

AUGUST 8, 2014

## General Status

Well folks, it has snuck back upon us this season. It is crunch time for all but a few acres of our crops. We have had a ridiculously rough, slow, and cool start and a weary weed control battle that just will not negate its self to the rear view mirror. Many of us felt that due to the 'late' start our cotton had, crunch time for that crop would be a week or more away. From the vast majority of cotton fields we are watching this season I can state that our assumptions were not accurate. Cotton is rushing into peak-bloom, and peak water use, right now and it is doing it in a hurry. This is the window of opportunity when each and every drop of water counts the most. Without those extra and all possible drops of water on our cotton fields, we could be looking at a late start AND an early finish. Our early planted corn is entering dent stage and looking to finish up but our late planted corn is nearing or at tassel and its peak water use. Early sorghum is in early soft dough to dough while our late planted sorghum is nearing flag leaf and its peak water use soon. All of this at a time when our soil moisture looks to be running out and it will not rain no matter how humid it is. Meanwhile the pest storm cloud could be gathering faster than the needed rain clouds. Lygus are tickling ET (economic threshold) in some cotton, FAW (fall armyworms) seem ready to release the next generation, the bollworms should be peaking soon, and we remain on the lookout for the potential white sugarcane aphid invasion in sorghum.

## Cotton

Our program cotton ranged in stage from a late 8.37 NAWF (nodes above white flower) down to a nearing absolute cut-out 3.8 NAWF. The majority of our fields fell between 6 and 4.5 NAWF which is at or very near peak-bloom and peak water use. Despite racing to this point, fruit retention and boll set remain quite good. One southwestern Swisher field I was in yesterday already had 6 quarter-sized and larger bolls set per plant and many squares to go. Most fields only have 2 to 3 with squares to go.

This is a 'normal' time of year to be reaching 'crunch time' in cotton. Our plants however are short a few weeks on development and do not have the total number of squares I would like to see as we head into peak bloom. Nonetheless, we are making cotton bolls right now and the more we can hang onto the better. It is inspiring to imagine how much dryland cotton the area could make if we catch a few more good rains over the next few days to a week.



**Lygus Nymphs of Assorted Ages**

We have had our share of Lygus 'scares' this week. Several fields required double checks to make certain they were not at ET for these plant bugs.

Despite the extra care and precaution, our highest Lygus population was 1 Lygus per 4.5 row feet with fruit retention of 89% and below economic levels, but occurred at several locations. For me to recommend treatment on Lygus in cotton at this stage I would need to see 1 Lygus per 2.5 row feet with a larger and plant bug proven (not drought stress) fruit drop. We certainly need to be on high alert this week for Lygus, especially with much

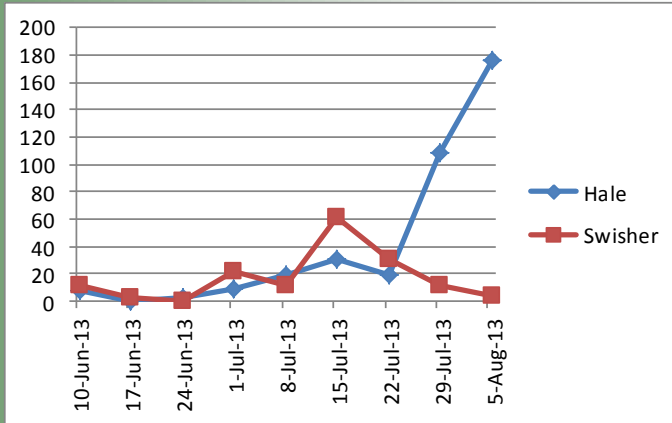
of our roadsides being cleaned up and hay being swathed lately. I will be surprised if we do not find some field in our program that requires treatment next week.

We started picking up a few bollworm eggs in a few of our program fields this week. This truly surprised me with all of the late corn and sorghum in the area.

Where we found the highest egg lay was adjacent to non Bt corn going into dent stage and only constituted 4,333 bollworm eggs per acre. The amount of minute pirate bugs, Nabids, and spiders I am seeing in field should be sufficient to cover most of the eggs for this light an egg

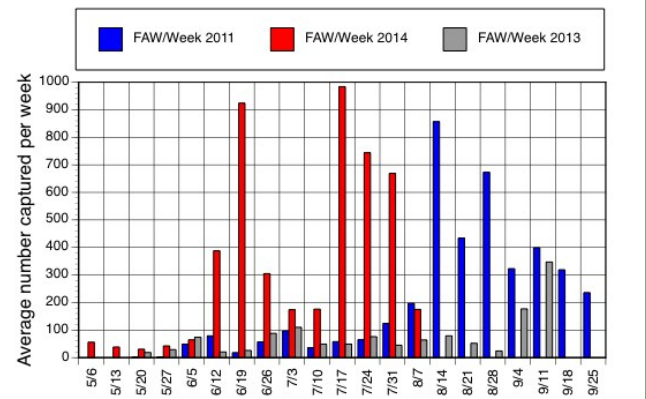
lay. If all of these 4,333 eggs hatched it is still below ET for worms but this egg lay does indicate a need to be watching non Bt cotton for worms a little earlier than usual and could be a hint at a larger than we have seen in a while bollworm population. My numbers from our bollworm moth traps tend to agree that the population could be slightly higher but due to some damage to the Swisher trap I have no data from Swisher this week.





2014 Bollworm moth trap numbers

2014 fall armyworm pheromone trap captures (moths per week) at Lubbock. (2011 was a high fall armyworm year.)



Dr. Porter's Lubbock FAW trap catches

## Corn & Sorghum

Our corn and sorghum stages remain all over the board with two completely differing planting dates. Our earlier planted corn ranges in stage from early dent to full dent. Likewise our early planted sorghum ranges from bloom to dough. Pests are relatively quiet in these fields. We had another early planted sorghum field reach ET for spider mites that required treatment this week. Control of our spider mite treated fields looks very good with high rates. In all of our corn and sorghum spider mite product research trials the untreated check is fairly easy to identify so I can say with confidence that all products are working pretty well at labeled rates. The mite predators are also helping to hold mites down in most fields, but were a little slow to arrive in our sorghum that required treatment.

We only have one sorghum field currently in bloom. The midge population for it this week was 0.23 midges per head. Surprisingly, the headworms complex (bollworm and FAW) remained out of our older sorghum fields with the highest population being 0.15 large FAW per head. Most older fields did not register a FAW / headworm population.

Our younger corn has tasseled or getting very close to it while some of our younger sorghum is starting to show its flag leaf. The majority of our younger sorghum should be going into boot in the next ten days. Spider mites remain hard to find in the younger corn while bollworm eggs are hard to miss. These 'corn earworms' should not represent any economic threat even to non Bt fields as the worms will cannibalize each other until only one per ear remain and they will only affect the tips of these ears.

All of our FAW population still seems to be fond of the younger whorl stage sorghum. It is quite population and still causing quite a bit of producer concern over the serious looking but cosmetic only feeding they are causing. As the week progressed, we began finding fewer and fewer numbers of worms in the whorl while the ones we did find were larger. This indicates to me that locally this generation could be cycling out, pupating, and getting ready to make the next generation. These moths could be just in time to lay eggs as our late corn reaches early dough and sorghum goes into bloom. I suggest staying on the alert for FAW in both of these crops. Personally, If this next generation proves to be as large as we expect, I hope their preference for late sorghum continues. I know we can find them and control them successfully in sorghum. Finding and controlling



Dr. Porter's June 2014 photo of FAW damage to non Bt whorl stage corn -Lubbock

the FAW in corn would be much tougher. On the FAW bright side, Dr. Porter, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension district entomologist, is reporting an uptick in FAW predators that could lighten the population.

## Weed Wipe Trial Results

Those of you that have kept up with the latest Plains Pest Management Newsletters know that Gary Cross, CEA-Hale, and myself placed a weed-wipe product trial a few weeks ago in response to the resilient weed pressure and producer interest. We utilized agent power, a chemical soaked rope wrapped around a moisture probe, and a heavy patch of weeds in a dryland cotton field that had survived Roundup sprays. The products and rates we used were;

Gramoxone at 1 gallon product to 2 gallon water

Envoke at 5% solution

Sharpen at 1 gallon product to 4 gallon water

Staple LX at 1 gallon product to 1 gallon water

Untreated check





225 Broadway, Suite 6  
Plainview, TX 79072

Tel: 806.291.5267

Fax: 806.291.5266

E-mail:

Blayne.Reed@ag.tamu.edu

*Blog:*

<http://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/>

*Pest Patrol Hotline,*

*registration at:*

[www.syngentapestpatrol.com](http://www.syngentapestpatrol.com)

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<http://hale.agrilife.org>

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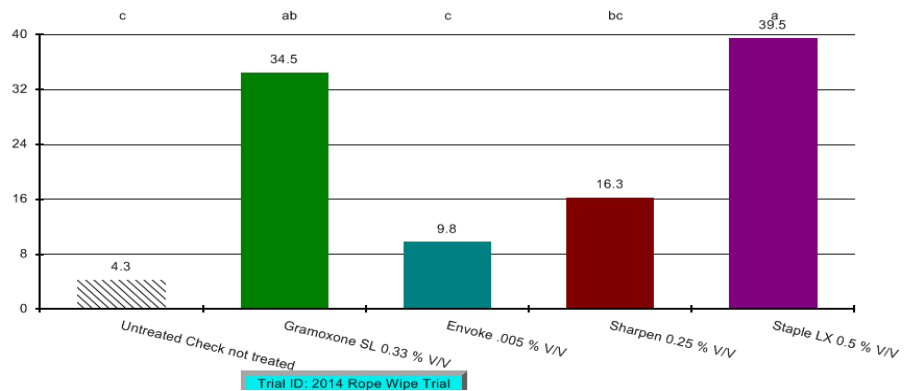
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***We're on the air...***

***"Tuesday's with Blayne"***  
***from 6:00—7:00 AM***  
***& from 12:30—1:00***  
***PM on the 1090 Agri***  
***-Plex Report 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.***

**% control with weed wipe at 13 DAT**



Although we achieved significant differences in treatments, no treatment came anywhere near 100% control. In fact, I would rate all treatments as failures. Gramoxone shown the most weed damage early. We can expect that by Gramoxone's fast acting nature. Gramoxone also completely killed more large weeds than I would have expected from a contact only herbicide which gives me some hope for this treatments success in field. However, the vast majority of weeds that Gramoxone contacted survived below the point of wipe contact to seed out and regrow. While commercial rope-wick rigs are sure to achieve better coverage and thusly some better control than our agent powered wipe, I am seeing the same affect though out both counties in fields that I know were treated with Gramoxone rope wicks. I estimate that Gramoxone rope-wicking looks good, but shows less actual success than it seems.

Our results show that rope-wicks are not an option for Envoke and Sharpen although some can offer rate and application challenges. Staple LX performed better than expected through this method of application. It took longer for the Staple treated weeds to show damage and wilt. As Staple is labeled for over the top treatments in cotton, that would be my preferred method of treated weeds in a cotton field. Based upon what we have seen in the field this season with Staple over the top, Staple can control weeds smaller than knee high, but has great difficulty with taller weeds. I would expect the over the top % control to hover around 60-70% of the total weed population.

*Blayne Reed*