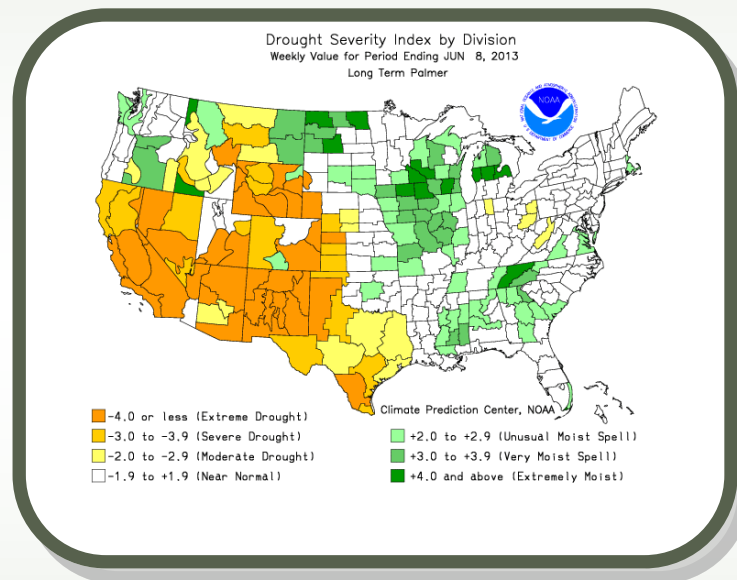


JUNE 14, 2013

General Situation

Crop status across Hale and Swisher Counties are just about as variable as I can remember them being this early in the growing season. The June 5th hail event caused more cotton losses than I had estimated that they would the day after the hail. The conditions in those areas were ripe for seedling diseases that finished off already heavily damaged seedlings, dropping the overall plant populations to unprofitable levels and proving the validity of waiting a few days before making any damage assessment. The southwestern third of Hale County may not produce but a few thousand acres of cotton this year. Most producers are waiting on an insurance assessment to determine a direction for those fields. Replanting considerations are leaning heavily toward sorghum. An area Pioneer Seed Retailer this week stated that the availability of sorghum seed was OK but, "You may not be able to choose the variety."

Many area producers who planted later irrigated cotton fields are still struggling to establish a cotton stand with limited seedbed moisture. Meanwhile, there are thousands of acres of advanced cotton fields from Plainview north through Swisher County that should be at pinhead square stage by early next week.



There is no mistaking that we still find ourselves in the midst of a drought. The recent rains have sprouted much of the dryland fields that already had seed in the ground, but more moisture is needed before any yield potential could be built or, in many cases, stand fully established. Other producers are still waiting on a good planting rain before heading to the field with final planting dates fast approaching. The chance of rain being in the forecast for the next few days keeps hope alive. Irrigated corn and sorghum have received the most benefit from the recent rain but deep soil moisture remains moderate to I wish I could get a rain.

Despite damaging hail, the corn in southwestern Hale County that we have scouted is recovering well. I have heard one report of a corn field near the border between Hale and Lamb County that had been damaged by hail so severely that the growing point was destroyed. Fields in this situation seem to be the exception and not the norm. Yield potential generally remains high for all area grain crops, but again, additional moisture help from above is a must to reach that maximum potential.

Weeds

A wily professional football coach was once quoted as saying after his coaching, his decisions, and some superb team effort had won a key game that his team really shouldn't have, "When you start a fight with a gorilla, you don't hit him lightly... you hit him with all you've got!"

That attitude seems very fitting as we face the most severe weed issues the area has yet to witness. Most area producers look to be taking this attitude to heart and good measures and approaches are being taken. There have been some fields that were not expected to be problematic that surprised producers. As we scouted this week we did find a few cotton fields that were not treated with any pre-plant herbicide, had been treated with high doses of glyphosate, and were still carpeted with rapidly growing Palmer. Luckily these fields were under the most severe of the June 5th hail. These producers have the opportunity to get some iron under those weeds quick before planting their secondary crop. This also gives the opportunity to apply some fresh modes of action on the next generational flush of these weeds. If a producer finds themselves in this situation and did not catch a field destroying hail, immediate action is required to prevent decades of heartache on that ground.

Producers in similar situations that planted glyphosate and gluphosate tolerant cotton have an option to apply Ignite over the top in addition to Roundup. Remember, Ignite has its limitations on vertically growing weeds, but advantages on horizontally growing weeds. Ignite is not likely to kill any weed taller than four inches. It is best to apply Ignite followed by Roundup within ten days. Never mix these two herbicides together for a treatment as the two counter acts each other's effectiveness. The only other labeled over the top herbicide option that adds knockdown in cotton is Staple. At full rates Staple adds season long residual but has rotational considerations to grass crops.

At this time, I do not feel cotton is advanced far enough to be ready for hooded sprayers. If these glyphosate tolerant weeds are not controlled within a few weeks, fields in this situation are likely to be lost. If the use of Ignite and or Staple has not turned the tide against these weeds, getting the plow and hoe after them become the only viable option to save the field before profitability is lost.



2012 Swisher County photo of a cotton field margin missed by the pre-plant residual herbicide.

Cotton

Cotton stages ranged from still emerging to 5th true leaf stage. I would consider fields that are just emerging this week to be a touch late. The vast majority of cotton not hailed out is now between 3rd and that 5th leaf stage. This is "behind average" but far from late. Fields not destroyed by hail are recovering from other adversity nicely. With many fields nearing pinhead square stage, producers and consultants need to be on the lookout for plant bugs soon. Primarily fleahoppers are our first concern but there is the possibility of some early infestations of Lygus also. Fields prominent with Silver Leaf Nightshade are prime candidates for early flea hopper injury.

Thrips:

The thrips population remains high to very high across both counties but is becoming more variable. The highest thrips counts this week were adjacent to still drying wheat. Preventative seed treatments seem to have been good investments and stood up to remarkable pressure this season. Preventatives look to have lost residual in any field over 2nd leaf stage and immature thrips are easily found there.



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Fox Talk 950 Ag
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Foliar treatments for thrips in conjunction with herbicide applications are being made with impunity. Rarely this week did a scouted field dip below the economic threshold of one thrips per true leaf stage unless one of these foliar treatments had already been made. One producer in eastern Swisher who did not use any preventative treatment reported to be on his second thrips spray already and looking to see if he needed to make a third. In most cases we scouted this week, foliar treatments had dropped thrips populations to zero found for the fields. Producers should be able to count on four to five days residual from any of the labeled thrips products used for a foliar application. The highest thrips count for Hale County this week was 8.69 thrips per plant while Swisher was 28.3. Cotton tends to develop past thrips damage when it nears the pinhead square or roughly the 5th or 6th leaf stage unless thrips have severely damaged the terminal or other damage has slowed cotton development.

Corn and Sorghum

High thrips numbers are still having a predatory impact upon spider mite colonies. A very few mite colonies can be still be found in corn. We did find one small colony of Banks Grass Mites surviving on a sorghum field margin this week. We have not picked up on any major aphid populations in either crop yet. We remain vigilant for whirl feeding from fall armyworms and bollworms alike, but still have not noted any. Fall armyworm moths are still being captured in Hale county traps in fairly high numbers. We began trapping for bollworm moth populations this week. Our Hale county trap caught four moths while Swisher caught three.

Please call or come by if we can help,

Blayne