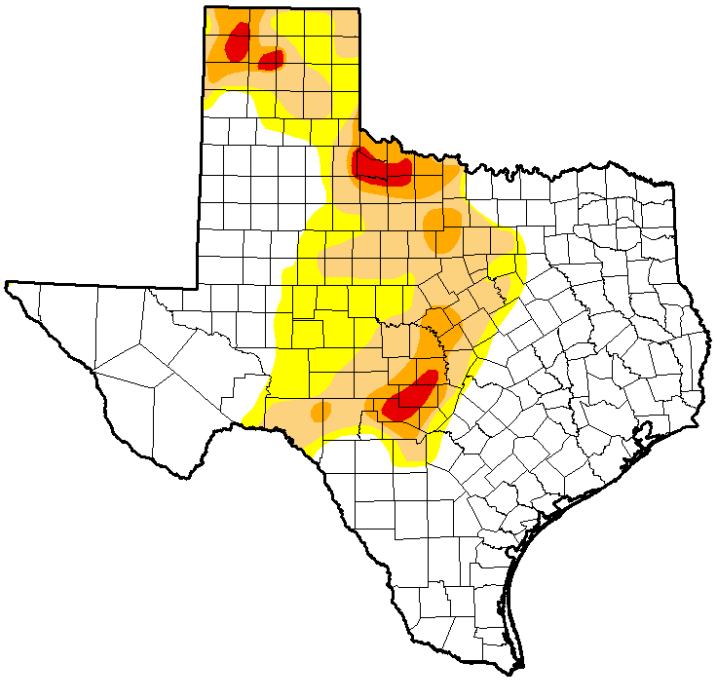
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Plains Pest Management

MAY 19, 2015

General Status

I find it very hard to complain about our month of rain. Not after the past few seasons we have had. So much rain over such an extended period may have put a kink in many of our summer cropping plans this season. With twelve days left in the month of May are still facing soil temperatures nowhere near conducive to cotton planting, assuming the field is not underwater or has a half a dry chance to hold equipment. I still think of the millions of gallons we have not had to pump in pre-irrigation and irrigating our wheat crop. I dare say that our long time thirsty soils are nearing finally near moisture capacity for near the whole profile and our watersheds are finally getting a start on a recharge. Even though we may have some pest challenges ahead of us in 2015 (both insect and weed) and plenty of cropping decisions to make in a hurry, agronomically it does seem that we are ahead of where we have been with help from a moisture standpoint.



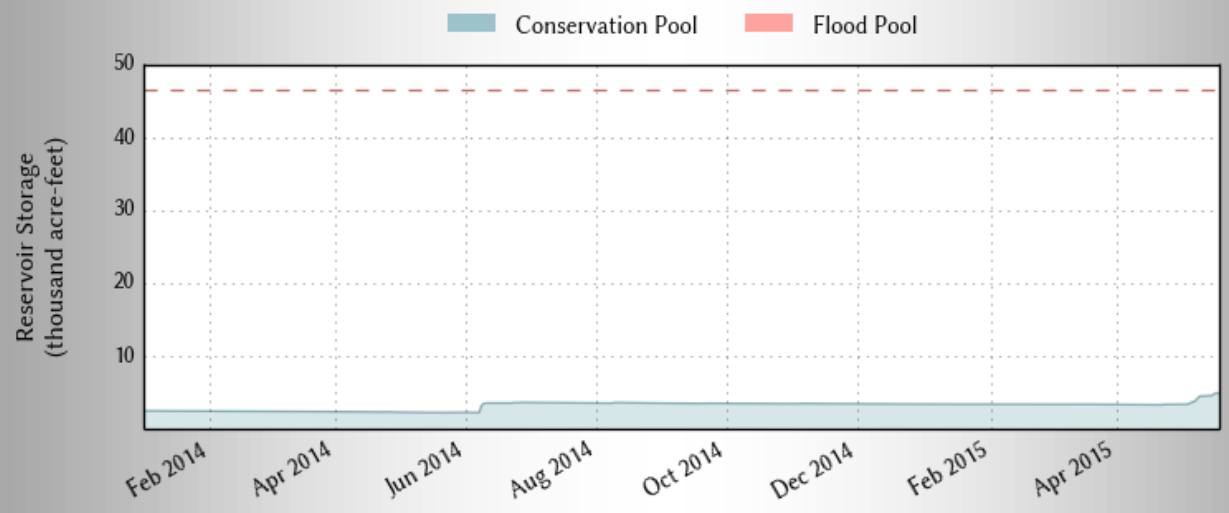
May 12, 2015

(Released Thursday May 14, 2015)

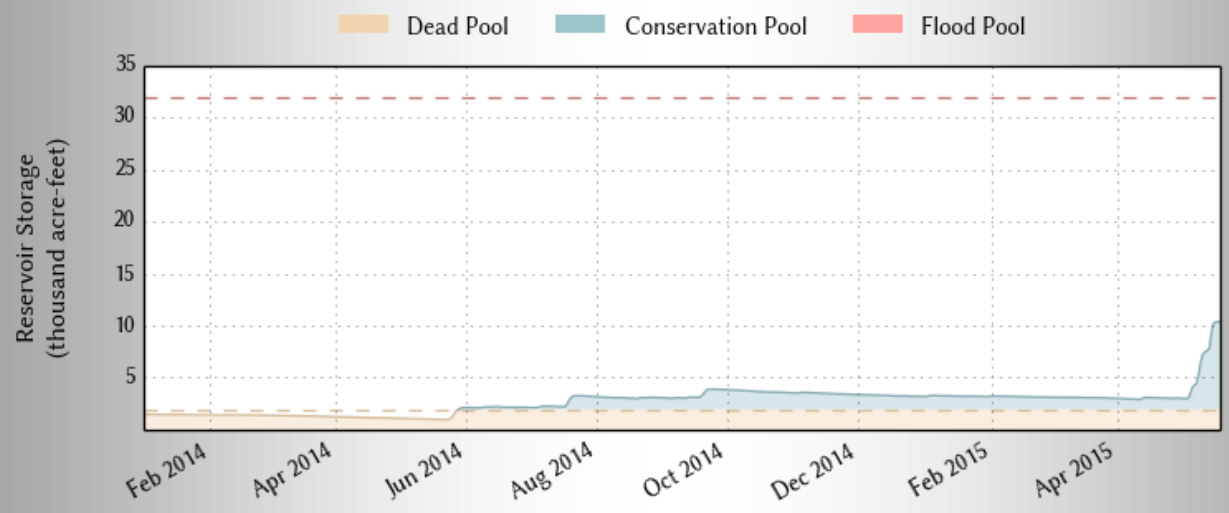
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Some information I pilfered from the web about a few of our area lakes:

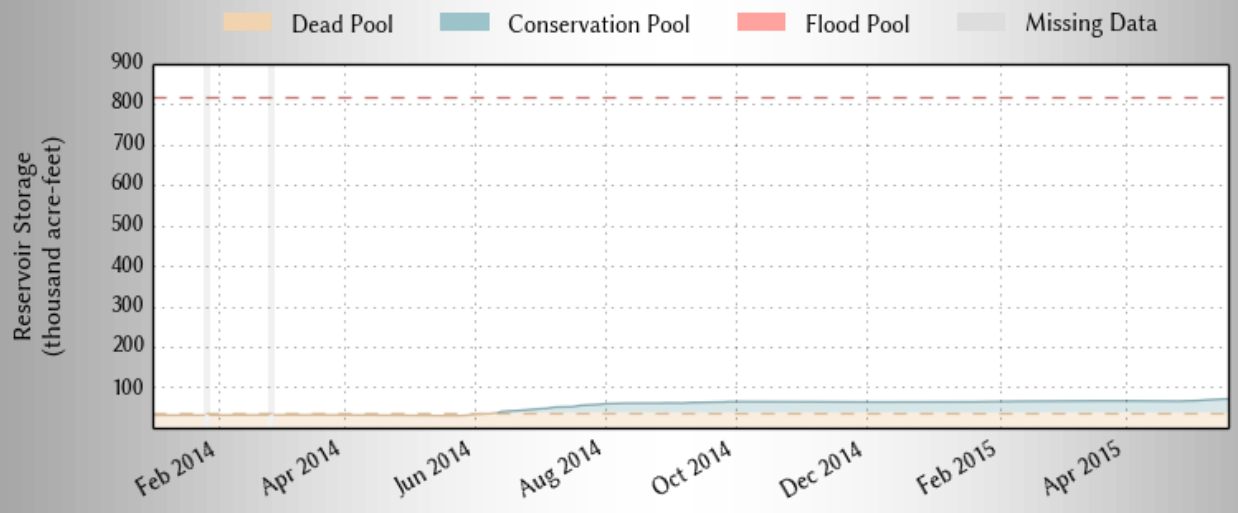
Mackenzie Reservoir is 10.6% full as of 2015-05-19



White River Reservoir is 28.2% full as of 2015-05-19



Lake Meredith is 6.6% full as of 2015-05-19



Cotton

It is safe to say that not very many acres of cotton have been planted into our damp, cool soil thus far. Those that have dodged the heaviest of the rains and had a small window of an afternoon here and there are far from guaranteed to establish into a profitable stand. What little information I have been able to gather from these fields is that wireworms are active on the seedlings but I do not know the level of pressure or damage yet. If and when we can get rolling at planting cotton, I would reassert that our standard seed treatments designed for thrips control offers at least minimum protection from wireworms also.

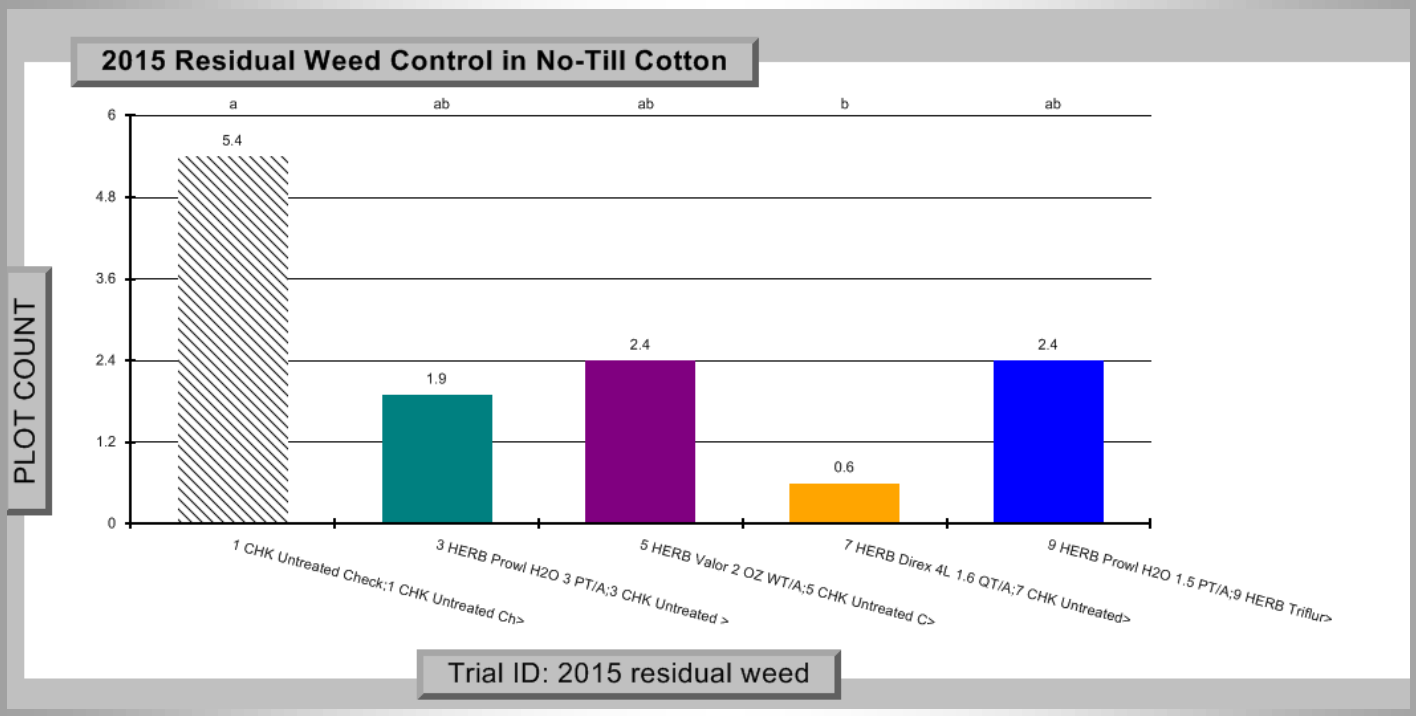
The 'if and when' we can plant seems to be the biggest question producers have today. The best suggestion I can make about changing planting intentions from cotton to another crop is this. In my experience cotton planted as late as May 29th or 30th still has solid yield potential across variety lines if it is planted into good conditions. After that point, I feel we begin capping yield potential with a late crop even though that date is prior to our insurance cut-off date. Like many producers, I too have seed waiting and ready, just waiting on rain to ease and fields to dry and warm. In my case I am hopeful to get 7 research trials out before our cotton planting window slams shut.

2015 Residual Herbicide Trial

One of the few cotton fields that has progressed and is planted contains our 2015 Residual Herbicide Trial. This season the trial is in a no-till situation with terminated wheat for cover in extreme southwestern Swisher. Today I will share our findings thus far in that trial for the pre-plant treatments. We made our pre-plant treatments on March 30, which were integrated with irrigation two days later. The field was planted on May 12 and our factorial treatment of Cotoran was made pre-emerge on May 18. Our pre-plant herbicides included in this trial are:

- UTC
- Prowl H2O @ 3 pts./ac
- Valor @ 2 oz. wt/ac
- Direx 4L @ 1.6 qt./ac
- premix of Prowl H2O and Treflan at 1.5 pts./ac each.

We took weeds per plot counts on April 20, May 4, and May 18th prior to making our factorial Cotoran treatment. The May 18 data was statistically significant (P=0.0117, LSD=0.66t).



Hopefully the field will establish and we can see for reference which of these herbicide treatments worked best season long and how they perform both with the addition the factorial treatment of Cotoran and with out the addition of the additional herbicide.

Corn

I feel that about 70% or our traditionally planted corn is in the ground. Most of this was planted in conditions that were less than optimal even for corn. I have had some concerns about chilling injury or damage that could hinder crop progress and ultimately yield. Although the corn has been slow emerging and growing off and generally has a yellow look and sluggish feel to it, I have not found and sign of serious damage that would lead to long term affects in the corn I have been able to check so far.

Sorghum

Many of us had big plans to plant our intended sorghum acres early as an IPM precaution to dealing with the expected arrival of the sugarcane aphid later in the season. Very little sorghum has been planted to my knowledge. The little that has been planted is fairing similarly to the corn with no serious cold injury that I can find.

The later than intended planting of sorghum will place more pressure on our other IPM management methods for all our sorghum pests. When we consider sugarcane aphid control in particular, I strongly suggest we apply as many of these practices as possible. We must consider using resistant or tolerant varieties, the use of seed treatments, fields must be scouted thoroughly, and

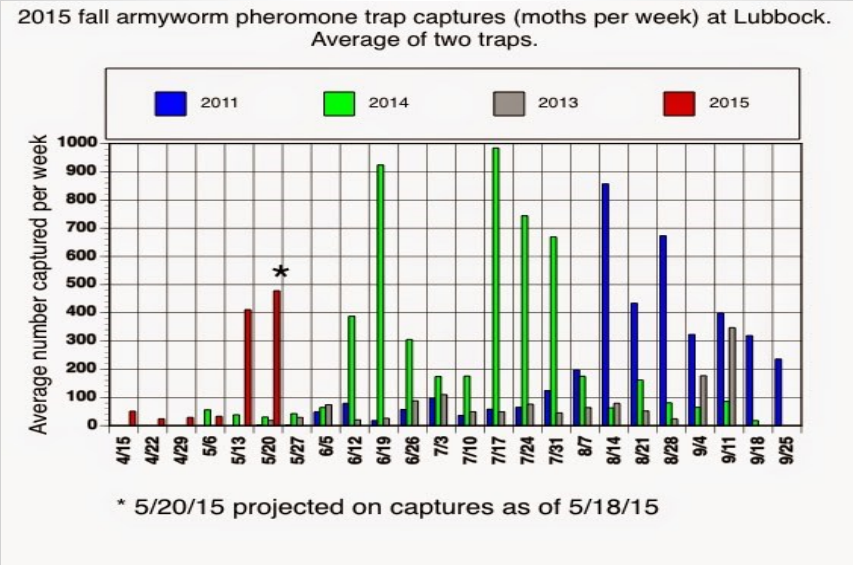
economic (action) thresholds must be adhered to stringently to make this crop a successful one. Even with a later than planned planting date, I feel we can profitably grow sorghum this season, even with the sugarcane aphid when and if it appears on the High Plains again. As proof I would site the increased sorghum plantings in South Texas and along the Gulf Coast, the apparently year-round home for this aphid.

For anyone wanting information dealing with growing an unfamiliar crop due to a last minute, weather forced change, please visit agrilife.org and run a quick search for the needed guide. The research has already been done to help you!

Notes from our District Entomologist

Dr. Pat Porter released two articles on the now blog based Focus that I would like to share here. The first deals with the adult fall armyworm trap catches in Lubbock County thus far:

Fall armyworm trap captures for the last two weeks are averaging around 10 times normal for this time of year.



Normal captures would be in the range of 40 - 50 but we are now seeing weekly captures over 400, and this has been sustained for two weeks. I am not sure what this means in practical terms, but the moths are laying eggs somewhere. Potential early season crop hosts include alfalfa, wheat, grapes, strawberries and some vegetables. Other hosts include several of our weed species.

The abundant rainfall has meant no shortage of early season hosts for these insects and it is looking like it might be a "wormy" year in our row crops.

Thanks Pat. We placed our adult FAW traps for Hale and bollworm for Hale and Swisher on May 18.

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WEB

http://
hale.agrilife.org

For quicker pest alerts-

Plains Pest Bugoshere:
http://
halecountyipm.blogspot.com/

Pest Patrol Hotline, registration at:
www.syngentapestpatrol.com

We're on the air…

"Tuesday's with Blayne" from 6:30—7:00 AM on the 1090 Agri-Plex Report on 1090 AM KVOP-Plainview.

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

The next article from Dr. Porter deals with some of our more modern pesticides, which are often the AI found in our many of our most common seed treatments and the "buzz" about how they relate to honey bee health:

Pollinators Pesticides Politics and Science

President Obama has established a task force to save the honeybees. A White House Blog entry on May 19th announced, "New Steps to Promote Pollinator Health", and this was quickly picked up by the National Media - with varying interpretations of the issues affecting bee health. It is accepted that honeybee decline is a complex issue that involves factors such as varroa mites, pathogens, stress on bees due to movement of hives, neonicotinoid insecticides and other things. So I was surprised to read the first sentence in the Wall Street Journal article today, "The White House is backing efforts to scrutinize the link between pesticides and a dramatic increase in honeybee deaths." (Full article, subscription required.)

Within two hours of the White House blog post, EPA sent an e-mail providing much more detail. Given that there will be widespread press coverage of the pollinator health issue, I thought it might be a good idea to provide links to factual information. The following links were provided in the EPA e-mail this morning:

1. Link to the White House blog
2. The National Strategy to Promote Pollinator Health
3. EPA's role in the national strategy (many other links behind this one)
4. EPA actions to protect pollinators (many other links behind this one)

I am not a honeybee expert and am not qualified to render an opinion on the factors involved in honeybee decline. Research studies are showing both harmful and benign effects of neonicotinoid seed treatments on honeybees. I have entomologist friends, whom I respect as excellent and sincere scientists, who have published papers with conclusions that came down on opposite sides of the issue. And then there is the middle: A recent paper published by Dr. Galen Dively at the University of Maryland found little to no effect of imidacloprid at realistic field doses. The pull quote from the article is, "Everyone is pointing the finger at these insecticides. If you pull up a search on the Internet, that's practically all anyone is talking about," said Galen Dively, emeritus professor of entomology at UMD and lead author of the study. "This paper says no, it's not the sole cause. It contributes, but there is a bigger picture." Here is a link to the University of Maryland webpage, and the scientific article can be accessed from this page.

I have worked with (and against) EPA for many years, and the one thing I know is that their scientists pay attention to scientific research and forward proposals based on science. What happens at the administrative levels of EPA is another matter, and that is where the pressures from interests groups come in to play. EPA tries to make decisions based on science and often succeeds in that effort, but obviously not always.

Honeybee decline is acknowledged to be a multi-faceted problem. In spite of the temptations to jump in and blame or exonerate neonicotinoids, it is really time to wait for more research results to accumulate; complicated problems often take a while to sort out.

Thanks for both articles Pat! If you are having trouble with the links on this newsletter, please visit http://focusonagriculture.blogspot.com/ for the original article and the direct link.

Blayne Reed