

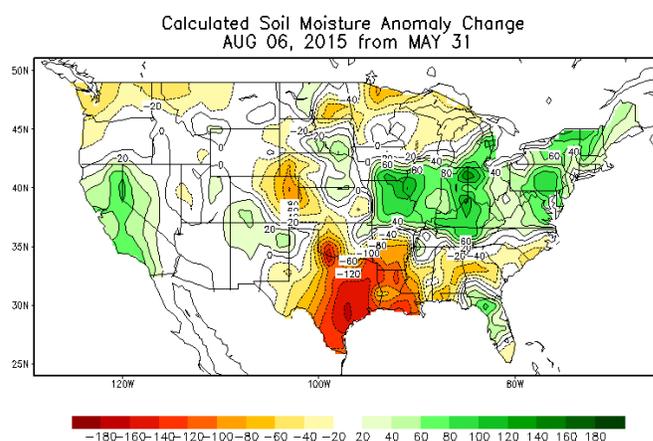
AUGUST 7, 2015

General Summary

Last week we had quite a few things keeping everyone on alert and triggering a few applications here and there around the area. Nothing was majorly widespread but we knew we all needed to be watching for those potential pitfalls. A few were even expected. This week it seems that each of those potential troubles has increased and tried “slamming it to the firewall” keeping us hopping from sun up to sun down and beyond with treatment recommendations for just about everything imaginable written in red flying off our clipboards. That is not good news in a tight economic environment. On the flip side, we have crops worth protecting and we have research based economic thresholds (ET) developed to guide us through to avert disaster.

I need to also mention the incredible Ag industry support folks working hard throughout this region. So, here is a nod to all of the AgriLife Research & Extension personnel, independent crop consultants, and company folks pulling together for the benefit of solving problems in the field. It is a unique situation we have here in this region in terms of serving the area. It seems that in many other parts of the country and world that everyone grabs for today’s dollar in place of keeping the economics of the region stable for the long term and for all.

Meanwhile, we have been slammed with heat these past few weeks with only spotty rain. It is showing as crops reach peak water use, even the once behind cotton crop. Some of us have not had solid precipitation for several weeks and irrigation systems are slipping ever farther behind the crop demand. Even those that have gotten good rain in the past three weeks seem to be falling behind quickly with a good crop in the field pulling moisture faster than many suspect it to be.



Cotton

Our 'later than normal' cotton has really felt the heat this week both in good ways and in bad. Fruit retention still looks quite good in general and we are setting the majority of bolls. Much like last season, several of our earliest program fields have zipped right past peak water use and fruit set at 5 NAWF (nodes above white flower) last week and in a matter of days are already staring at absolute cut-out of 3.5 NAWF soon. Even though potential boll set has been good for these fields, reaching absolute cut-out this early after starting blooming so late represents a drastically shortened bloom window. At the same time, our latest and most growthy fields that we have been managing for maturity are snapping back with rapid maturity progress through fruit load, PGR efficacy, and high heat. I do not feel that there will be much need for additional PGRs this next week, individual field depending, but our water and nutrient needs should be going through the roof. Over the past five to six weeks we have been pulling back on these fields to keep them from becoming too rank and growth. Now is the time we have been preparing these later fields for with our PGR applications helping to keep these fields shorter and potentially more efficient. Even a cotton plant better prepared for heat stress can easily be overcome with too much stress during peak water use and shed way too much irreplaceable fruit if we are not careful. In essence, we have been telling these fields to pull up, or if you prefer "whoa" for the sake of fruit load. With what feels like the blink of an eye later our field data is telling us that we now need to be "putting the spurs" to our cotton crop with as much water, and if needed fertility, as we possibly can through these next few days and weeks.

Here are this week's cotton stage numbers of our scouting program. Our program cotton ranged from 3.7 NAWF up to 7.8 NAWF with the bulk of our fields hovering between 5 and 6 NAWF. Our average for the top 5 internode length measurements (good indicator of potential and / or upcoming plant growth) ranged from 0.72 inches (<0.8 inches indicates drought stress) up to 1.7 inches (>1.2 inches indicates need for PGR treatment) with most fields falling in between 0.92 inches and 1.12 inches. This is a rapid drop from last week when most of our cotton ranged from 5 NAWF to 9 NAWF with average top 5 internode lengths falling between 1.02 inches and 1.83 inches. Fruit retention remained high again this week unless pests became an issue. Our percent fruit drop ranged between 2.9% and 23.1% and we are seeing between 1 and 4 quarter sized or larger bolls per plant.

Lygus did sneak into two of our program fields this week and caused economic concerns prompting treatment. In both situations, the pest had moved from a primary host plant into our program fields. The Lygus source for one field looks to be either a recently cut alfalfa field or shredded roadside weeds. The other source could be from either a recently sprayed patch of no-till layout ground or recently grazing of nearby weeds by livestock. The area Lygus population is still high and we should be mindful of situations similar to these for potential problems, especially with a shortening fruit set window. My suggested ET for Lygus remains at 1 Lygus / 2.5 row feet with a pest proven fruit drop increase.



Assorted Lygus nymph stages.

Corn

Our program corn ranged in stage from V7 to mid-dent with most of our older corn being in dough to late dough, a middle grouping of corn clustered at green silk, and most of the very late corn categorized at VX. Spider mites, all banks grass mites, have overtaken diseases as our primary concern this week. As of today, we have treated an estimated 80% of all of our oldest corn for spider mites either last week or through this week with the balance nearing ET. We have even needed to treat about 15% of the corn at green silk stage for mites also with more problems expected soon.

For all of our fields, this is their first mite treatment but I have reports from Cotton Center all the way north of Amarillo to Dalhart of corn that has needed a second application of miticide. These second applications were needed due to very heavy mite pressure with plenty of concern over efficacy. I would tend to lean more toward heavy mite pressure rather than chemical failure based upon what I am seeing in the field. Spider mites tend to thrive in high temperatures and slightly water stressed corn like we have experienced lately. Add to that the fact that the predators are lighter than we have noted in our program fields over recent years and we have a perfect mite storm ongoing at this time. On the predator side, we are only seeing six spotted thrips as the main mite predator in-field with a noted absence or short fall of mite destroying lady beetles, predacious mites, and neozgites infection in the spider mites. Six spotted thrips are outstanding mite predators, but without support from other mite predators and with the perfect environment for mites, they are being out paced by the mites. All of our suggested and labeled miticides available are all soft on predators and even count on predator support. Right now, they just are not getting enough to corral the mites as severely as we need them to.



Plot treated with labeled miticide for BGM at ET. Hale County 2015



Plot untreated for BGM at ET. Hale County 2015

I would like to direct you toward the two supplied photos from my 2015 miticide efficacy trial as proof of mite efficacy from our miticides. The one on the left has been treated with a max labeled rate of miticide. Granted it still has mite issues. The one on the right is the untreated check. Visually, I see no major differences between labeled miticides in this trial and have not had time to crunch any of these numbers yet. As I evaluate these two plots, our treated plot might need a second application soon without predator help, but we are getting benefit from the first treatment based upon what I see here.

While the hot weather has help caused the mites to seemingly explode, the disease pressure seems to be leveling off in our older corn. This could be related to dry conditions, but also a lot of effective treatments have gone out recently. Despite the dry conditions, I am noting a carbon copy increase in common rust and Southern rust in our green silk stage program corn very similar to the spread that occurred on our older corn when it was at that stage. Most of these mid-maturity fields have not been treated yet. We are still rating the Southern Rust as moderate to very heavy for most fields shortly after they reach tassel stage due to this increase. We are keeping an eye on these corn diseases too.

Sorghum

This week our program sorghum ranged in stage from VX to soft dough. Most fields were in boot stage. The sugarcane aphid (SCA) takes the pest spot light focus again this week but the yellow sugarcane aphid (YSCA), greenbug, sorghum midge, and even headworm needs to be on our pest priorities at this time.

The SCA has increased throughout the Hale, Swisher, & Floyd area with about 75% of our program fields having the aphid present at this time. Of these fields, we have initiated treatment on 5 fields so far. Only four of these fields were treated primarily for the sugarcane aphid. The other field treated this week had primary problems with YSCA and SCA were present in significant numbers. In one of these fields we have placed our 2015 High Plains SCA Efficacy Trial comparing 11 treatments of various products and rates including an UTC. Myself, Dr. Pat Porter, district 2 entomologist, Dr. Ed Bynum, district 1 entomologist are working together on this project. We will be getting the results out to you asap with our the 3DAT counts happening on Saturday and the &DAT counts happening on Wednesday next week. Results will likely be posted first on the Texas Sugarcane Aphid blog site at <http://txscan.blogspot.com/> and the Plains Pest Bugoshere at <http://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/>.

I continue to encourage close scouting of this pest. Once the populations within our program fields reached 1-2 aphids per leaf, it only took a matter of days to be within the ET window of 50-125 aphids per leaf. Treatments of Transform at 1 ounce per acre and Sivanto at 5 ounces per acre both seem affective so far. If a second treatment is needed, I suggest a chemical swap and utilizing the other product to prevent resistance issues to build up on SCA populations.

Bollworms and FAW should be a concern in sorghum as headworms after boot. Our moth monitoring indicates an increase in bollworm activity, but our FAW remain inexplicably light.



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For quicker pest alerts-

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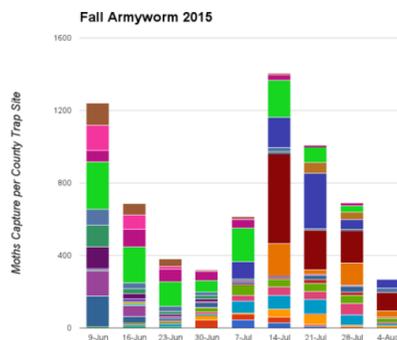
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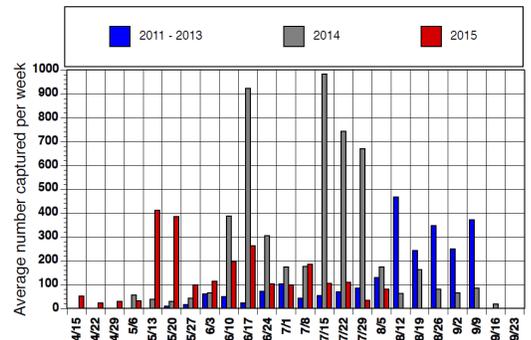
*"Tuesday's with Blayne"
from 6:30—7:00 AM
on the HPRN on
1090 AM KVOP-
Plainview.*

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

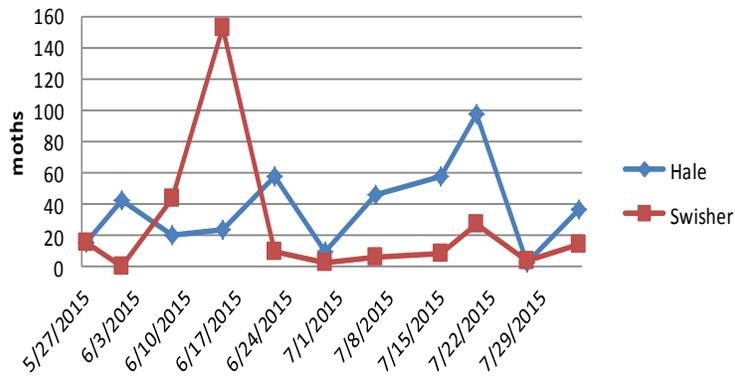
YSCA remains a threat to area sorghum. Increasingly we are finding joint populations of the YSCA, SCA, greenbugs, with a few corn leaf aphids also. Sorghum midge will continue to be a concern for any sorghum field currently in bloom. We have found just a few sorghum midge this week with populations well below the ET of roughly 0.7 to 1 midge per blooming sorghum head, with crop value and plant population considerations. Complicating matters even farther, the spider mite explosion has not been limited to corn. We are now finding 85% of our program sorghum infested with mites that minimally reach a rating of 1 on the Texas A&M AgriLife 0-9 rating system where 3-4 would represent ET. Currently there are only two labeled products for mites in sorghum, Comite II and Onager. Our locally conducted mite trial in sorghum in 2014, Onager performed well and I have had decent success with Comite in the past.



2015 fall armyworm pheromone trap captures (moths per week) at Lubbock. Average of two traps.



2015 Bollworm Moth Trap Catches



Blayne Reed