

AUGUST 16, 2013

General Status

Our crop status this week depends upon which field you are standing in. Recent rains, and some very damaging hail, have made our crops in Hale & Swisher even more variable than they already were in every aspect imaginable. The rains will certainly help many cotton fields that were zipping into that 3.5 NAWF absolute cutout stage hang onto some already pretty good boll loads as they agronomically wind down. The rain will also help finish out much of our at least average first planted corn. There were still a few late cotton fields that we were wrestling for maturity to beat a potentially early fall that we may need to refocus again. There were of course those widespread hail events this week that did no field or producer any favors. Damage assessments will have to be done on a field by field basis, no matter the crop, as the hail's area of coverage and severity was as variable as the whole season has been. It should be safe to say that any cotton field with heavy damage this late is probably finished on the input side. Putting a finger on just where the heaviest hail was this week is difficult. Halfway to Hale Center likely caught the most consistent single hail storm, but I have reports of some very spotty and personal hail from almost every corner of both counties.

Meanwhile, our pest species and situations are heating up as we race through crunch time and all these crazy 2013 pitfalls. This is in comparison to how quiet they have relatively been this summer. I suppose that puts the pests on a slow simmer, but cooking and heating up nonetheless. We will have fewer fields 'at economic risk' of pests next week thanks to the hail, so those that are at risk need to be scouted carefully.

Weeds



This photo probably says it all. It is from a 2013 field that did not receive any residual pre-plant due to unavoidable difficulties early in the season, while the balance of the producer's other fields did. It has been by far the producer's most expensive field in his larger (and overall tougher) weed fight this year. After doing a good, hard fought job cleaning the field up with multiple herbicides, which included a light rate of post-planting residual and eventually iron, more weeds emerged following rain events. It is my suspicion that very little of the already light rate of residual used did not reach the soil, shadowed by the existing (now missing) weed patch AND has likely already played out with multiple rains and ridiculous weed emergence pressure. This photo was taken almost two weeks ago and three days behind an additional glyphosate spray. Three days is not giving the herbicide much time, but we already see a mixed reaction to the glyphosate here.

Unforeseen difficulties happen all the time in the field and this is a widely shared situation for the region. I would suggest that light rates and the absence of pre-plant residual can no longer be an option for us in our weed control.

Cotton

The majority of our program fields were racing through crunch time toward cut-out this week. Cotton was setting bolls as well as we could hope for, given each field's irrigation capacity and / or water availability which looked to be the number one factor affecting yield. The only exceptions were those few fields with pest problems or those that were running late. In many of the later fields we felt we were at a point that we manage them for maturity with water regulation. Following the rains, we may need to re-evaluate for one more round of PGRs on those select few fields. Fields that are reaching cut-out will have a reduced daily water use very soon.

Plant Bug Pests:

Lygus continue to pop up in just a few localized fields at ET (economic threshold). The MO for these Lygus fields remains the same, a lush field near recently disturbed alternate Lygus habitat. I should note that not all fields in this situation have had a Lygus infestation, only a few. I feel our cotton yield potential in fields not hailed on remains fairly high, but for a field at ET with Lygus not monitored weekly by a good by a good consultant or solid scouting program, the results could be disastrous in a very short period of time. I should also note that fields are experiencing quite a bit of natural drop this week. We need to be careful to not confuse Lygus induced drop on healthy fruit with plant induced drop on drought stressed or unhealthy fruit that the plant cannot hold on to under even the best circumstances.

We are also picking up an above average amount of stink bugs, but noting near ET yet. I have one report of a consultant needing to spray a field in eastern Lamb County for these plant bugs this week. Stink bugs are a somewhat rare pest to our area, and we can expect to see an increased occurrence of them in recently hailed on cotton with damaged bolls, but that should not be an economic problem in severely hail damaged fields. If you are already scouting for Lygus, you should be able to pick up on any problematic stink bug species too.



The Green Stink Bug and Concheula Stink Bug are fairly common to our area and are rare economic pests, but can become a serious problem to cotton if the population and damage prove adequate.

Lepidopteron Pests:

We continue to watch for bollworms, bollworm eggs, and FAW (fall army worms) in our area cotton, corn, and sorghum. We are still finding those 'lost' eggs and worms at a sub-threshold levels in cotton. We still expect a large moth flight this month, and I 'gestimate' we will see it within the next 10 to 14 days as large bollworms are maturing and leaving our older program corn to pupate. Just which crop those future moths will choose remains a mystery. With a large amount of late corn and sorghum, most may choose those more typically preferred crops. On Wednesday, we found a FAW egg mass in replanted corn just starting to tassel.



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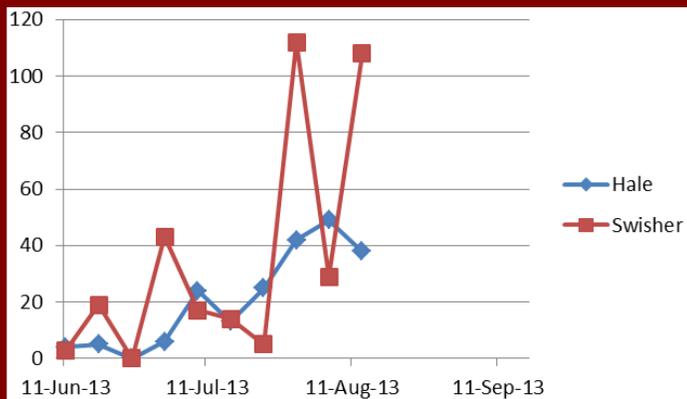
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Bollworm Trap
Catches this
week

Corn

Spider mites were the big pest attention getter this week. We had several program corn fields reach ET again that required treatment, but we also had several fields we held off on treatment for a few specific reasons. In a few fields, we had good predators and mite diseases move in at a rate that I felt would clean up the mites well enough alone. In several others, the corn had developed into a measurable dent stage. Corn at dent stage can tolerate a higher population of spider mites, but I do recommend caution. If those mite populations get high enough, they could cause lodging issues. Please consult an experienced professional if you need assistance determining your mite population versus your crop stage versus your predator population. In general, mites should ease with recent rain events, but will need to confirm this general assumption with field checks.

In our miticide trials that are currently ongoing, we are seeing some moderate to good mite control with the higher rates of all labeled tested products at 10 DAT. Lower rates do not appear to be having near the impact, but no statistics have been run at this time. If these lower rates had been applied in a full field situation, I would be recommending a re-treatment at this time based upon the number of surviving mites and increase in crop damage. In the fields that we recommended treatment for last week, we are seeing similar results from the higher labeled rates.

Our late corn is just starting to tassel or is very near it. I do not know if mites will move into the later corn. The textbook says that they should not, and our numbers there have been pretty low, but we will just have to wait and see. I am more concerned with FAW moving in at economic levels on this later corn and causing serious damage as late summer turns into fall and we have already found one egg mass in the one of these fields.

Sorghum

Our oldest sorghum fields are starting to put on some color as they move from soft dough to hard dough while our youngest fields should be near boot by late next week. In between we have no program fields in bloom this week and are left to assume the populations of midge we started finding last month are still building in other area fields and sorghum like weeds in bloom. We are finding an increase in FAW feeding in sorghum whorls, but only a few in heads filling grain. Spider mites can still be found in area sorghum, but none have reached ET in our program fields. As your fields go into bloom, I urge producers to check daily (just before noon is ideal) for midge while your field is in bloom and weekly for headworms (FAW and bollworms) as your sorghum goes into grain development. The late sorghum situation is set so that we should see heavy sorghum pest pressure over the next six weeks.

We will keep you up to date with what we are seeing in the area as we can. Please call if you have any questions,

Blayne