

Blacklands IPM Newsletter

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Status

Cotton is progressing well, with most producers staying on top of fleahoppers with timely sprays. Some fields still need watching for thrips, but others are at match-head square. Corn looks promising despite not having enough moisture during silking.

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Cotton

Cotton aphids (picture right) may be taking off in some fields following treatments for thrips and fleahoppers.

Unfortunately, the few products we have to treat these pests are highly toxic to beneficial insects, including ladybugs, lacewings, minute pirate bugs, and parasitoid wasps. When these natural enemies of aphids are eliminated, and with fire ants guarding the aphid colonies from danger, we can see population booms.



Cotton aphid feeding causes leaves to cup downward.

Early season infestations of aphids that feed on the young terminal leaves and buds can cause square and leaf loss. However, treating for aphids is rarely economical before first bloom. Typically natural enemies can work quickly to bring their populations down (unless of course they are being carefully guarded by scores of ants). Before making a treatment decision for aphids, consider the beneficial insect population. If you see around 20% of the aphids are parasitized (mummies), or there are one or two ladybugs (adults or larvae) in 10 ft-row, a spray may not be necessary.

Corn



Corn ranges from milk to dough stage. Corn earworm larvae are feeding and emerging quickly, and will soon produce an adult generation that will begin to lay eggs in our cotton fields. We are seeing both Bt and non-Bt corn with similar infestation levels, but yield damage appears to be negligible in both.