being of 1 thrips per true leaf stage, the majorities of our fields are over the economic threshold and require treatment as soon as possible with potential sprays yet to come. Our key thrips predators, minute pirate bugs, big-eyed bugs, and spiders seem to be lagging behind the moving thrips so far. Hopefully they will play a larger role in deciding upon thrips treatments in the weeks to come.

It is perfectly acceptable to mix thrips treatments with any planned over-the-top herbicide treatment but I do not suggest waiting to make a thrips treatment this year until it is convenient for you to make the herbicide treatment. These fields do not need to be set back any farther by a hungry ET population of thrips. The profitability of the field could already be at risk, especially if we have an early freeze.



Minute Pirate Bug feeding on thrips

Weeds

For the most part, I can state that our improved attention to preventative weed control measures are paying dividends, especially following the rains that May and early June brought. Those rains have been fueling a flush of the usual weed species suspects that seems less impactful than recent experiences, if we have a good residual program in place. That is not to say we are weed free and diligence remains our best weapon today. On a 0-10 pressure rating system, the bulk of our fields with good residual applied and incorporated properly are running with ratings of 0.2 to 2 while the minority of fields without any residual thus far or fields with residual only applied recently are running at 4 to 8.2 on the same 0-10 scale.

This also seems to be a fairly heavy season for marestail. This shallow germinating weed typically comes up in late-winter or early-spring in a rosette pattern but is known to germinate year round under the right conditions. Once this weed starts growing



Typical marestalk vertical stem.

vertically, it becomes very difficult to control. To say it is resistant to Roundup or Ignite is a stretch of the technical meaning of the word resistant but marestalk will often survive over-the-top treatments of both more often than not. This is because the plant usually has such strong turgor pressure that the herbicides cannot penetrate below ground level. Ground level is where marestalk has multiple alternate growing points. Often you will see Roundup or Ignite kill these weed's main vertical stem, only for it to come back as a "multiple headed hydra monster." If you note this weed in any significant level in your fields, I recommend a mechanical or physi-



Marestalk prefers undisturbed soil.

cal control method as soon as possible and not to waste time, money, or effort in trying to control this weed with over-the-top chemical methods.

Corn & Sorghum

The bulk of our program corn is only being scouted today. However, the corn we have scouted so far ranges in stage from V3 to V8. Our sorghum ranged from V1 to V5 this week. While diseases in the corn were easy to find this week, we found none that were economically threatening yet and were beginning to fade rapidly with the return of warm weather as we moved through the week. Dr. Pat Porter, District 2 Entomologist, reported seeing fall army worm feeding in non-Bt corn in Lubbock, but we have not noted any in our program yet, with many fields yet to be evaluated. We are picking up heavier than normal spider mite populations moving in on field margins compared to 'average' years in corn. These are not of economic concern yet but, last season was one of the most expensive in recent memory for mite and disease control in corn. We will be need to watch both of these situations very closely, especially post-tassel.

In sorghum, no pest news is good news. We have not found any sugarcane aphids, or any other pest of consequence, (weeds aside) in any sorghum field so far. These sugarcane aphids remain hard to find in area Johnson grass following successfully

overwintering in Hale County. We truly have no idea what may happen with this aphid this season. Still we maintain hope that the local beneficial populations will be better able to keep pace with this aphid this season because they are already in the area. In general, the predator numbers still seem fairly high but we must wait and see what aphids move into the area and how the local aphids will multiply. We expect the local aphid to increase in reproduction as the Johnson grass and sorghum nears boot stage.

I rather expect with the loss of a substantial number of cotton fields and delays in cotton planting that stretched too long, several producers will be grudgingly planting more late corn and substantially more late sorghum acres. For any late corn, I recommend following a solid IPM plan tailored to that corn.

Earlier planted corn tends to experi-

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2016 Texas High Plains Sugarcane Aphid Management Guide

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Timing effective treatment to control sugarcane aphids (SCA) in sorghum depends on the size of the SCA population. Follow these guidelines to make treatment decisions.

Grain Sorghum Action Threshold	
Growth Stage	Decision Threshold Specific to the Sugarcane Aphid
Pre-Boot	20% of plants with presence of aphids
Boot	20% of plants infested with 50 aphids per leaf
Flowering-Milk	30% of plants infested with 50 aphids per leaf
Soft Dough	30% of plants infested, localized areas with heavy honeydew, and established aphid colonies
Dough	30% of plants infested, localized areas with heavy honeydew, and established aphid colonies
Black Layer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy honeydew and established aphid colonies Treatment only for preventing harvest problems Important to observe preharvest intervals

Revised from original threshold recommendations from Mississippi State University.

ence more spider mite issues while later corn experiences more FAW, corn earworm, and disease pressure. Planning ahead and planting the strongest Bt traited corn late could prove useful if this trend continues this year.

For sorghum yet to be planted, I recommend taking every sugarcane aphid IPM precaution we have learned on the Texas High Plains. When scouting for this pest, please make certain we utilize the Texas

First Detection: Is the Field at Risk?

- Once a week, walk 25 feet into the field and examine plants along 50 feet of row. Check at least 4 locations per field (total 60-80 plants).
- Inspect underside of leaves from upper and lower canopy from 15-20 plants per location.
- If honeydew is present, look for SCA on the underside of a leaf above the honeydew.
- Sample each side of the field and sites near johnsongrass and tall mutant plants.

Sampling Decision

- If no SCA are present, or only a few individual wingless/winged aphids are on upper leaves, continue once-a-week scouting.
- If SCA are found on lower or mid-canopy leaves, begin twice-a-week scouting. Use the **Grain Sorghum Action Threshold** (over) to determine if the infestation is at or exceeds the action threshold.

Control Options after First Application

- Check fields for control after 4-7 days.
- If poor control and aphid colonies of 50 or more per leaf are still present, repeat application.
- If there was good control of the aphid, continue scouting fields twice a week for re-infestation or a rapid increase in aphid numbers.
- For whorl to early dough growth stages, use the **Grain Sorghum Action Threshold** for any second applications.
- From dough to late dough growth stages, a second application may be required when aphids are re-establishing, 40%-50% of the total leaf area has aphid damage, and predator populations are not suppressing aphid populations.
- At black layer growth stage through harvest, an application may be required to prevent harvest problems.

Forage Sorghum Management

Treatment thresholds have not been determined for forage sorghums. Until thresholds are available, contact your Extension agent-IPM or Extension entomologist.

Learn more at Texas Sugarcane Aphid News at <http://txscan.blogspot.com>

Photos courtesy of Entomology & Plant Pathology, Oklahoma State University.

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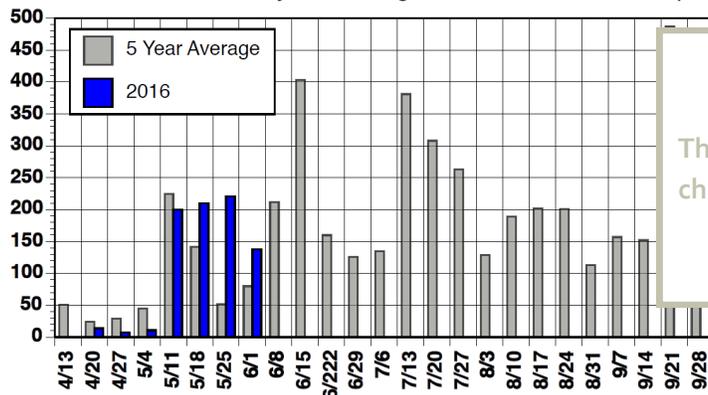
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High Plains Economic Threshold for this pest and not the Texas threshold or any other tool that was developed in developed in South Texas. Those thresholds work well there, but once again, it was proven that the High Plains are unique. We need to get much farther ahead of the aphid here, which the Texas High Plains ET is tailored for. We also need to be making use of seed treatments, scouting regularly, and making use of the mildly resistant sorghum hybrids if possible.

I suggest being very leery of any official public sugarcane aphid resistant hybrid list this season. It requires a minimum of three years and multiple locations before a list can be reliably presented to producers. Us as researchers, are just not there yet. We only have one season and are only beginning to test lines for resistance locally. For the short-term, we are going to have to rely on company information about their hybrid's SCA resistance level. While these hybrids have proven economic in our 2015 research trial at Halfway, the resistance factor is not strong enough to stand alone. All of the company suspected or promoted lines with SCA resistance must be scouted and if needed, sprayed to remain profitable.

Average number of fall armyworm moths per trap, Lubbock, Texas 2016. Current year averages are based on two traps.



This week we placed our Hale, Swisher, & Floyd bollworm moth traps and Jason Miller, CEA-Hale, should be placing local FAW moth traps soon. Expect local data next week.

Blayne Reed