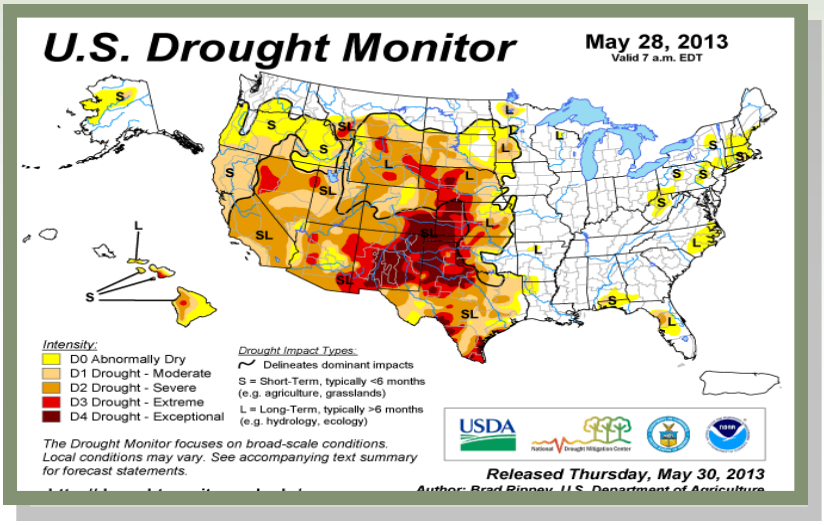
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Plains Pest Management News

MAY 31, 2013

General Situation

Despite rain being forecasted almost every day this past week, conditions remain frustratingly dry with no rain received. Dryland fields are grudgingly being planted with time running out on planting date. Without several inches moisture received soon, there remains little hope of making any dryland crops. Irrigated fields are faring better. Fields with good seedbed moisture are jumping out of the ground and making quick progress. Producers are fighting hard to maintain a good seedbed and prevent blowouts with the ongoing drought conditions and multiple days with high winds robbing soil moisture. Deep subsoil moisture remains short to moderate at best, despite heavy irrigations.



Weed Update

Weeds might be our biggest IPM concern this week. Residual herbicides are already paying dividends, but control is rarely 100%. Conventional tilled fields currently have the least weed pressure, but some Russian thistle, Palmer, and morningglory are emerging behind heavy irrigations. Generally, I would rate control from burndown treatments in no-till fields as moderate to good, but weed escapes are a common sight. In addition to the same few weeds emerging through residual herbicides; marestail, kochia, and field bindweed are common escapees and could be problematic over the coming months. No-till fields with heavier cover are holding up much better than those with less. We will need to keep a close eye on all field situations for weed problems. While resistance to glyphosate is a real possibility for burndown weed escapes, the dry environment is likely the main culprit. If our next herbicide application misses any additional weeds, I would recommend a swift shift in method of control before these weed get much size or any seed development on them. Hoeing or plowing might be the best option, but a mode of action shift involving a hooded spray is an option too.

Cotton

There is very little irrigated cotton yet to be planted. Conditions of these fields today are almost completely dependent upon available seedbed moisture. Stage ranges between dry seed and second true leaf stage, sometimes within the same field. I remain confident that most fields should establish a solid stand as moisture comes or as it is applied.

Thrips:

Thrips pressure in the area is higher than I have seen in several years and they are moving into established cotton a little faster than what I would call normal. Predators are a little slower in the 'to cotton migration' at this time. Our thrips counts and pressure this week still depended mostly upon plant stage. Fields that were just emerging or at cotyledon stage ranged from 0 to 1.5 thrips per plant with the lower numbers being more common. Once fields reached the first or second true leaf stage, thrips pressure increased significantly, ranging from 0.7 thrips per plant in a preventatively treated field to 9.1 in an untreated field. Seed treatments or in-furrow insecticides appear to be controlling thrips very well. We have noted very little reproduction in those situations thus far, but adult migration is very high. Reproduction and migration was abundant in untreated fields. Fields planted in wheat stubble also appeared less attractive to thrips at this time. I recommend all fields be scouted for pressure and reproduction this week.

Adult thrips are straw colored insects 1/16 to 1/12 inch long. The wings are fringed and held flat directly over the body when at rest. Immature thrips look similar to the adults but have no wings and are somewhat lighter in color. All thrips have rasping mouthparts including a single mandible that the thrips uses to scrape and jab host plant tissue. The thrips then consume the resulting 'bleeding' of plant juices. Thrips often feed in the more sheltered and tender terminal or growing point of the cotton plant, requiring very close inspections to acquire an accurate population count. The ensuing damage causes scaring and malformation of the young leaves at a time when plants need healthy leaves for energy and a good start.

The economic threshold (ET) for thrips remains at one thrips per true leaf stage, but there are multiple factors to consider in conjunction with that threshold. The presence or absence of immature thrips should represent the primary additional consideration. The presence of immature thrips indicates that the thrips are reproducing in the field and will be there causing damage for some time. Some other factors include the recognition of light thrips damage, plant stage, and predator populations.

I feel that if a producer is going to be making an herbicide treatment this week, adding a thrips treatment to the mix is a real consideration for all situations in Hale and Swisher County. Fields without any preventative thrips control and a confirmed population might require a thrips treatment sooner than expected.

Wireworms:

Wireworm damage can be found in the majority of area cotton fields, but I would rate their damage as very light to light. Some early planted fields experienced some significant stand loss to wireworms (in addition to other factors) while rapidly emerging later fields have almost no stand issue related to wireworms. The heaviest wireworm damage we noted in later planted cotton is roughly a 5,000 plant per acre reduction in stand.

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We're on the air…

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

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

Corn

Area corn continues to progress well. Growth stages varied between V4 and V8. Fields with less available deep moisture were showing signs of heat stress in the high winds and temperatures this week. We are noting some early spider mite development on the edges of some fields adjacent to CRP. These colonies were very small but have begun reproducing. These fields need to be monitored for mite progression, but I do not see any economic situations worthy of treatment yet.

One benefit to the high thrips pressure in the area is that it might result in mite control in our corn fields. Thrips prefer to feed on corn but cause no measurable economic loss. As they feed, mite colonies are often consumed along the way. Predacious thrips can also be in abundance on high thrips years and mites are among their favorite prey.

Sorghum

Much like corn, early planted sorghum is progressing well, already at the V3 – V5 leaf stage and still determining head size and maximum yield potential. I have noted no pests in sorghum at this time. Some later sorghum has been planted and seeds are starting to sprout. Plenty of sorghum is yet to be planted.

Please call if I can be of assistance,

Blayne