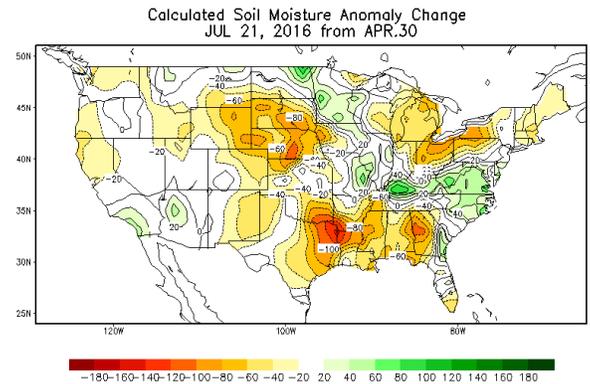


JULY 22, 2016

## General Status

The area remains hot and dry. I believe everyone in Hale, Swisher, & Floyd received some moisture last weekend following the accumulation of outrageous heat, life sucking wind, and soil draining heat units, but the amount wasn't really enough to effectively hydrate the crops past mid-morning the next day. Our crops, even most dryland, remain in pretty good shape and setting fruit well with a few understandable hiccups. In the driest areas, there are some dryland fields that might already be past the point of no return. I made note of a Floyd dryland cotton field already at 2 NAWF and a Swisher dryland sorghum field with an already completely dried flag leaf that failed to boot fully. Those driest pockets aside, our crops have a lot of potential, dryland and irrigated alike, but need assistance in the form of rain very soon.



On the weed front, I maintain we are doing a better job this year of punching the weeds right in the face. We have been punching hard and most of us know that economically we really need to get that knockout blow so we can put the battle behind us but, the weeds just will not stay down. I am afraid that if we stop hitting now, these weeds could knock us out instead. Most of us are out of weed control funds and need one more good, affordable option to choose from, but it does not exist this season.



Swisher field with a few marestail hanging on

## Cotton

Our scouting program cotton ranged in stage from a lagging 1/4 grown square stage up to a feeling the heat already at 6 NAWF (Nodes Above White Flower). The vast majority of our fields came in stage this week between 7 and 9 NAWF with about 85% of fields entering or well into their second week of flowering and moving past economic fleahopper concerns. Fleahoppers are still a concern on the minority of later fields and we continue to find the scattered field over established thresholds that required treatment both the pest population and square drop percent caused by the pest. The fleahopper threshold remains at 1 fleahopper per 1.5 row foot with 25% to 35% (week of squaring depending) fruit loss in pre-bloom cotton.

Our fruit drop ranged between 1.89% up to a fleahopper added 41.4%. Most came in between 4% drop and 14% drop this week indicating some pretty good fruit load and boll set so far, especially considering the heat. Lygus remain very light in our program cotton this week. Unlike fleahoppers we will need to watch for economic Lygus in cotton until bolls reach 350 heat units in development, which will be for some time yet. Similar fleahopper caused fruit drop considerations are in place for our Lygus thresholds as pest damage should be considered before treating for Lygus.



Hale field at 1/4 grown square.

for



Swisher field just starting its 2nd week of bloom.

Lygus are very mobile insects with a wide variety of host plants. Cotton is not always this pest's first host plant of choice and adult Lygus will often move through a field with minimal fruit damage and move on to more preferred hosts. However, if the high heat and droughty conditions continue, there is a good chance that other host plants will become much less desirable to Lygus. In this situation, Lygus could very well be looking for the irrigated cotton as a food source of opportunity and move into fields suddenly and in mass.



Hale white flower peaking out with decent fruit load.

There are still a few select and very carefully considered PGR (plant growth regulator) applications being recommended and made this week. These are generally only on fields with adequate fertility and are being pushed a bit with irrigations through the high heat. For the first week of plant mapping and plant growth measurements, a surprising majority of our irrigated cotton indicated a need for some PGRs despite conditions. The good fruit and boll set, combined with the heat and realistic irrigation capacities for the next month were considered enough factors to

keep most fields vegetative growth from getting out of hand and no PGR applications were made on most fields. There do remain a few fields that PGRs look to be helping but I do urge producers to take careful measurements and made every input consideration before making these applications under these conditions. These factors include: potential vegetative growth via plant measurements, varietal growth habits, field conditions, field history, fruit load, soil moisture, irrigation capacity, soil fertility, heat unit accumulation, plant stage, NAWF, and even the long term forecast.

### Corn

The largest concern in our older corn last week was over pollination and ear fill in the ridiculously high heat under drying conditions. It might still be a touch early to tell for some fields, but some preliminary evaluations show a few fields with some issues. It does look to be field by field depending on irrigation and soil moisture, but possibly not too large an issue. The worst I have evaluated likely has a 20% reduction in yield potential. Most fields I have been in look to have far less but still notable damage from stress occurring at that critical time.



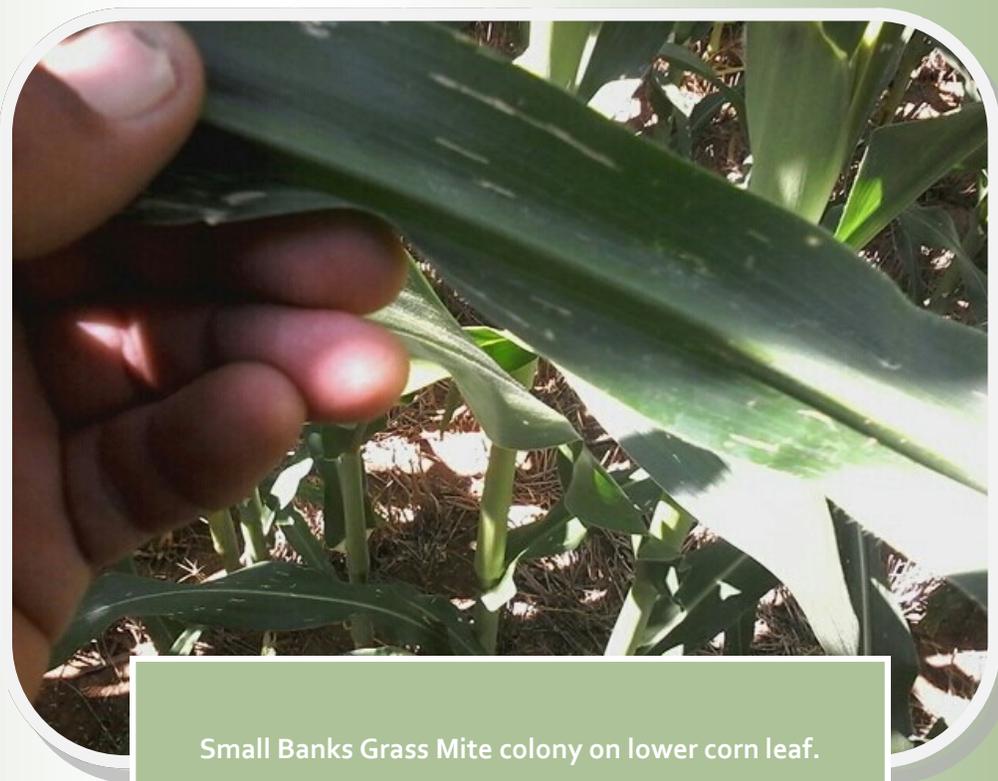
Hale corn ear with some mild to moderate heat caused issues.



Ear from same field with less heat issues.

Our oldest program corn came in this week at early soft dough while our youngest came in at V7. We still have two groupings of corn stages with the majority of the older corn between green silk and early blister while the younger corn is mostly around a V9 or maybe a VX where true number of leaves are difficult to count accurately. Irrigation needs in post tasseled corn remain peaked through the current heat.

Pest problems in our program corn remains minimal. We are starting to find worms in older corn ears now. In our Swisher fields, these worms are 100% fall armyworm (FAW) while our fields in Hale are running about 80% FAW and only about 20% corn earworm (CEW or bollworm). This concurs with our moth trapping numbers with bollworm moths being strangely absent from the area so far despite being unusually heavy and problematic earlier in the season farther down State. The feeding we are finding this week has not moved to all ears yet and remains at the tip only, where it is of no economic concern. However, we should be on the lookout, especially in non-Bt or weaker traited Bt fields for economic FAW populations that could, later, move and attack lower on the ear. It very well could be the next generation of FAW before this is a serious threat. We will have to wait to see what CEW moths migrate into the area to see what pressure they will bring later.



Small Banks Grass Mite colony on lower corn leaf.

what

Spider mite populations, still mostly banks grass mite, continue to increase in most of our program fields, but remain spotty and well below ET for now. The current weather conditions are ripe for a spider mite explosion and do not seem to be abating in any major way anytime soon. Post tassel corn under high heat and experiencing mild drought stress, with limited irrigation capacity and having few mite specific predators, could be brewing a perfect mite storm if we are not watchful.

## Sorghum

Our very few program sorghum fields seem to be developing slowly. This week our fields ranged between a V7 replant and 20% bloom. While any blooming sorghum field today is headed out before the August 4<sup>th</sup> average sorghum midge arrival date, there are a few midge already in the area as confirmed by Dr. Pat Porter and Dr. Katelyn Kowles in Lubbock County. Any sorghum field in bloom is at risk for sorghum midge damage and needs to be checked daily. The threshold is very dependent upon crop value but typically runs around 1 midge per blooming head averaged across the field.

Much like corn, the FAW are finding the sorghum. Also like the corn, the vast majority of these worms are FAW while CEW are very scarce in our sorghum at this time. We do not have any worms in our heads yet but whorl stage plants experienced a significant increase in FAW pressure this week.

Most of us are keeping a very close eye on the developing sugarcane aphid populations (SCA). Officially detecting them in Hale or Swisher County has been fairly difficult for us this week following the confirmation of their presence in Floyd last week. All of our program sorghum fields are in western Hale with 1/3 of them being seed milo in extreme northwestern Hale. We have been relying upon our outstanding independent crop consultants and producers to let us know what is going on in their fields. From what we are seeing in Lubbock, Crosby, and Floyd Counties, it was very likely the SCA is in Hale & Swisher too, just at almost undetectable levels. However, just this morning, the Plains Pest Management field scouts found a very small colony of SCA in northwestern Hale, just a few miles from Lamb county. It is likely very safe to assume we now have this aphid in spots throughout the area at very, very low levels. We all know how quickly this can change based upon our experience with this aphid last season. While the SCA population builds, we hope our higher beneficial populations can give us more aid earlier this season. We will be watching closely.



**Sorghum Midge Damage, Hale 2013.**



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**WEB**

<http://hale.agrilife.org>

**For quicker pest alerts-**

***Plains Pest  
Bugshere:***

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[halecountyipm.blogspot.com/](http://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/)

***Pest Patrol Hotline,  
registration at:***

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

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

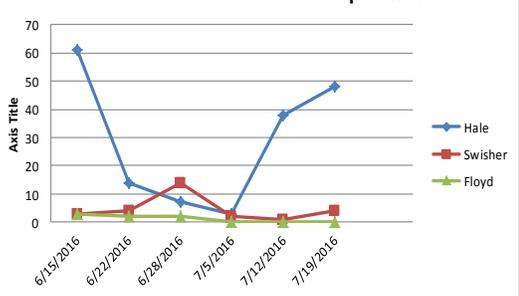
***"Tuesday's with Blayne" from  
6:30—7:00 AM on the  
HPRN network on 1090  
AM KVOP-Plainview.***

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

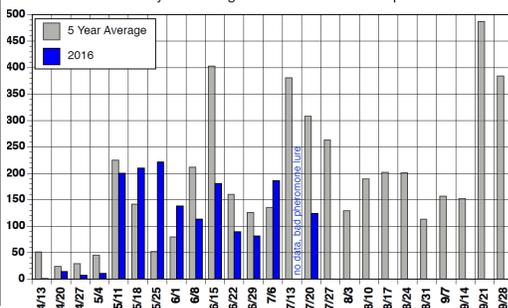
***"IPM Report with the Bruiser"  
from 7:06-7:15 PM on  
1470 AM KDHN -  
Dimmit.***

With the looming shadow of the SCA hovering in the peripheral view, there are a few other pests in sorghum, including the sorghum midge, that pose a more immediate threat. The yellow sugarcane aphid (YSCA) has been on the increase in our program fields this week too. Most of our fields are rating between 0.5 and 2.5 on a 0-10 scale where a 3-4 would be a good action threshold for treatment. I also have reports from Floyd County of YSCA ratings even higher than ours that needed treatment. Unfortunately, the fact is, we must deal with the problem before us. If the YSCA, midge, or FAW reach economic levels, we must treat for them. I only urge consultants and producers to salvage as many predators as possible by choosing beneficial friendly products when possible. There are cheaper products that will control these pests but they will also decimate all beneficial populations. The shadow of the SCA looms too large for me to want to deal with that issue without beneficial help at all. I just do not think we can afford to buy that much product this year. In our SCA efficacy trial last year, we did have a mixed SCA, YSCA, and green bug populations in our trial with the SCA being the largest threat at the time of treatment. I can state that all labeled SCA products work very well on YSCA and green bug. Please consult labels for FAW and midge product.

**2016 Adult Bollworm Moth Trap Catches**



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



Grasshoppers continue to be a spotty issue with several fields requiring edge treatment. Do not let these steal too much as they move from drying vegetation to our fields. I have reports of skeletonized corn farther north.

*Blayne Reed*