

General Status

Rounding out ‘crunch time’ for the majority of our fields with some cooler, yet still heat unit accumulating temperatures is not a bad way to spend a week in August production agriculture in West Texas. While we did not receive any additional rainfall this week, some is in the latest forecast I have seen for tonight and early next week. Harvest has started trickling in for silage and early planted corn and some early preparation for wheat planting is underway. I do not have any hard numbers for very many of these early yields yet, except for some troubled spots that were lighter than expected. I do not expect the few disappointing trouble spots I have fielded questions about to be the full trend of what is to come for the bulk of yields. These few issues can easily be chalked up to very early corn plantings that experienced cold shock as seedlings or pollination issues during the ridiculously high temperatures with hot, dry winds while experiencing irrigation system troubles. Meanwhile we still have plenty of things to keep an eye on and manage while we try to bring this season’s crops into the final stages of development. Bollworms, stink bugs, fall armyworms, spider mites, sugarcane aphids, and plant diseases are lurking about as potential threats while our crop stages are all over the board. In our scouting program we have cotton still not at absolute cut-out that needs to be reined in pretty hard to avoid ‘rankness’ and a mess of a late crop and others that have been done with boll setting for weeks where we expect to see open bolls any day and we have corn and sorghum still in the whorl with others drying down for the combine.



Two area irrigated cotton fields past absolute cut-out. These fields are the same variety and grown by the same producer but have vastly different irrigation capacities and need to be managed very differently from each other.

Weeds

Of course, we have the ever present weed pressure. There are fewer trouble fields this season, but there are ample frustrating fields in the area. Most of the issues we still have in our program are from weeds that were too large for Liberty to control when sprayed and what Roundup simply will not touch anymore. These weeds initially look 'fried' by the Liberty / Ignite but rapidly regrow from multiple points. This underscores the necessity to catch weeds while small and to stay on top of them often. If weeds are still thick enough to cause issues in the field this late, I am afraid iron might be the only recourse left.



Hale Cotton field with weeds that grew back from multiple Liberty Treatments.

Cotton

Our program cotton ranged from 4.89 NAWF (nodes above white flower) to absolute cut-out with no blooms left on the plants. The majority of our fields were cut-out but still had the extreme upper and 2nd and 3rd position blooms still trying to set into bolls. With a really good boll load already, I am not sure how many more bolls these plants can realistically hold but we are trying



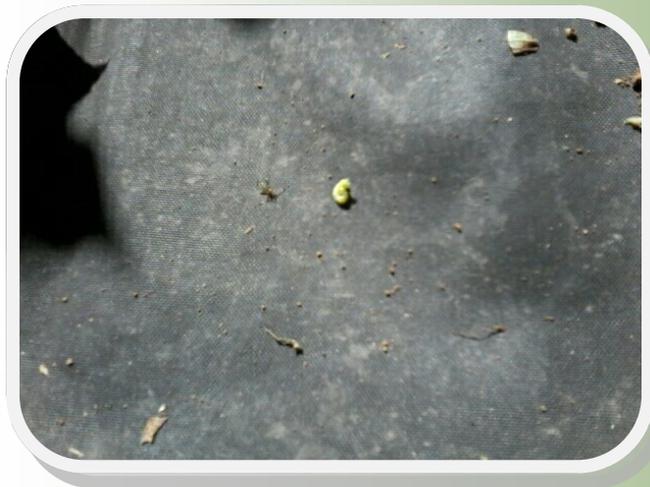
Hale field setting the last of its fruit for 2016.

to give the plants all we can so that they hang onto and develop as many as possible. The fields that have not reached absolute cut-out yet, we are recommending pulling back inputs pretty hard at this time. These fields are getting 'big' and starting to go 'rank' with the cooler temperatures, still high inputs and higher humidity despite a pretty good boll load. We have not recommended PGRs for these fields in particular this week as they are not truly 'growing away', but rather developing naturally from a late start and high inputs. Every field should be evaluated independently for these needs.

On the cotton pest side, we have gone another week without any of our program fields requiring treatment. We are on the backside of the season's largest bollworm moth flight in Hale & Swisher County and many fields, especially growthy non-Bt fields, are at risk. We are seeing moths in cotton, a few eggs, and a very few small worms, but most fields have no detectable or threatening worm populations. For a bollworm in cotton research trial we are currently running, we took an extraordinary amount of data sets from the plots. Our numbers from this trial, extrapolated over the whole field, shown a population of 422 eggs per acre and 202 small bollworms per acre. With the current bollworm economic threshold being around 8,000 to 10,000 worms per acre, I feel pretty good about this field being safe from bollworms this week. I am getting reports from southeastern Floyd of similar situations.

Predators in our program cotton were excellent this week, undoubtedly helping to keep the bollworm population from establishing in cotton. Another factor likely aiding in keeping the bollworms from becoming economic in cotton would be the late corn and few sorghum fields in the area. In the bollworm preferred late corn, they should be of no economic concern with that crop acting as a sink to absorb much of the bollworm potential damage without loss. Next week is another chance for the worms to sneak in, and with this large of a flight, it is very likely some cotton field will reach ET soon. I suggest vigilance in scouting to make sure it is not your field these worms choose to rob from.

We are picking up a steady increase in our Lygus population but this is still not near ET. Our highest Lygus cotton field was 1 Lygus / 3 row feet while the damage was not above than what the plant was already shedding naturally for cut-out. We have not seen any cotton aphids in our scouting program to date.



A small bollworm 'popped and pried' free from a boll in one of our drop cloth data sets this week.



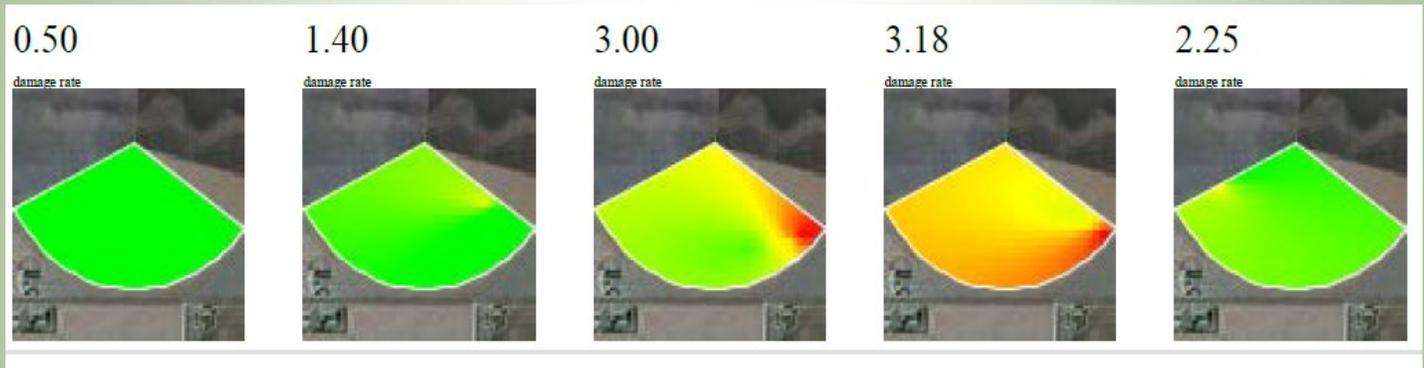
2 Lygus nymphs shining on our black drop cloth this week.



Bollworm feeding on square.

Corn

Our program corn ranged from VX to 5% starch line this week. Our mite specific predators continued to economically corral all of our older mite infested fields this week. The higher humidity aided in mite control in corn this week as we noted an increase in neozygites fungus adding to the mite mortality helping to keep populations under control. On the down side, mites look to be moving into the younger corn at levels higher than expected shortly after tassle. These populations are not economic today but should be watched. The ET for mites in corn remains at a damage rating of 3.5 - 4 on the 0 - 10 Texas A&M AGriLife Extension scale. We also noted an increase in disease in the later corn that should be watched.



Five week heat map representation of the mite population in an untreated Hale corn field. Predators eventually held mites in check.



SWCB Egg photo.



ECB Egg photo.

We did confirm a sharp increase in bollworm (also corn earworm) egg lay and hatch in our younger program corn this week. These worms should not be economic in this situation and provide a good 'sink' crop to absorb the worm damage. The fall army worm (FAW) flight from a few weeks ago did settle into some of our younger corn but thus far, their feeding also remains at the tip similar to the bollworm and not lower on the ear where the damage would be much more critical. In a non-Bt corn field this week we found our first and only European corn borer. This was a lone worm and only amounted to a 2.4% infestation rate for that field but we should be aware that borers remain here and active. The ET for both the European and Southwestern Corn Borer remain around 8% for non-Bt corn. I also suggest a few extra data set in any non or single traited Bt field, especially if it is late planted.



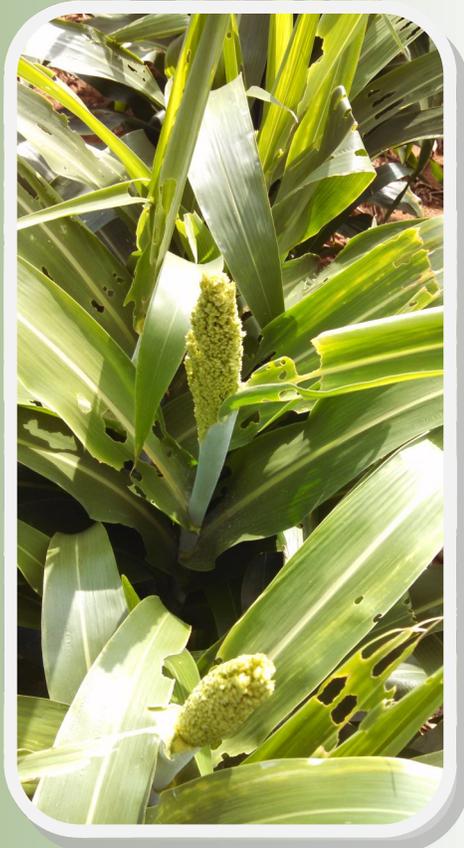
SWCB in the stalk.



Old SWCB damage.

Sorghum

Our program sorghum ranged from VX to early hard dough this week. Most of the pest 'excitement' is still in sorghum again. This does seem moderated greatly compared to recent seasons. As of this morning, we only have about 60% of our program fields even infested with the sugarcane aphid (SCA). The population and behavior of this pest does certainly seem lighter this year



2014 FAW whorl damage that did not impact the head or yield.



2016 Hale field with SCA still below

than last but we are not SCA trouble free. Just this morning our scouting indicated that another seed milo field in northwestern Hale had reached our new threshold for the Texas High Plains and required treatment. Good rates of Sivanto or Transform along with good coverage are getting really good SCA control when and where needed. I am aware of some treatments of Sivanto going out with a mix with Lorsban, another labeled SCA product that did not perform well in our trials here or consistently elsewhere against this pest. At this time and from the level of control I am seeing from Sivanto and Transform I cannot see a need to remove predators from the long term SCA and headworm control equation for the proven to be unlikely benefits of adding any Lorsban knockdown in a SCA treatment control mix. If possible, we may look at this mix in a trial soon.

This week we had a major uptick in FAW in our whorl stage sorghum but not a major increase in FAW in bloom or dough stage sorghum heads. While this damage is impressive and looks serious, it is rarely economic in the whorl. We did have an increase in bollworms in headed sorghum. Our highest population was 1 small worm / 0.33 heads and not economic. Predators in these fields were aiding greatly from these worms becoming economic.



SCA colony on the increase.



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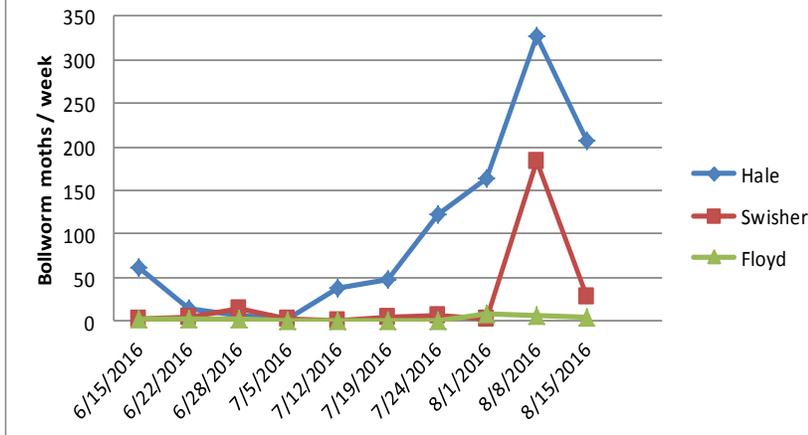
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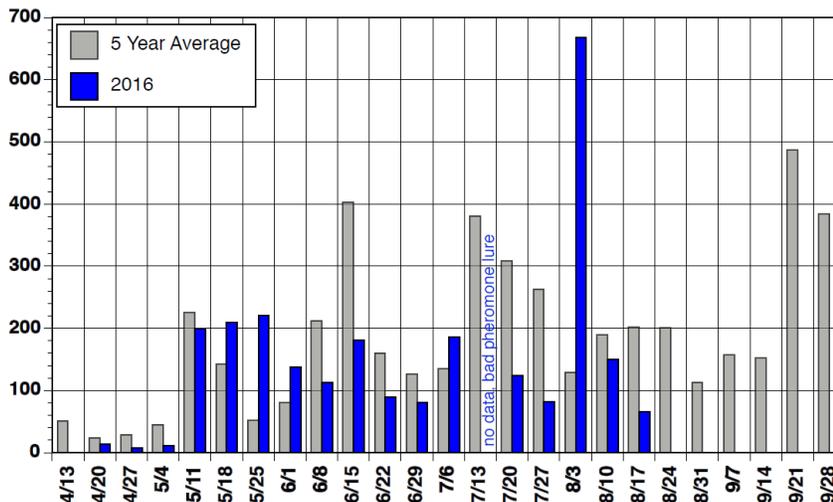
*"IPM Wednesdays" from 1:00-
2:30 PM on The FoxTalk
950 Ag Show. FoxTalk
950 AM - Lubbock.*

*"IPM Report with the Bruiser"
from 7:06-7:15 PM on
1470 AM KDHN -
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2016 Adult Bollworm Moth Trap Catches



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



Blayne Reed