

JUNE 17, 2016

General Status

It has been a hectically busy and somewhat mixed week for Hale, Swisher, & Floyd crop production fields. Many of us, particularly for those in areas of western and southwestern Hale County and swaths ranging to the northeast, had additional weather events that decimated crops just as we are struggling to get them started... repeatedly. For some extra 'special' fields, planting number three was just wiped out. For other fields, many that have come through numerous problems themselves, this week was a perfect week of establishment, growth, and recovery. Glancing ahead to next week's weather forecast, everyone should get the type of weather their crops need to recover and let us get some massive amounts of field work in, that is, unless you are one of us that need some nice, gentle rain...

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
								
Hot	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny
High: 101 °F	Low: 69 °F	High: 96 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 93 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 93 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 93 °F

Weeds

With every drop of rain, heavy or light, and pass with surface irrigation, weeds are still trying to flush. I stand by last week's statement that our weed IPM appears to be much improved



Hale Sorghum with a 5.5 weed pressure rating

compared to recent seasons. Yet the struggle continues. On our 0-10 pressure rating system, the bulk of our Plains Pest Management fields with good residual applied and incorporated properly are running with ratings of 0.1 to 4.2. Last week this rating was 0.2 to 2. The remaining fields that have not had any residual thus far or fields with residual



Some aggressive weed control in struggling cotton without the use of pre-plant herbicides in Southern Swisher.

only applied recently are running from 2 to 8.9 on the same 0-10 scale while they were at 4 to 8.2 last week. The changes in these ratings over a 7 day period come from several factors. These factors for both good and bad include good weed control, poor weed control, lack of a needed treatment, weed size, weed germination, and weed density. With ever increasing work load and difficulties in crop establishment producers are thrust into this season, I urge producers to remain diligent in weed control. With whatever plan of action you are taking this week, hopefully the reduction of the in-field weed population remains a consideration.

Cotton

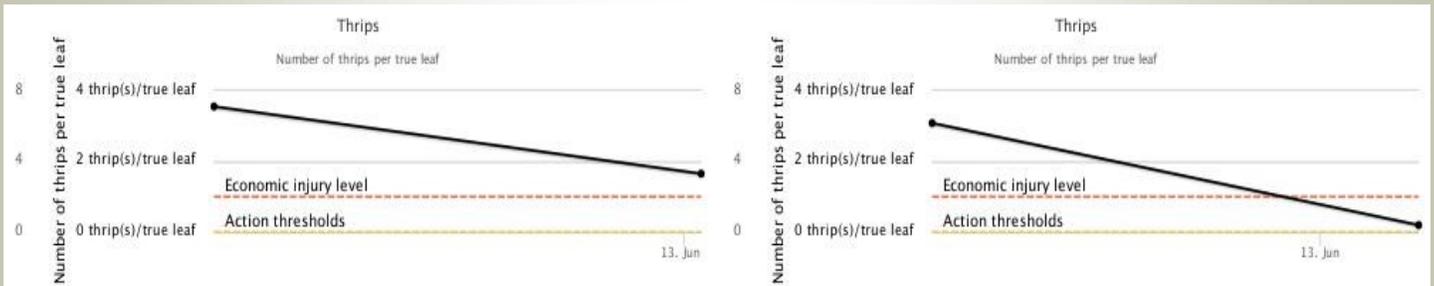
Our program cotton acres this week ranged in stage from pushing seedling to 4th true leaf stage. The majority of our fields fell between cotyledon stage and 4th leaf. Admittedly, some of these fields were likely lost following our scouting this week and will need to be re-evaluated early next week for viability.

Thrips remain the only major pest concern in our PPM cotton at this time. The thrips population we are finding this week is somewhat reduced but remains substantial across the area. This population is notably higher from Plainview north, an area with a higher rate of wheat production and wheat being utilized for grain this season. As this wheat dries down for harvest, adult thrips are steadily moving from the wheat into cotton. Until cotton goes into its early reproductive phase at or about the 5th true leaf stage, it will be at risk for thrips injury which usually causes developmental setbacks and delays in maturity.



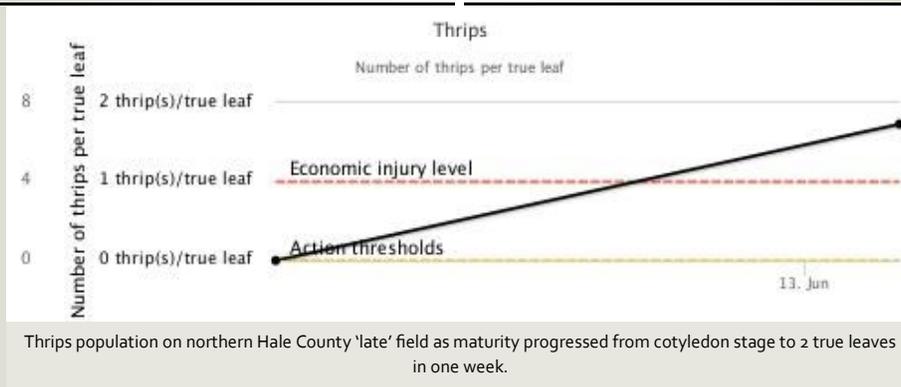
Central Swisher Cotton field treated for thrips and recovering from damage.

This week we began finding some older and yet untreated cotton fields with thrips larva present. This usually means that thrips are surviving in the field long enough to begin reproduction and is the key indicator that our insecticidal seed treatments are beginning to lose residual. Despite this, our overall thrips pressure began decreasing. We had a number of fields with 0 thrips per true leaf up to a field with a high of 2.1 thrips per true leaf. This decrease is likely two fold. The first factor comes from the fact much of the area's cotton already has one very effective thrips treatment applied. The second factor likely comes from the fact that the area's wheat is almost finished drying down and thus the thrips are almost finished moving from the wheat source to the new cotton host. Still, we will need to keep an eye on thrips in cotton until we start seeing pin-head squares. The economic threshold for thrips until then remains at 1 thrips per true leaf stage.



Untreated field with thrips population reduced from last week but still > ET.

Field Treated for thrips. Population reduced to below ET following treatment.



Thrips population on northern Hale County 'late' field as maturity progressed from cotyledon stage to 2 true leaves in one week.

Checkout our new video on how to scout for thrips in cotton here: <https://youtu.be/uD2dIDQmRb0>

Our thrips in cotton predator ratings remain light but they are showing signs of increasing.



Ladybug eggs on a cotton leaf.



Treated plants recovering from thrips and other stresses.

Corn & Sorghum

Our program corn ranged in growth stage from V4 to V9 this week although I have noted a few area fields much farther along, some look to be nearing tassel. I also suspect we will have some late corn planted this week behind some of the failed cotton. Our program sorghum ranged in growth stage from V2 to V6 but I also suspect more sorghum will be planted this week too. We are finding no major pest of note in either our corn or sorghum at this time.



Hale County seed milo at a wind whipped V2 Stage.

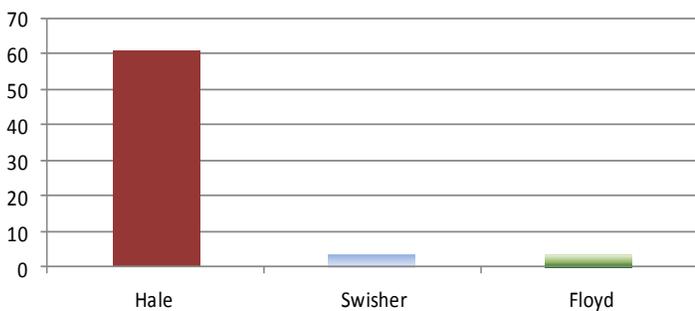


Hale County Corn at a healthy V9 Stage.

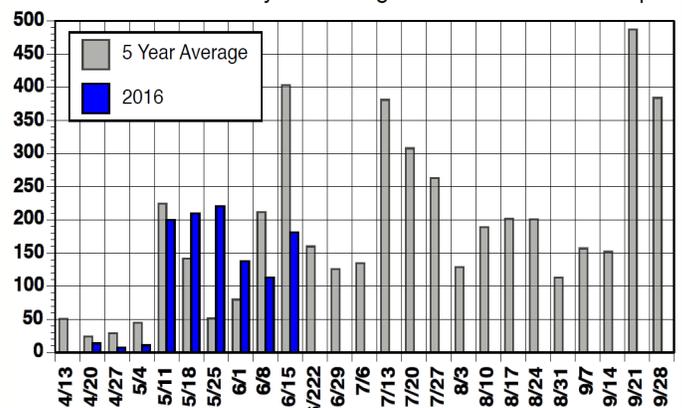
We continue to find

banks grass mite populations in corn field margins fairly easily and noted a few fall armyworm and corn earworm damaged whorls. Neither of these pests is near an economic standard yet but are deserving of watching. We still have not found any sugarcane aphids or any pest of note in our program sorghum to date. Our predator counts in these two crops are pretty solid with the exception of the mite specific predators of six-spotted thrips and mite destroyers.

2016 Adult Bollworm Moth Trap Catches - Week of June 15, 2016



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



Evaluating Early Season Damaged Crops and Alternate Crop Options

When evaluating for cotton stand viability, I suggest waiting at least a few days for any border line cotton field. This will give the seedlings time to begin re-growing from the terminal or alternate growing points (if possible). This will also make it much easier for the evaluator to tell if the field is still strong enough to retain profitability. At this date, a stand reduced but healthy enough and recovering cotton field should remain more profitable than a late replant of cotton and likely another crop. I suggest a re-plant or switch to an alternate crop only if the irrigated stand has dropped well below the neighborhood of 31,000 plants per acre (PPA) or has consistent gaps in the stand larger than 1 foot in length. In dryland, I suggest using an 18,000 PPA guide and a 1.5 foot gap length standard.

For heavily damaged corn or sorghum, we can evaluate the damage as soon as possible but waiting a few days should be advisable here also. These grass crops, whether dryland or irrigated, will look much worse than they likely are immediately following heavy weather related damage. This 'look' factor alone can and will be misleading because it is the growing point that needs to be evaluated. Grass crops can lose a tremendous amount of foliage during the whorl stage and retain full profitability.

To evaluate the growing point, we will need to dissect the corn or sorghum plant. To do this, pull the plant up, slice off the top of the plant at about the base of the whorl. Then carefully slice the length of the stalk into two roughly equal halves until you reach the crown roots. Somewhere between the base of the whorl and the crown



roots you will find the growing point of the plant. For V2-V10 stage plants this will be near the soil surface. Once the growing point is identified, we simply need to evaluate its health. If the growing point is discolored or 'mushy' in any way, that growing point is damaged and is unlikely to recover. However, if the growing point is healthy, that plant will recover, no matter how damaged looking the rest of the plant is.

For corn and sorghum fields in the early whorl stage, with the growing point so near the soil surface, seriously damaging enough growing points to wipe out a corn or sorghum field is almost impossible. This is not to say there will not be some stand reduction or odd growth patterns for a minority of the plants, especially if there is a large amount of 'buggy whipping' or stalk bruising. A 1% to 5% reduction is quite common in severe situations. As with cotton, corn and sorghum will make up yield for missing plants up to a point. Several plants per field will need to be dissected to get an accurate measure of damage severity.



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[http://
hale.agrilife.org](http://hale.agrilife.org)

For quicker pest alerts-

*Plains Pest
Bugshere:*

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

*Pest Patrol Hotline,
registration at:*

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.*

When it comes to replanting fields that will not maintain profitability, we can likely expect an ample amount of late corn and sorghum to replace much of the expected cotton loss. Many producers are also very likely to consider alternate crops. While markets are depressed for many commodities, including our more popular alternate crops there are still likely some opportunities.

Two of our alternate crops that are often considered locally are sesame and sunflowers. Today I spoke with both Todd Beyers of Red River Commodities and Jerry Riney of Sesaco. According to Todd, Red River Commodities is not currently seeking any new sunflower acres in our area but, "We might need to review that decision soon following the weather earlier this week."

According to Jerry, Sesaco is actively seeking acres in the Hale, Swisher, & Floyd area. Jerry forwarded me quite a bit of information, both contract and agronomic, about sesame, via email:

Subject: Sesame for Failed Cotton
Date: Friday, June 17, 2016 2:06:54 PM

Sesaco is offering acre contracts for delivery at Northern Ag at Hart, TX. Sesame is ideal for catch crop behind cotton and double crop behind wheat.

Contract price is \$0.35 per pound for irrigated and \$0.32 per pound for dryland.

Seed cost is \$7.00 per pound where vacuum planters use 2 pounds per acre. Grain drill can be used at 4-5 pounds per acre.

Sesame can be planted into most cotton residual herbicides with incident. Staple and Caporal are not safe for sesame prior to planting. For double crop behind wheat, sesame would follow plant back restrictions similar to cotton as it pertains to long residual SU herbicides.

Benefits and opportunities when growing sesame is low input costs, very few pests, no sugar cane aphid or wild hog damage.

Harvest is with conventional or draper header with a well maintained combine.

Contact Joe Guzman at 806-781-5908(mobile) or Jerry Riney at (806)-778-2193(mobile) or Sesaco Headquarters at (512)-253-2262.

Seed can be purchased at any TriStar Chemical dealer, any Sanders Chemical dealer and McFadden Grain in Olton, TX.

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Thanks Jerry,

Blayne Reed