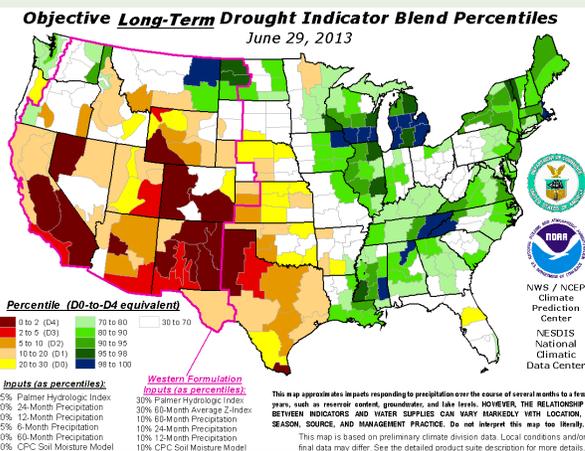
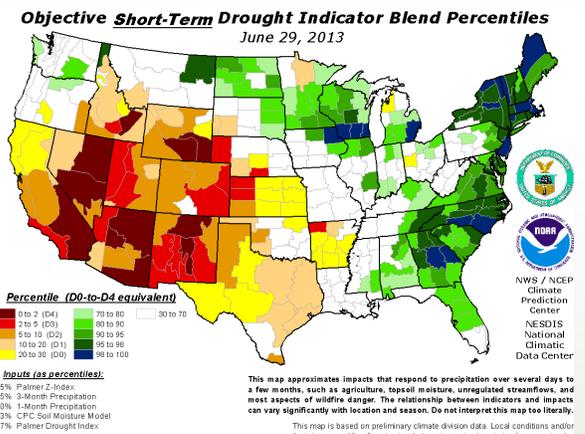


JULY 5, 2013

## General Status

Crop conditions and status remain highly variable across Hale and Swisher Counties. A select few irrigated cotton fields are looking outstanding and are just days away from first bloom, while others that received severe wind or hail damage last month are just putting on their first match head squares. Likewise, a select few corn fields are at silk stage, while others, mostly in replant situations, are only at V3 stage. This last week brought rain that was as scattered and variable as the crops they fell upon. The western portions of both counties generally received more rain than the eastern portions over the past ten days or so. Thankfully, this last week we experienced a break from high temperatures and a respite from the monotonous winds. For the first week since planting began, we have no additional fields lost to weather events that I am aware of. All fields looked to have taken advantage of the chance to recover with the better growing conditions. Even in locations that received no rainfall, the corn that looked drought stressed last week looks better as hard working irrigation systems were given a chance to play catch up. With rain being the largest beneficial factor, a few irrigated fields have even started gaining headway in getting some sub-soil moisture profile. The fact that the region remains under drought conditions is unmistakable. Spots that received no rain are still quite desperate and I note no irrigation system setting idle for long.



## Weeds

It might be sounding like a broken record, but... weed pressure remains high. Whether flushed by rain events or frequent irrigations, weeds continue to emerge relentlessly. Generally, I would rate our control thus far as pretty good, but the weeds are keeping the pressure on. Producers with only pre-plant residual herbicides applied might start seeing stronger weed emergence as the residual begins playing out this month. This affect might be amplified if the crop has not shaded over yet. It is not too late for most cotton fields for some in-season over the top herbicides that can carry residual season long. Please do not forget to add some herbicides with good residual to replanted sorghum or corn this year. There are some outstanding herbicide choices that both burn-down and provide residual in corn and sorghum, but they need to be out soon. Atrazine remains the staple herbicide that needs to be mixed with these newer herbicides in sorghum and corn to maximize residual.

Again, I recommend vigilance in dealing with weeds coming through residual and surviving glyphosate treatments. We are still seeing handfuls of

weeds actively growing and I do not feel any additional glyphosate will take these weeds out. I urge producers to not let these weeds seed out and consultants to make producers aware of even the slightest escape. Controlling mature weeds after seeding is difficult and does little to prevent the next generation of weeds from being just as problematic and worse. Additional control methods will be needed to finish any of these weeds off.



A 2013 field in southwestern Hale County without pre-plant herbicides after 1 failed application of glyphosate



A 2012 field in southwestern Swisher County. Glyphosate resistant patch of Palmer that was hoed after 5 failed glyphosate applications. Weeds had already seeded out and robbed quite a bit of yield from cotton.

## Cotton

Cotton acres are down for the region this season and a substantial amount has been lost to bad weather, but what remains is doing very well with plenty of yield potential. The crop remains somewhat behind in maturity compared to an 'average' season but still has plenty of time and heat units to make. Fields planted in heavy cover look outstanding and may have even caught that 'average' season already.

Our program cotton ranged from 4<sup>th</sup> true leaf to  $\frac{3}{4}$  grown squares this week with the majority of fields falling between match head square and  $\frac{1}{4}$  grown square. Square set looks good also, ranging from 91% to 100%. Almost all fields are past thrips damage at this time. Thrips are only a slight concern this week and only on pre-squaring cotton fields. There remain just a handful of these truly late fields in the area. The economic threshold (ET) for thrips remains at one thrips per true leaf stage.

Fleahoppers were a common sight in our program this week, but none were at an economic level yet. A few of our fields reached 20% fleahopper infested cotton plants. The fields with a relatively high number of fleahoppers usually represented our highest square drop rate which only rose to 9% (91% retention). We will remain on high alert for fleahopper nymphs when scouting cotton fields this next week. With fleahoppers remaining in susceptible cotton fields for extended periods we would expect to see substantial reproduction and a strong possibility of the fleahoppers reaching economic levels. The ET of fleahoppers remains at 25-35% infested plants (1fh. / 1.5-2 ft.) with square retention, predator, and plant stage considerations. Fields just entering squaring should not be allowed to lose more than 10% of their squares to fleahoppers while fields at roughly 3/4 grown square can acceptably lose 18%. Fields that can be measured in nodes above white flower (NAWF) should be considered passed economic fleahopper concerns.

Our predator counts from across both counties have been remarkably good in our area cotton. It is quite possible there will be enough predators to help control some potential fleahopper problems for us this week. The population of fleahoppers and predators and amount of square set will vary from field to field and can only be monitored by scouting carefully across the entire field. I prefer to use a combination of plant inspections and drop cloths to find all possible squares and pests, but will utilize sweep nets if the situation calls for it. For some helpful tips on affectively and quickly scouting cotton for plant bugs, please give my office a call. 806-291-5267.

We still have not noted any Lygus in our program cotton fields, but they're presence has been confirmed in area alfalfa and clover along roadsides. The most commonly used economic threshold for Lygus in our area is 1 Lygus / 2 – 3 row ft. of cotton with some of the same square retention considerations. This plant bug pest has proven to remain a threat to cotton bolls until the bolls have received 350 heat units. If Lygus do materialize into a major problem for us this season, it might be feasible to alter your cotton scouting to twice weekly.

## Corn

Area corn continues to look pretty good. Stages range from V3 where planted behind failed cotton to silking in our oldest fields. Most planned corn fields should be nearing tassel this next week. Our largest pest concern in corn remains spider mites at this time. Predation seemed to have all but cleared mite colonies in pre-tassel fields. However, in the few area fields that has reached tassel, the mites made quick recoveries. In one isolated field now at silk stage, 90% of the corn plants had at least one dime sized colony of Banks Grass Mites on the extreme lower leaves. This population remains well below ET, but proves the need for vigilance in mite monitoring. Under the right conditions, fields such as this one could reach ET very quickly. All of the newer affective miticides are beneficial friendly but need to be applied in a timely manner before mites develop very far passed ET and rely on help from our predator species. At this time, I still do not recommend a blanket, preventative treatment for spider mites unless a heavier population of mites exists in your field well above what we have been seeing thus far.

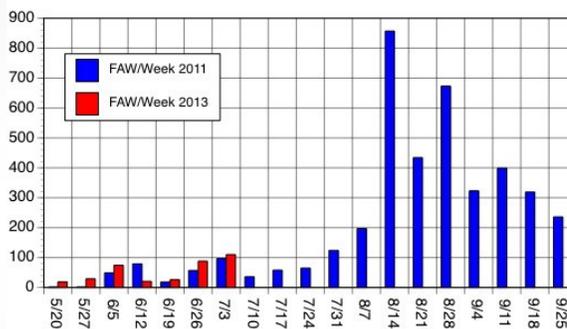
We have started finding a few fall army worms (FAW) and boll worms in whorl stage corn this week. We will need to keep an eye out for FAW in particular as the corn moves into tassel. The following is an excerpt from this weeks "Focus" by Dr. Pat Porter, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension District 2 Entomologists:

**Yield loss to fall armyworm and associated fungi and optimal spray timing**

Fall armyworm trap captures are up for the week and this flight, and corn earworm, will be laying eggs in corn that is at tassel or approaching tassel. The graph of fall armyworm trap captures (below) shows moth numbers approximately the same as in 2011, a dramatic fall armyworm year. This might be a good time to recap some of the findings from last year's research on fall armyworm. The Texas Corn Producers Board funded our research into the amount of yield we are losing to fall armyworm and the right time to apply insecticides to avoid that yield loss. **The bottom line is that when one fall armyworm larva gets into the bottom 2/3 of an ear the yield loss will be one-fifth to one-quarter of a pound of grain, on average.** This is due to the kernels destroyed by the insect itself and the fungi that invade the ear at that time. No one has ever quantified yield loss to fall armyworms when they infest ears and we were astounded at these numbers. However, we believe them to be correct. We also investigated spray timing and learned that insecticide applications need to be go out a few days prior to tassel or at tassel, and spraying a week after tassel may result in yield loss. All of last year's findings are presented in a 21-minute video on the Plant Management Network at <http://www.plantmanagementnetwork.org/edcenter/seminars/Corn/FallArmyworm/>. This year we are investigating different insecticides for fall armyworm and corn earworm control when applied at tassel. The insecticides are Belt, Endigo, Besiege and Prevathon.



Fall armyworm moths per trap per week, Lubbock, Texas. 2011 had a very heavy moth flight and is used for comparison.



Gary Cross, CEA-Hale, has also had an increase in his FAW trap numbers this week. So far, all of our Lepidopteron pests found in-field have been below ET. We hope to find what ET is for FAW soon.

## Sorghum

Sorghum stages in Hale and Swisher also remains highly variable. Some re-planted fields are just out of the ground, while older fields are reaching boot stage. Some very hard to find mites remain present in area sorghum and we are finding some very light FAW in sorghum whorls this week. Overall insect pressure to sorghum remains light with nothing near ET and no pressure from any aphid species to speak of. Fields reaching boot this week will start blooming this next week and will be at risk of sorghum midge damage.

Midge are tiny Dipterans, or flies, that feed exclusively on sorghum type plants. The adult midge only lives less than one day, just long enough to lay eggs into blooming sorghum. The tiny resulting maggot feasts on a single developing grain from within consuming it fully only to emerge as an adult a short time later (usually about 2 weeks) as an adult to start the process over. Midge cannot overwinter in our area and must migrate from the south every growing season, usually hopping generationally from blooming sorghum field to blooming sorghum field. Johnson grass can also harbor the midge life cycle. Sorghum field blooming this early in the growing season are normally immune to midge damage, as the midge typically do not arrive in force until an average date of August 4<sup>th</sup>. Every season and situation can be vastly different, and we do recommend scouting for midge in any blooming sorghum field.



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

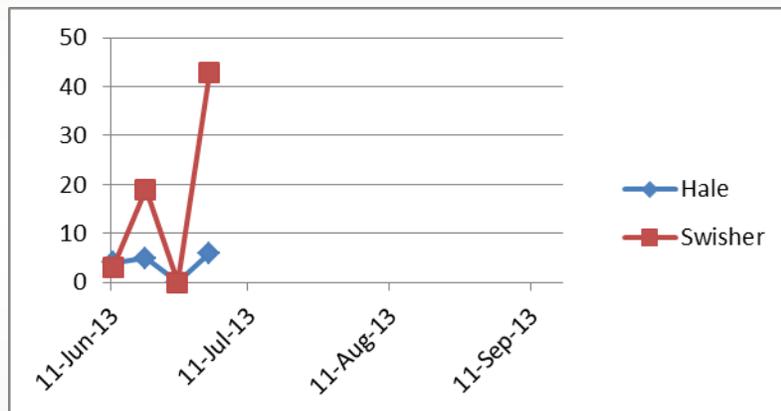
*"Tuesday's with Blayne"*  
from 6-7AM on the  
1090 Agri-Plex Re-  
port. 1090 AM  
KVOP - Plainview.

*"IPM Wednesdays"* from  
12:30-2PM on The  
Fox Talk 950 Ag  
Show. Fox Talk 950  
AM - Lubbock.

When scouting for midge, I prefer to make use of beat buckets or jugs by placing the bucket over the blooming head, tilting downward and shaking vigorously. Midge should be shaken loose and counted. A minimum of thirty plants per field should be checked, but total number needed to be checked will vary depending upon field size. Another good method for use on windy days involves enveloping the blooming head in clear plastic, disturbing the head and counting midge trying to escape. While in bloom, sorghum should be checked daily for midge starting about 11AM, temperature depending.

## Moth Trapping

The local boll worm moth traps returned good data again this week. I would still consider these numbers as low but we should expect to see boll worms move on tasseling corn very soon. In areas without corn or sorghum to sink boll worms into, cotton might be the moth's only host plant choice.



Please call or come by if you have any questions!

*Blayne*