

JULY 12, 2013

General Status

Insect wise, all has remained economically quiet in our program crops so far this season, the early thrips population aside. There are some cards on the table that could cause problems over the next few weeks in our crops depending on what transpires over that time. Meanwhile our crops' stage remains highly variable making blanket production management decisions difficult. I doubt anyone can think of a year with quite so much variability in crop stage and condition. It is fairly common to find some of the area's best fields just a mile or so from some of the area's worst. What makes one scratch their head is the fact that many of these fields belong to the same producer. Such has been our weather, wind, etc. patterns this growing season. All remaining and replanted fields are on the mend and growing rapidly. Our largest concerns this week have been the return of hot and dry conditions of this drought and, of course, the weed pressure.

Weeds

The weed pressure this season has been high. With every passing shower and irrigation, no matter how light, a fresh flush of weeds has tried to emerge, even those handfuls that made it through our pre-plant residual. It also remains common to find weeds, in both large and small groups, surviving over the top glyphosate sprays. Producers seem to have hitched up their pants and made ready to tackle the problem this season. Most producers are hitting those weeds with any and all recommended and possible control measures. It has been a chore, but I am feeling pretty good about our area's response to Roundup resistance. Many of the fields we were very concerned with at the start of the season look pretty clean. While speaking to producers this week about other fields that look to be very problematic I have been impressed by the plans about to be unleashed on those weeds. I maintain that stern vigilance is needed when dealing with these weed issues as the weeds have never, nor will ever, ease their potential pressure.



2013 Recently hoed pigweed patch, hoed before weeds were allowed to go to seed.



Producer doing whatever it takes in 2013 to control troublesome weeds.

David Graf, CEA-Swisher, is planning some squirt and see spot spray trials for Roundup resistant pigweed patches in cotton. We are likely to lend David a hand with these potential trials. Some of the product entries David is considering might be some 'unconventionally cotton' herbicides sprayed only in those troublesome spots so you might want to keep an eye out for some useful results.

As it stands today, the best way to control Palmer surviving 1, 2, and especially 3 glyphosate or gluphosate sprays remains the plow, hoe, or altering labeled over the top herbicides and hooded sprays. To quote a producer I spoke with this week, "It is hard to develop resistance to iron."

If in-season tillage is an option for producers with minimum tillage and even conventional type situations I urge those producers to replenish as much soil moisture as they can as soon as possible behind any tillage. Once that soil is opened up, large amounts of moisture will be lost. We have not had much moisture to lose, so a few hours lost could actually have an impact upon yield. A day or two under stress certainly will.



A problematic weed field, post tillage.

Cotton

This week we noted our first cotton blooms, but these fields are few and far between. Our program cotton stages ranged from match-head to 1st bloom, most fell between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ grown squares. Square set remains outstanding, ranging between 89 and 100%. We still have not found any fields at ET (economic threshold) for pests yet. I feel our good predator population has greatly helped with this fact.

We continue to find fleahoppers in most cotton fields regularly and a few adult Lygus have started joining them. These plant bugs seem to be concentrating into borderline ET populations on lush cotton fields, such as drip and higher irrigation capacity pivots. The plant bug populations dropped dramatically in fields starting to show even the slightest drought stress. This situation reminds me greatly of our pest issues in 2012 where only 'pockets' and situations of plant bugs were *very* problematic while the area as a whole had very few pest issues at all. I was surprised to find no fields at ET for plant bugs this week, but I will be stunned if we find none this next week. I suspect there might be a few area fields that we are not scouting there already. Weekly, in-depth, and field by field pest scouting is a must in situations like these. An otherwise outstanding crop can be reduced to 'crazy cotton' (heavily Lygus damaged cotton without fruit by season's end) these plant bug pests without vigilance.

We have started finding the usual bollworms / earworms / headworms in our program corn this week. The population seems fairly large and should start moving to cotton by August, perhaps a week earlier than normal by judging the caterpillars' instar stage. For areas without corn or sorghum to 'sink' this generation of bollworms into, you might start seeing them in cotton this next week.

Corn

Oldest corn fields are turning their silks brown and filling kernels. Our youngest fields, consisting of replant corn, were only reaching V5 this week. We are still not seeing any corn pest reach ET. We have been primarily watching for spider mites, but predators are cleaning them up very well. Our highest mite counts only consisted of a couple of 2" X 2" Banks Grass Mite colonies up to the -4 leaf (fourth leaf below the ear leaf). If conditions remain hot and dry, this could change rapidly as more and more fields move into tassel and silk.

We are also keeping a close eye out for fall army worms (FAW) but have only found a few as there population is still building. We expect the next generation or two of FAW look to be very problematic for the late and replanted corn in the area.

Sorghum

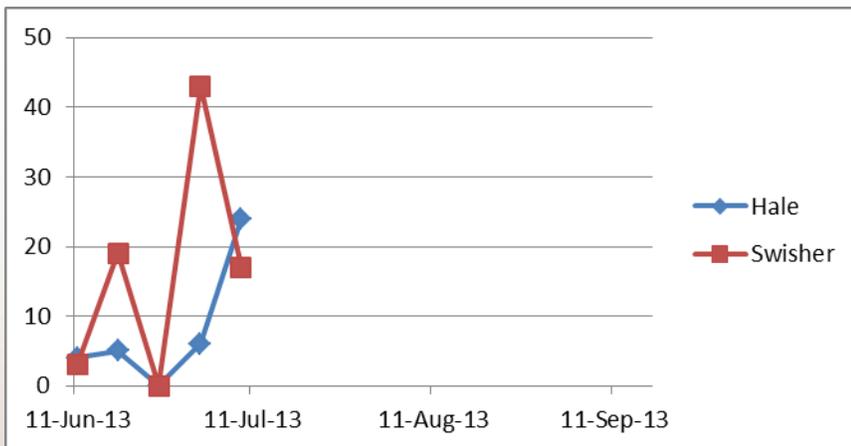
Area sorghum might be our most varied crop on a ridiculously variable year. Some area fields are starting to bloom, while others are just now reaching V3. The youngest of the area sorghum are replanted fields. FAW should be a potential problem for them also. Otherwise, sorghum pests have been the quietest of our program crops. There are a few FAW and yellow sugar cane infestations, but nothing even half-way to ET.

With some early fields starting bloom, we are starting sorghum midge checks. While training our intern on checking for midge, we found one on an edge male plant of a seed milo field. Midges generally do not migrate into this area until roughly August 4th. Finding one this early, with many, many acres of sorghum with stages ranging this much could be a very bad sign. Speaking with Dr. Pat Porter on the subject today, Dr. Porter roughly stated, "What with the stage variance and the amount of sorghum acres this year, finding even one midge this early... well that could combine to be a very interesting midge situation up there this year."

The ET for sorghum midge is roughly one midge per blooming sorghum head. Due to the life cycle of the midge, sorghum in bloom needs to be checked daily. If an economic problem does develop, I urge producers to treat for midge early and hopefully head off a potential midge nightmare.

Moth Traps

I would still consider our bollworm trap numbers to be light this week. By the volume of worms we are starting to find in our area's early corn, I would say estimate that most of the population is in the larval stage. Our Hale County trap has begun a steady uptick. I hypothesis is that this may represent our annual influx of moths from the south, just in time to infest our tasseling corn. The drop in Swisher County moth numbers may indicate a closing to native or overwintering moth emergence.



Area FAW traps are leveling off somewhat, also indicating that the pests have lain eggs in the area crops and are building in population for the next generation.



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We're on the air...

"Tuesday's with Blayne"

***6:00—7:00 AM & Agri-
Plex Report from
12:30—1PM 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.***

Vegetables

This week we witnessed an interesting turn of pest events in some of our area farmer's market and vegetable production fields. Several tomato (and a few other vegetable fields), already set back from wind, thrips, and other weather, had an economic infestation of bollworms attack the rapidly growing fruit. Luckily, we were able to identify the problem and find a full list of products labeled and proven to be safe to treat these worms before too much was lost. If you are seeing any of these worms in your fields, please do not hesitate to give us a call. We will be happy to help guide you to a safe and healthy harvest.

Please call or come by if we can help,

Blayne