TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Plains Pest Management News

JULY 12, 2013

General Status

We have finally been blessed with some good, timely rains. This is the big news of the week as our pest species remained quiet for the first half of the week and our scouts have been forced to stay out of our program fields since. I cannot recall a rain event that gave so much moisture that fell so gently and soaked so well. Even in areas where the rain came in a large amount over a short period of time, we had very little runoff. Our soils were certainly thirsty. The amount of rain received varied greatly again, but all areas seemed to get a good soaker. Amounts look to have been varied between a little over 2" to just over 6" for across Hale and Swisher Counties.

Every productive plant and crop in the area has received some much needed relief. I have particularly been impressed by how our overgrazed pasture land has responded to the rains. I would urge the cattle producers in the area to not re or overstock these finally green again ranges too quickly so that the grass has as long as economically possible to recover from the multi-years of overworked drought stress and desperate grazing.

Weeds

Following these rains we are expecting another relentless and large flush of germinating weeds. Even with multiple sources of residual used, some will come through. Even though some weeds are and will come through our residual treatments, I take this time to reassure producers that those residual treatments are paying off. I have recently seen fields without any residual applied this season that have been experiencing a tenfold increase in germinating weeds compared to those with residual applied. As producers enter another bout with the weeds, I also urge producers not to wait on finding an alternate control method for any weed that comes through your upcoming glyphosate treatments.

Cotton

I am 'guesstimating' today that about 40% of our program cotton fields are now at first bloom or can be measured in nodes above white flower (NAWF). Around 15% can officially be considered late and needs to be managed for maturity to make those good yields. The remaining balance should be blooming by weeks end next week with plenty of yield potential. From the full stage range of the cotton we have been able to scout this week ranged from ¼ grown squares to bloom. Of our fields at first bloom this week are setting that first bloom between 6.5 NAWF to 10.4 NAWF.

Insects remained quiet through the first part of the week, but we are still working through our acres for the week. We remain on alert mostly for Lygus, but several fields are still at risk from fleahoppers. I suspect any economic problems that are out there at this time would come from a mixed plant bug population.

With the recent rain events our practical focus' for cotton this week is shifting toward the possible need for plant growth regulators (PGR). From our plant measurements and mapping data collected earlier this week and this morning, I estimate at least 80% of our area fields could make good use of some level of PGR, even if the field had already received a blanket treatment a few weeks ago. Lush cotton fields and late fields are among the 'givens.' Several of these type fields may already be on a planned PGR schedule. With or without a planned schedule, the rates needed will vary from field to field depending upon the plant's growth habits, fruit load, applied fertilizer, and irrigation potential. There is a definite possibility of late fields becoming 'rank' unless reined in and managed somewhat. Other fields will depend upon these same factors to determine the need for PGR at all. Fields only or already at 6 NAWF or so and are already red stemmed and short may not need a PGR, especially if the field only received a few inches of rain. That amount of moisture only helped keep that field's potential high and a PGR could do more harm than good in that situation.

With several days of cloudy, cool, and rainy weather this week we should expect to see some additional fruit shed. With daytime temperatures not reaching 80°F, cotton plants have a hard time moving starches to set blooms to bolls. This could cause some associated natural fruit loss. I do not feel this will be any major concern as fruit retention has rarely dipped below 90% for the season in any location we have scouted. With temperatures rebounding at least to the 90°F range, plants should regain a normal fruit development pattern.

Corn

The moisture was just what the doctor ordered for our area grain crops, especially corn. Our oldest corn fields are ranging from tassel to soft dough. Most of the area's most mature fields seemed to be one step ahead of stress and losing ground as it came into peak water use. Our youngest corn, now only at V6-7, was looking and developing well, but we knew it had limited sub-moisture to meet future needs. What a difference a rain makes. Much of that rain soaked well and helped 'store' some moisture for tomorrow. It is good to see our irrigations systems get a few days' rest, but with the water needs of corn climbing or near peak, a few days might be all we can afford to give them.

We are still not seeing any economic insect problems in corn. A few fields have some established mite populations, but cooler weather has slowed mite development and a good population of predators continues to cull the colony. We are picking up corn ear worms regularly in almost every developing ear of corn now, but this is far from economic. We are still finding very few fall army worms (FAW) in corn.

Sorghum

The rain has done the area sorghum good as well. The timing could not have been better for fields now at boot or bloom or those still setting head size. Those fields in between should enjoy the benefit of a deeper moisture supply.

We are picking up an increasing population of FAW in our sorghum, mostly in fields nearing boot, but nothing is economic yet.

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We're on the air…

"Tuesday's with Blayne"

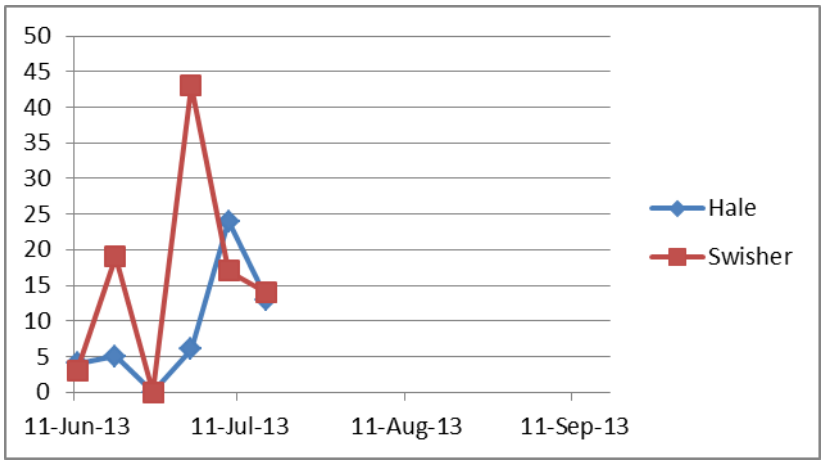
6:00—7:00 AM & Agri-Plex Report from 12:30—1PM on 1090 AM KVOP - Plainview.

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

Areas of fields with heavy FAW damage do look ragged but getting insecticide down into the whorl is almost impossible and these have only been relatively small areas of the fields we have scouted. We are also still finding some yellow sugar cane aphid damage, but only enough to keep us aware of their presence. All other sorghum pests have been very quiet. We remain on alert for sorghum midge in blooming fields.

Moth Trapping

Our Swisher and Hale bollworm traps remain light as most individuals should be in their larval stage, 'sunk' into corn. The flights should pick back up in a few weeks and peak during the second week of August, an average time for the earworms to become bollworms.



Moth data for the FAW and SWCB in Hale and Swisher, collected by Agent Gary Cross and Agent David Graf respectively, have been tapering off as well. Dr. Eddie Bynum makes a similar moth flight prediction for the timing of the next generational FAW flights based upon data collected across the region.

Please call or come by if you have any questions,

Blayne