

JUNE 7, 2013

## General Situation

The one factor that has remained a constant for our area crops this week has been the wind. Regardless of what generated it, the wind has been strong, from every direction, almost continuous, and on multiple occasions (when fueled by outflows from various regional storms) neared hurricane force. I have been pleasantly surprised by how well our young irrigated crops have fared through the damaging wind thus far. It is easy to find 'ragging' and 'sandblasted' damage and some loss of leaves in just about any Hale or Swisher County field, especially the edges, but very few fields have experienced substantial, yield losing damage. Thanks to the use of cover and quite a bit of producer effort, very few fields have been lost, or lost yield potential as a result of the wind and potential blowing conditions.

On the night of June 5<sup>th</sup> Hale & Swisher Counties finally received a long awaited rain event. This event was far from the drought busting rain we all have been hoping for. Amounts received varied from a disappointing 0.12" to just over 2" officially. Unfortunately, the heaviest rains came hard and fast with damaging hail, some localized flooding, and additional winds. Southern Hale County seemed to catch the worst hail damage. Several cotton fields have been hailed or washed out. Stand evaluations will be very important this coming week. Dryland fields receiving 0.6" or better should have ample moisture to germinate while those receiving less may not. If a dryland field is able to emerge, it will need additional moisture soon to build any yield potential as sub-soil moisture remains light to nonexistent.

## Weeds

Weed control is set to remain one of our largest IPM concerns this year. While heavy irrigations have caused a moderate flush of germinating weeds, the June 5<sup>th</sup> rain is sure to cause a much heavier weed flush in all situations immediately. Pre-plant applied residual herbicides continue to pay dividends. I estimate that we are seeing an 80-99% reduction in germinated weeds from residuals so far this year compared to fields with no residual applied. This week our scouts found a few fields without residual applied that already had a carpet of Palmer with some weeds 6" tall and starting to seed. These weeds could not be more than 3 weeks old.

Escapes from burndown treatments in no-till fields look to be very problematic. Several of these weeds are gaining in size and have already survived one overspray. These weeds will be tough to kill. Producers should target these situations first, preferably with heavy rates of multiple modes of action (label and rotation depending). Any escapes from this next treatment need to be dealt with quickly by other means, hoeing likely being the best and last option before machetes come into play.



# Cotton

Irrigated cotton stages ranged from emerging seedling to 3<sup>rd</sup> true leaf stage. By most standards, this cotton is behind an “average” year but not what I would consider late. Yield *potential* remains high. Despite multiple obstacles, most fields are in moderate to excellent shape and off to a pretty good start. Plenty of time and heat units remain to develop good cotton yields and quality. The largest concerns this week have been establishing a late May stand in high winds and dry conditions, high thrips pressure, and now evaluating hail and accumulated wind damage.

## Decisions about cotton damage, potential, and stand evaluations:

For several fields that were subjected to the heaviest hail, this becomes an easy call. If the hail has beaten off all of the plant’s growing points (terminal or alternate) to grow back from, that plant is clearly dead. Without a fairly evenly distributed population of around 27,000 plants per acre the field loses all profit potential. There are ample area and localized fields where hail and winds have caused this much damage and more. These fields need to be destroyed and made ready for an alternate or secondary crop as soon as possible.

The majority of the cotton we were able to scout behind the June 5<sup>th</sup> hail was not damaged to that automatic decision level. The rest of the fields that received hail or blowing wind will require some hard thought evaluations this week before any determination on whether or not to keep the field can be made.

The first factor to evaluate in determining the viability of an individual plant is the health of the terminal or an alternate growing point. If a plant has all leaves stripped, fried, or blasted, but still has a healthy terminal, that plant has only been set back a few weeks. If at least 27,000 plants per acre are found with healthy growing points, that field still has more profit potential than a late replant or secondary crop. Four to five days following a damaging weather event maybe needed to allow regrowth to start before the health of a growing point can be determined. This is especially true if you are evaluating wind and static damage alone. Some other factors in considering cotton field viability include stalk bruising and gap issues. Stalk bruising from hail or blowing sand causes a slower plant recovery. Gaps larger than one foot will cause notable yield losses. Cotton can compensate for gap issues up to one foot if they are not repetitive.

Based upon quick and early estimations; Most of the hail damaged fields (not clearly hailed out) in southern Hale County should settle next week with 30-35,000 healthy plants or better with some gapping. Very few fields have been completely lost to high wind. Most wind damaged fields in Swisher and northern Hale are set back and have some spotty stand reduction, but very few true ‘holes’ in the fields can be found.

## Thrips:

The rain and hail have given us a brief respite from some pretty heavy thrips pressure. Before the rain event, our numbers were running at or near 1 thrips per true leaf stage in central and southern Hale County, but ranged from 0.5 to 3 thrips per true leaf stage from Plainview north through Swisher. The economic threshold for thrips on healthy cotton remains at 1 per leaf stage. After the rain, our numbers have dropped by half, but I would expect the thrips to return soon. We are starting to find a few key predators in cotton this week indicating that they are following the thrips population. Preventively treated cotton has stood up to thrips damage pretty well. Starting at the 2<sup>nd</sup> true leaf stage we started finding immature thrips in these fields, indicating that the residual from the seed treatment was running out.



Cotton damaged by hail, wind, or static will be more susceptible to thrips damage. Monti Vandiver, EA-IPM Parmer/Bailey, recommended considering an economic threshold of 0.5 thrips per leaf stage in those situations.



225 Broadway, Suite 6  
Plainview, TX 79072

Tel: 806.291.5267

Fax: 806.291.5266

E-mail:

Blayne.Reed@ag.tamu.edu

*Blog:*

<http://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/>

WEB

<http://hale.agrilife.org>

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***"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.***

## Corn

Corn did not escape wind or hail damage. Much of that corn looks very rough and beaten. When I evaluate the growing point, it looks to be in good shape. I would expect most of those fields should recover almost fully with some solid yield potential. I did note some green snap over most of the area related to high winds but not enough to become an economic issue. Fields not hit by high winds look really good. Deep moisture remains marginal. Rainfall amounts have really helped the corn, at least for the short-term.

Corn growth stages ranged from V5 to V9. Still finding some spider mites on field margins but high thrips numbers are having a predatory impact, generally holding the mites from progressing. In a few cases the thrips have completely emptied mite colonies. A few other key predators are finding corn also. I recommend keeping an eye on these spider mites but I do not expect to see any treatments made until the corn is much taller.



There are some new and good miticides on the market, but none are systemic. Only the leaves treated with the miticide would be protected from mite infestation. For this reason, I would recommend holding off on any blanket preventative mite treatment.

## Sorghum

Sorghum ranges from seed in the barn to early sorghum at growth stage V7. We are still watching for early mite infestations in sorghum margins also, but as of this date, have not found any. One small greenbug colony was found this week in a field margin adjacent to wheat. Gary Cross, CEA-Hale, announced high numbers of Fall Army Worms trapped this week in Hale County. I would suggest that area producers and consultants should start watching early planted sorghum for whorl feeding and damage aphid pests alike.

## Vegetables

There is a "growing" interest in area farmers markets. The area vegetable crops we have scouted this week have been affected by the high thrips numbers and wind more severely than cotton has. If you are producing tomatoes, I suggest keeping a daily scouting schedule for thrips and thrips damage. Several varieties are very susceptible to thrips damage and can be delayed in fruit production weeks by just a few days of feeding. Thrips damage to onions can be very detrimental during rapid bulb enlargement causing yield loss and onion thrips are known to vector serious onion diseases. Onion thrips are not suspected to be our most populous species of thrips, but they are found here. Orthene is labeled for thrips control in both crops.

Please call or come by if I can be of assistance,

*Blayne*