TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Plains Pest Management News

AUGUST 23, 2013

General Status

Last week's rains and cooler temperatures slowed much of our area cotton from reaching that absolute cut-out stage (3.5 NAWF) this week. I feel we had done a pretty good job of managing our later planted cotton this season so that most fields were not 'late.' Now there are several cotton fields with varying levels of late concerns. With a typical fall, we should be able to count on an August 24th bloom making a harvestable boll in Hale and Swisher Counties seven out of ten seasons, but not much after that date. This makes managing fields at 4 our 5 NAWF this week difficult to manage, especially as our sub-moisture remains short and our September heat unit accumulation is in question. It remains a tight rope irrigation act between stressing a field into a timely cut-out, causing harvestable fruit shed from undue stress, and allowing 'junk' fruit production to ruin an otherwise good field.

Meanwhile our summer grain crops, from early to very late, are developing well, receiving full benefit from the rain events and cooler temperatures. There are ample concerns about an early freeze terminating our late sorghum and corn before they could mature and late summer pests, but as of this date our potential remains good.

Cotton

Our program fields so far this week have ranged from well cut-out with no new blooms noted to 5.7 NAWF. All fields avoiding recent hail events have a solid boll load ranging from a late field with 2.7 'made' bolls per plant to a finishing up 10.2 'made' bolls per plant. Most were reaching absolute cut-out (3.5 NAWF) this week with 5 to 7 'made' bolls per plant. Boll set has been relatively high and later fields have plenty of squares and potential, but limited time.

Actual field pest pressure remains light, but we remain on alert for multiple pests. For the first week in nearly a month, we had no new fields reach ET (economic threshold) for Lygus. Although several cotton fields remain at risk for Lygus damage many other fields are developing past economic Lygus concerns via heat unit accumulation and boll development. Lygus populations remain very spotty.

We noted in our blog earlier this week that a suspected large bollworm moth flight had begun and that most moths appeared to be drawn more to our large amount of late corn and sorghum rather than cotton. This trend seems to be continuing as the only bollworm eggs we are finding in cotton are not near any corn fields. Our fresh bollworm egg lay ranged from 0 to 8,250 eggs per acre in cotton this week. This remains light by any standard and predators are expected to take a toll on eggs and small worms. The ET for bollworms is roughly 10,000 to 12,000 worms (not eggs) per acre, crop stage depending. It is quite likely that some area non-BGII cotton will need to be treated this week or next for a late population of bollworms, matching the still at risk 'lateness' of our crop.

Corn

Our program corn stages ranged from green silk to 15% moisture line down. Most of our 'normal' corn has started denting, while most of our late corn has just pollenated. Grain development and pollination looks to have gone pretty well.

Spider mites continued to be the biggest realized concern in corn this week. We had no fields in our program treated this week, but several fields in the area did reach ET and required treatment. This week an area consultant and our program had fields very close to each other with almost identical mite populations of concern. We did not recommend treatment in our program field, while the consultant did recommend treatment. This begged the question, "Which move is the right move?" I believe the answer is both. Our program field was seven to ten days farther along in development and in full dent. Corn at this stage can tolerate more mite damage without harming grain development and I did not feel the mites were high enough to cause lodging issues.

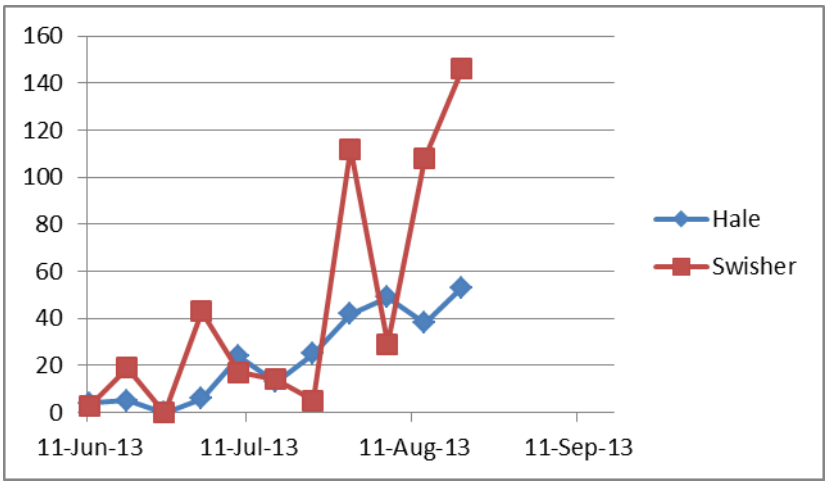
The consultant's field had not started denting yet and is still moving large amounts of water and nutrients to the ear. Both I and the consultant experienced a little heartburn over several area mite situations of similar nature this week. With good field scouting and understanding, good IPM solutions can be found.

We are still getting good data from our ongoing miticide trials. I still have not been able to run any statistics on our data, but at 17 DAT, labeled spider mite products look to me to be achieving mite control at higher use rates. Any labeled product at the lower use rates still looks very questionable if not somewhat calamitous in control. Predation and fungal mite disease have lent a big hand in mite control (whether needing treatment or not) area wide.

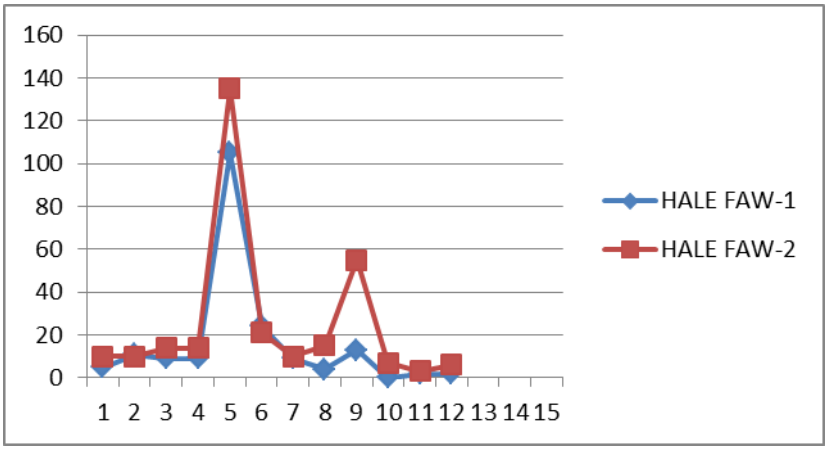
Mites continue to move into later corn fields in a pattern similar to the earlier corn. We will need to keep an eye on the mites in the later corn for almost another full month. We are also concerned about FAW (fall army worm) movement into our later corn, but we are having difficulty finding FAW egg masses this week. The FAW flight could be later as we can still find larva in a few ears and in whorl sorghum.

Sorghum

Sorghum ranged from still in the whorl to early hard dough stage. Just about all of our earlier sorghum is starting to turn from soft dough to hard dough. We are finding headworms ranging from 0 to 0.5 worms per head in these fields. A few of these worms were late instar FAW. Predominantly the headworm complex we found this week was made up of small bollworms. No field reached ET this week, but bollworms are in flight now and fields need to be watched over the coming weeks.



Weekly bollworm moth trap catches



Weekly FAW trap catches—

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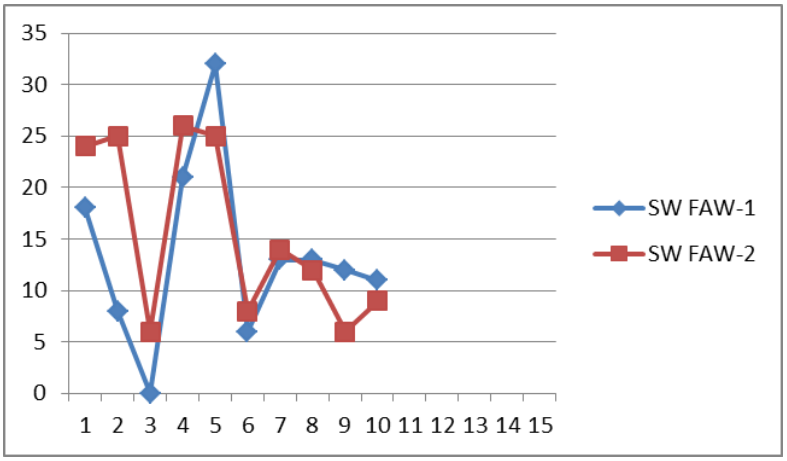
We're on the air…

"Tuesday's with Blayne"

The 1090 AgriPlex Report from 6 – 7 AM & 12:30 – 1 PM on 1090 AM – Plainview

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



Weekly FAW trap catches, Swisher

We also started finding Lygus in some of these field's heads. Reed Consulting did a one year study in 2003 that hinted that our ET for Lygus in early dough stage sorghum should be around 14 per head. This agreed with studies conducted by Dr. Roy Parker at Corpus Christi several years earlier about a usable ET for Lygus in sorghum. So far, our heaviest sorghum Lygus population was 1.04 per head.

The earliest of our program's later or replanted sorghum fields should start blooming this weekend. At that time, our midge checks will begin. We expect to find several fields at ET for midge over the coming weeks due to the early population of midge we started finding at sub-threshold levels in our earlier sorghum in July. While in bloom, I suggest sorghum be checked daily for midge. If we run into any ET midge fields this next week, we will get the information out on our blog as soon as possible.

An isolated sorghum head attacked by midge earlier this season. Field did not reach ET.

Wheat

Some area wheat planting is already underway as producers look to provide grazing for cattle this winter and take the first steps at rebuilding our area's cattle herds. While producers can take advantage of available field moisture to establish a decent stand, there are ample wheat virus transmission concerns with early planted wheat. Please reference Texas A&M AgriLife Extension publication B-1251 about managing these concerns. The wheat curl mite is primarily responsible for transmitting wheat streak mosaic virus. I quote from page 10 of B-1251, "Control wheat curl mite and wheat streak mosaic virus by managing volunteer wheat and planting at the appropriate time. The usual pattern of wheat streak mosaic virus is from wheat, to summer grass or crop, to volunteer wheat or early planted wheat, and then to later planted wheat. To control wheat streak mosaic virus, this cycle must be broken."

This is often easier said than done, especially when we must have grazing for cattle well established before a killing freeze. I do urge producers to manage this situation as best we can by controlling all volunteer wheat and not planting early wheat near actively growing grass and summer corn crops. I have noted quite a bit of volunteer wheat emerging over the past few weeks.

Please call or come by if you have any questions, *Blayne*