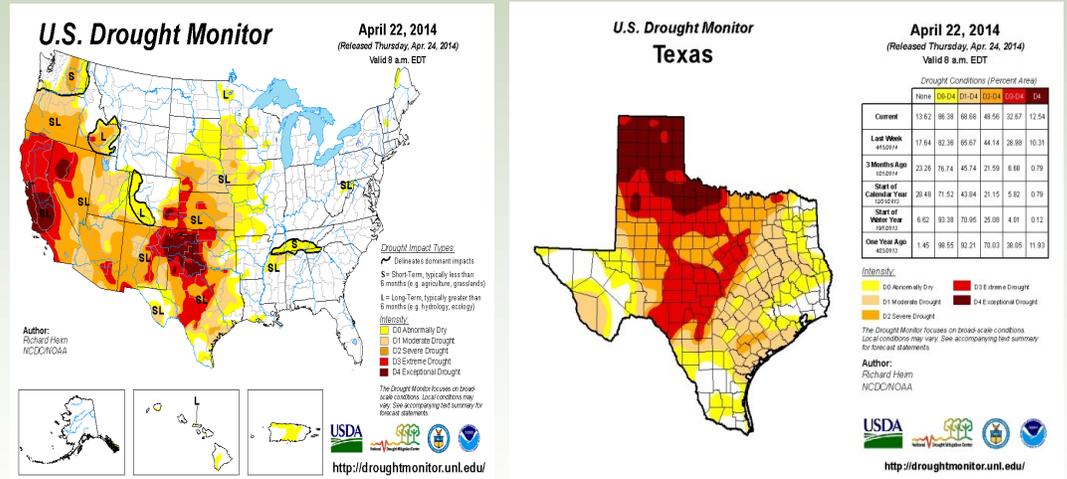


General Status

Over the past month most of us witnessed some precipitation events in Hale & Swisher County. The actual amounts of rain fall ranged from “my rain gage got wet” and “it almost settled the dust” to just over an inch in pockets. From producers, residents, and data collected from pivot track the reports I have indicate that most of us accumulated some moisture this past month, but were very spotty and often ridiculously sparse in amounts. Even those lucky few with the heaviest rainfall, the situation remains dry as the area is well behind on annual rainfall.



Preparations for the upcoming summer growing season cautiously continue as many producers report ‘dry wells’ and ‘severely limited and not rebounded pumping capacity’ from their irrigations systems after three years of intense need and use as we make attempts at pre-irrigation in 2014.

Wheat

I have been amazed at how well our area wheat has hung on through some of the toughest environmental situations imaginable. This is not to say that it is in stellar shape. Most ‘still green’ or not grazed out dryland fields have started heading out, most well below one foot tall. Brown Wheat Mites can be found in most dryland fields, but at a low number. It is believed the economic impact these mites would have on wheat is negligible, unless the fields are already drought stressed near the point of permanent wilt. These mites are generally viewed as the nail that sealed the coffin so to speak until reliable research proves otherwise.

Irrigated wheat is faring better, but also has much more water invested than many would like for what most area producers view as an auxiliary type crop. I estimate most of these fields are still late, but only by a few weeks now as recent weather has allowed positive growth. Of the fields I have been able to check this week, some are starting to show flag leaves and many soon will. Much of the area’s irrigated wheat crop is already intended for hay. This hay should be of high quality, but will likely be of low quantity due to the shorter stature of the plants brought on by drought conditions. I estimate the yield potential of fields managed toward grain production to remain in the 15 to 40 bushel range with most falling in the 20 to 30 range.

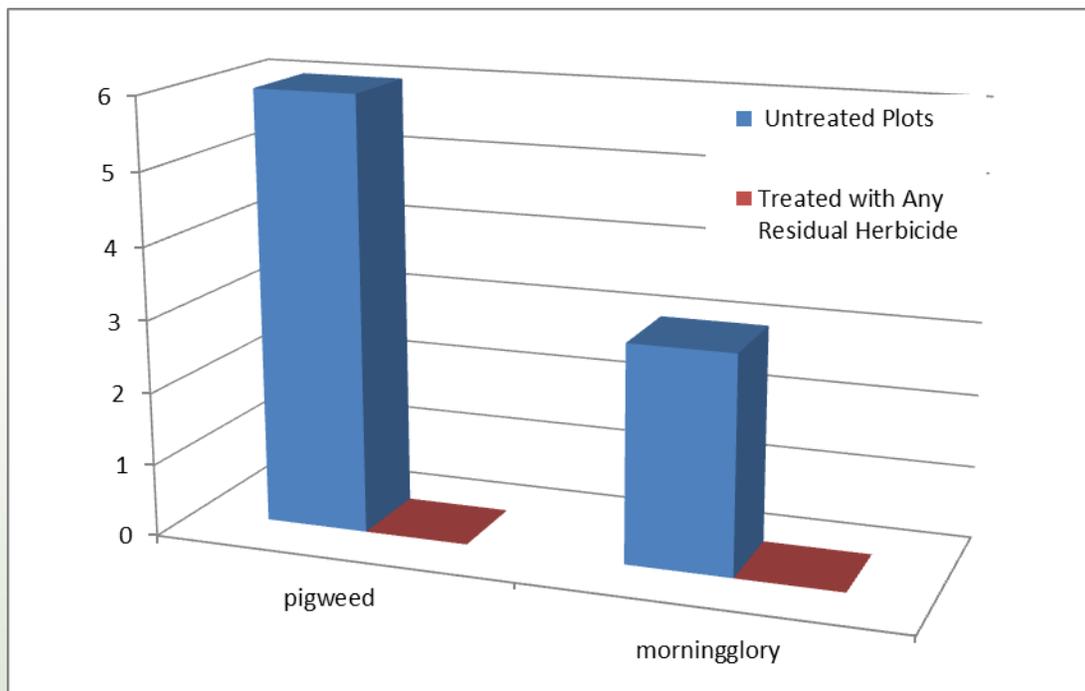
There were serious concerns about the hard freeze event of April 11th and 12th and its potential damage to our area wheat. In the majority of fields I have checked this week any damage to the head is hard to find with only about 5% damage in the lower portions of the fields. There are a few unfortunate exceptions with much more damage. I estimated one lusher than average field in south-central Swisher County with 70 – 80% damaged primary heads in the low laying areas of the field and 30 – 40% in the higher elevated areas. This field does have a good number of healthy secondary heads available to help mitigate some of the yield loss associated with this freeze damage loss.

The wheat pests this month seem to be following the crop stage rather than the calendar date. By name, greenbugs had only begun to build, much later than normal, when a tremendous number of predators and parasitoids rapidly cleaned them out. I am not aware of any area field requiring treatment thus far. This week it has been difficult for me to find a countable population of greenbugs.

We have also taken a fair number of wheat samples into the Texas A&M AgriLife Plant Pathology Lab in Amarillo for testing. To date, all samples have returned negative for any disease. Three samples from the Edmonson area have just come into my door that looks very suspicious. Please watch for blog postings on the Plains Pest Bugosphere at <http://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/> as we receive results.

Weeds

Corn and early planted sorghum planting has begun. Along with our crop seeds going into the ground, there are thousands of weed seeds already present. I maintain that the vast majority of weed problems we have experienced over the past few years has been a due to early emerged weeds. I strongly recommend producers control weeds any existing weeds and plant into a weed free environment. Many summer and spring weeds are already emerging this week. It is very easy to miss recognizing emerging Palmer that is only a few millimeters tall or wide. I assure you, without well incorporated pre-plant residual, regardless of planned crop type, these weeds are there. The following is a summation our weed counts taken from our residual weed control trial in southwestern Swisher on April 21.





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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.

Announcements

On the afternoon of Friday May 9th we will be holding a scout school at the Texas A&M AgriLife Center in Amarillo and another on June 6th at the Texas A&M AgriLife Center in Lubbock. These scout schools are being designed to educate crop consultants, industries, and producers, field scouts on plant agronomy, pests, and diseases they will be encountering throughout the upcoming growing season. The details of the Lubbock school are still in the planning phase. The agenda for the Amarillo school follows:

Texas Panhandle Scout School

Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center
6500 Amarillo Blvd. West, Amarillo, TX 79106
May 9, 2014

For crop consultant workers, farmers and their workers,
County Extension agents and their interns, and any
agricultural related worker

\$10 Fee payable at door

12:45 pm - 1:00 pm Registration

1:00 - 1:15 pm Introduction - **Ed Bynum & Blayne Reed**

1:15 pm Agronomy, Weed Identification, Herbicide Injury and
Insect Pests - **Jourdan Bell, Ed Bynum, Blayne Reed**

a. Corn - 45 min

b. Grain Sorghum - 30 min

c. Cotton - 45. Min

d. Beneficial Insects - 15 min

3:30 pm break

3:45 pm

Diseases - **Ron French**

a. Corn

b. Grain Sorghum

c. Cotton

4:15 pm TDA/WPS DVD

5:00 pm Concluding Comments

Contact Ronda Fisher, (806) 677 – 5600, or email Ronda Fisher at
rk-fisher@tamu.edu to RSVP by May 7. Three CEU's will be offered

Please call or come by with any questions,

Blayne Reed