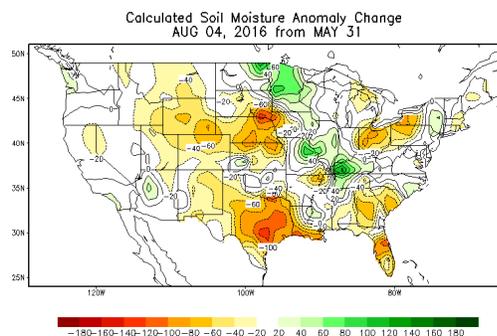


General Status

It seems like we have just gotten this year's crop off to its rough and late start. Maybe it is just how hard and long we have worked at getting the crop started and since but, after a short but intense blink of a hot and sweaty eye, we have slammed right into the middle of my self-titled 'crunch time' for most of our crops. The time of year when hours matter as our main crops turn the bulk of the cotton blooms into bolls and fill our grain. Getting off to a good start is always imperative, which was an uphill battle this season, but for the fields that we have gotten here in decent to good shape, the yields (and our annual income) will be set right now and over the next week or two. Crop management and inputs during this time are paramount, especially in cotton. Right now, it is all about the water. With the intense heat, lack of general rainfall, and diminishing pumping capacity, each and every drop counts the most. Even a few hours spent under too much drought stress at peak bloom (5 NAWF) will cause countless and now irreplaceable cotton bolls to drop, corn and sorghum grain weight to diminish, pre-tassel corn to be predisposed to lodging, and pre-boot sorghum to fail to boot. On the other hand, fields getting too much water, yes there are a few, cotton not at 5 NAWF (also physiological cut-out) could continue to grow away and become 'rank' and post-bloom sorghum to 'sucker head.'



While most of our crop got off to a late and rough start there are plenty of fields already reaching past or quickly reaching the point of no return due to lack of moisture. A late start and an early finish do not bode well for these fields. There are plenty of dryland fields that will only be harvested if the insurance man says it must be. We also have plenty of fields still in the game with good fruit load and high yield potential yet to be made. This combined with some slight movement upward in the cotton market and we have some of the first 'excitement' I have seen for the 2016 crop. 'Crunch time' is here again, and there are plenty of things to keep an eye on.

Cotton

This week our program cotton ranged from a very late 9/10 grown square to absolute cut-out. This might be the largest gap in plant stage I have seen in our program cotton yet for this date. The bulk of our program fields fell in between the critical 5 NAWF (peak water use and physiological cut-out) and 3.5 NAWF (absolute cut-out) with a respectable number of what can be considered heavy irrigated fields falling somewhere between 5 NAWF and 7 NAWF.

Pests in cotton remained very light this week, but we remain on alert for Lygus and bollworms. Fruit loads remained very good this week with only a few fields

starting 'absolute cut-out fruit shed' and no major pest to rob the yield. Once 3.5 NAWF is reached and the plant does not have adequate water to set anymore bolls, plants will typically shed a massive amount of fruit shortly after they bloom for lack of resources to hold any more fruit. For many of our lighter irrigated fields at this stage, the typical shed has been somewhat abated by focused irrigation that began at 4 – 5 NAWF. The yield potential might not be great for these diminutive cotton plants already at cut-out, but producers are saving all the irreplaceable fruit possible, which could be several hundred pounds of middle and top crop, and making what irrigation they have while irrigation can still help yield. Within a week following a field reaching absolute cut-out, irrigation needs drop to a boll fill level and substantial yield cannot be added to any longer.

The number of program cotton fields requiring a PGR treatment dropped drastically this week. There were still a few drip irrigation fields with focused irrigation capacities and a late pivot field that did call for more PGRs. These fields were either in their



Swisher field at 4.8 NAWF with good yield potential. Fruit load was enough to hold this field in check.

3rd or 4th week of bloom, and still above 6 NAWF with tremendous yield potential or were in the 1st week of bloom and getting lanky and rank. We remain very careful about PGR recommendations at this time.



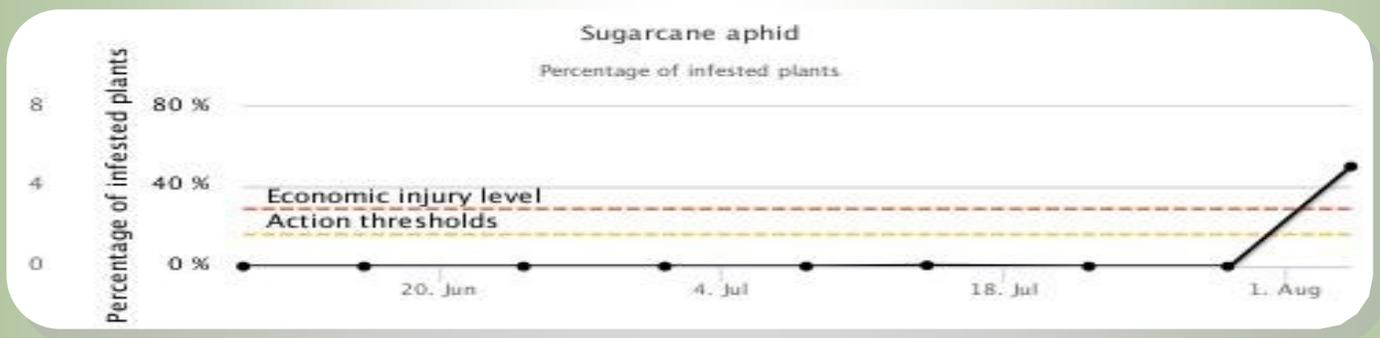
Swisher field at 7.7 NAWF this week that received PGRs last week.



Hale field at 1st bloom this week that was a candidate for PGRs this week.

Sorghum

Our program sorghum ranged in stage from V10 to soft dough. That is a fairly large stage range also, but we just do not have enough sorghum fields in the program this year to do a true grouping of stages. Sorghum continues to develop well. We are still finding significant yellow sugarcane aphid (YSCA) populations in all fields, but nothing that required treatment for this pest alone. It is also fairly easy to find spider mite populations in post boot sorghum. For now the mites are well below ET also. We are bracing for a large fall armyworm (FAW) flight that Dr. Pat Porter, Extension Entomologist Lubbock, picked up on starting earlier this week. We could start finding FAW in headed and blooming sorghum soon, but bollworms remain either light or more attracted to late corn for now. The most pressing issue today remains the sugarcane aphid (SCA).



Field's SCA population went from 0.017% infested plants week 1 to 1% infested week 2, to 50% in week 3.

Fields in Floyd and Crosby began reaching our Texas High Plains Sugarcane Aphid Economic threshold (ET) last week and earlier this week. Yesterday, I found one of our program seed milo fields in northwestern Hale County that had just reached ET and required treatment. Another neighboring field is close to ET and might need treatment as early as Monday, unless the predator population can somehow hold them in check. For anyone following closely, you can note that last week I listed our heaviest program SCA population (this field) at about 1% of plants infested with only about 8 aphids per colony. This week, this field was over ET at



Average week 2 SCA population.



Heavy week 3 colony from same area of the field.

50% infested with SCA colonies ranging in size from 5 to well over 1,000. This is a testament to how quickly these aphids can reproduce under good conditions and underscores the need to watch fields closely, and multiple times per

once SCA establishes in sorghum.

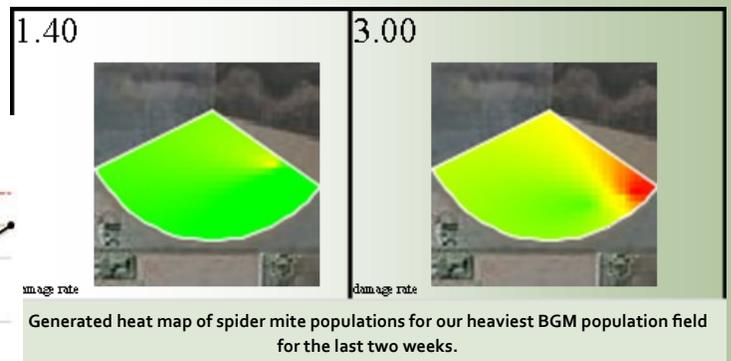
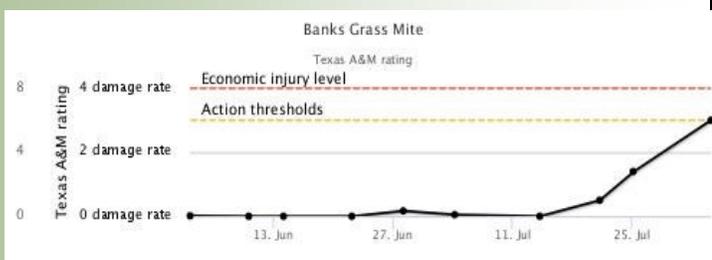
The SCA problem is not widespread at this time. Although that can change quickly, we still have over half of our program fields that we have not found the aphid yet. I have also snuck into several area early planted dryland sorghum (some that has gotten some rain) that is in hard dough stage and could not find a single SCA. These fields could very well escape all SCA threat this year by being in the grain bin before the aphid reaches ET. Fields still in whorl stage or boot stage have a long way to go before they reach a SCA safe zone. For the latest on the SCA, please go to: <http://txscan.blogspot.com/>



Seed milo field not yet at ET for SCA. We will be checking it twice weekly for SCA and midge this week.

Corn

Our Plains Pest Management corn ranged in stage this week from VX to dent. Most of our older corn was in late dough to early dent while our younger corn is somewhere between putting a tassel out and setting its ear size. Pests remain fairly light in corn, but there are several things we need to be watching. Spider mites, still mostly banks grass mites (BGM), continue to stubbornly increase in post tasseled corn through an increase in our key mite specific predators. We even picked up a few of the younger corn fields with some BGM starting to infest. I have a few reports of mites reaching threshold in area corn and requiring treatment this week. None of our program fields have reached that point yet, but there are a few fields very close. We have been watching this battle between the BGM and predators closely with the predators, particularly six spotted thrips, making a big comeback this week. A third factor that needs to be considered in the mite decision column should be plant stage. As corn dents and eventually begins forming a starch line, the needs of the developing ear diminish and the amount of mite damage the plant can tolerate increases. Until that time, I would suggest a mite damage rating of 3.5 to 4 on the 0-10 scale as a good area ET for corn from green silk to fully dented.





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We're on the air...

"Tuesday's with Blayne" from 6:30—7:00 AM on the HPRN network on 1090 AM KVOP-Plainview.

"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 - Dimmit.

All other potential pests in corn have been pretty docile so far. This includes the rarely if ever economic bollworms (corn earworm) and slightly increasing fungal diseases. The bollworm populations we are finding in the field match fairly closely what our moth traps have been catching. Most of our fields in Swisher are strangely absent of any worm damage much like our traps have been strangely empty. In the heavier populated Hale fields, the bollworms have not been a serious issue. I did note some fresh disease pressure, including some southern rust, but without the needed moisture, I seriously doubt these issues will become economic for the older corn in time. We may have to watch the younger corn into early fall for disease issues though. With the expected increase in FAW

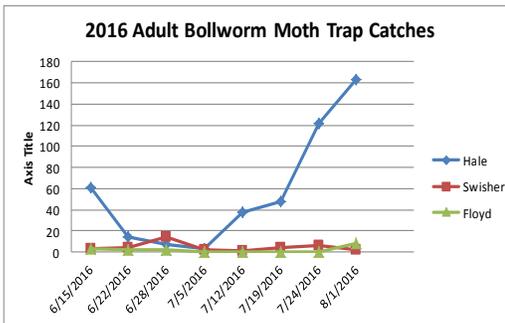
pressure, I recommend any non-Bt or single traited Bt go under very close scrutiny for eggs, moth flights in your area, and FAW attacking anything but the ear tips.



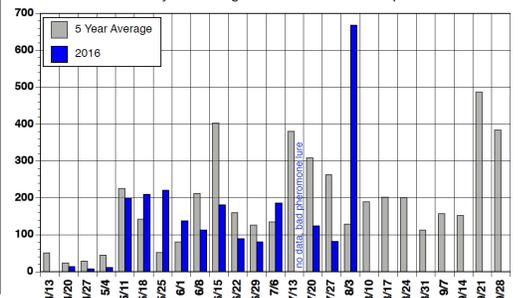
Our youngest program corn this week will need to be watched for disease later.



Without moisture, it is unlikely disease issues will be economic for older corn.



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



Blayne Reed