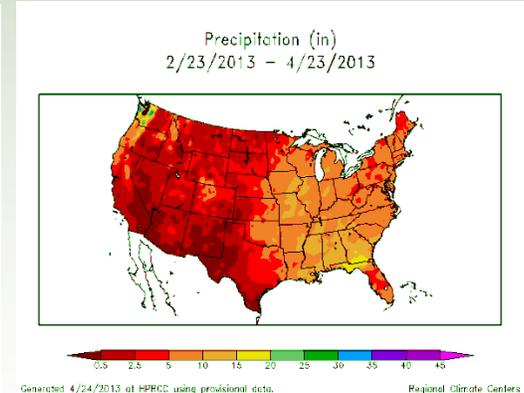
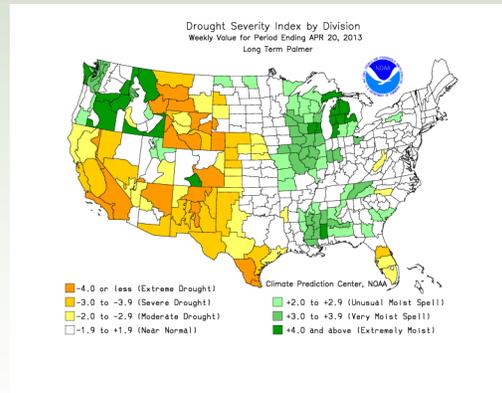


By this time next month we should have all corn and early sorghum planted and be well into cotton planting. That would be an average year. Today there remains quite a bit of producer indecision and foot dragging. Even without market forces caught in a tornado and frequent cold front visits from the Arctic tundra, the persistent drought and dwindling irrigation capacity has stunted the enthusiasm of many producers coming into the 2013 growing season.



As we finalize cropping plans amongst an ongoing drought, I would urge producers not to overestimate their irrigation capacity. Likewise I would also urge producers not to cut too many corners on the acres so they can focus irrigations on in terms of weed and insect IPM. A good residual herbicide or seed treatment can be the difference in a profitable crop and one that costs too much to raise for the dollars returned.

Corn & Sorghum



Most Hale and Swisher growers have put corn or early sorghum planting on standby for a few days until temperatures rebound to more spring like conditions. There are several early planted fields that could be at risk of cold shock or freeze damage. I would urge producers and consultants to inspect your corn or sorghum seedlings closely for abnormalities at the growing point or in the roots. Plants seriously damaged from cold shock may survive and look acceptable from afar, but if they are seriously damaged they are not likely to ever fully recover.



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We're on the air...

*"Tuesday's with Blayne"
from 6-7AM on the
1090 Agri-Plex Re-
port. 1090 AM
KVOP - Plainview.*

*"IPM Wednesdays" from
12:30-2PM on The
Fox Talk 950 Ag
Show. Fox Talk 950
AM - Lubbock.*

Cotton

It is nearly time to get out our soil temperature gauges and monitors for cotton planting. Cotton gets off to its best start when planted into a sustained 67° F. soil temperature. Just when that temperature will become steady at that minimum level remains unclear. Soil temperatures have varied wildly and followed fairly closely behind the air temperature through most of the recent cold weather events.

In the few prospective fields I have been able to 'scratch' in I have found a fairly high occurrence of wireworm larvae in high residue fields and have had one producer report the presence of white grubs in his prospective cotton field. There is also a high potential for thrips problems this this season as the noted populations in the area wheat seems ample. These will all certainly be potential pests to plan for before we head to the field with the planter.

Hale & Swisher Wheat Damage

Of the fields I have looked at this week, the percent of damaged heads ranges from 5% to 60%, with most irrigated fields averaging about 15% in Hale and 25% in Swisher. This is not a 1:1 head damage to yield loss relationship. Historically, that relationship is more 2:1 in nature. Secondary tillers, if healthy, can help compensate in yield and grain weight. It remains debatable what the yield potential of the area wheat crop was before the recent frost events occurred with so many detrimental factors working against the crop.

If present, freeze damage to the stalk will be much more severe in economic terms than damage to the head or growing point. Fields with this type of damage are very likely to lodge as the grain matures and become un-harvestable for hay or grain. In addition, that stalk becomes limited in the amount of grain fill it is capable of. Symptoms of freeze damage to wheat stalks include a brownish-red discoloration and are easily collapsed compared to healthy green stalks. I have noted a few low lying fields already lodged well before boot and have had several producers report the same. In these cases, the wheat is lost to any use other than grazing or cover.

Greenbugs and other aphids can still be found in most area wheat fields, but appear to have run their economic course. Area insecticide treatments seem to have worked well where applied. Many producers opted not to treat for economic infestations of greenbugs this season due to the already bleak wheat situation and economic outlook. In fields where greenbugs were allowed to run their course significant pest damage has occurred, but predators and parasitoids are now working their way through the aphid populations and look to have the pest on the downward slope. I urge producers and consultants to remain vigilant in their pest and plant monitoring efforts. Each field is likely to have unique populations and situations and the threat of economic damage from greenbugs are still present.

If I can be of any assistance, please give me a call. Thanks,

Blayne