



Blacklands IPM Update



GENERAL:

Wheat is turning the last corner and headed for the finish line, with some wheat fields starting to turn last week. Most of the hard-red winter wheat fields in the scouting program are in the medium dough stage. An increase in daily temperatures and decrease in rain fall can quickly speed this maturation process up but look like it could be delayed due to a cold front moving through later this week. Cotton planted before this wet weather pattern started is up and some acres will need to be replanted once fields dry out enough to get equipment into the field. This wet spell is exposing these young cotton plants to both seedling insects and seedling diseases.

WHEAT:

Hard red winter wheat fields in the area are starting to turn while the soft wheat in the area is still in the milk to early dough stage. Wheat could benefit from hot dry days to help finish the maturation process. Black chaff/bacterial leaf streak is being found in new fields, and I recently found a few soft red wheat fields with symptoms of black chaff. As long as we stay in this wet weather pattern, we will see the disease to continue to spread within fields, and be found in new fields. This bacterial disease can be seed borne, and Dr. Ken Obasa the extension plant pathologist in Amarillo is offering to test your seed for *Xanthomonas* contamination. I am waiting to here back on the amount of seed needed, what information is needed, and the cost per sample for testing. Insect and disease pest are slowly playing out, but there are still chances for some occasional head disease to pop up.

COTTON:

The saturated soil conditions around much of the area, and the forecast for more rains during this week could lead to high thrips populations in cotton that has already emerged. Since much of the cotton I have seen up around Hill County has not started squaring, fields in the scouting program have yet to reach the 1st true leaf stage as of Friday (May 3rd) these fields are very susceptible to thrips. These cotton fields were averaging around 0.4 thrips per true leaf and are well below the economic threshold. Insecticide seed treatments typically last only about 21 days if were lucky, this is hopefully enough time to get the plant up and running to a point where its growth is quicker than what thrips can damage the plants.

For fields that have not been planted yet, as we move later in the year and closer to wheat harvest our potential to see thrips damage in these cotton fields increases. However, we do have to look at that our weather conditions at this time will be excellent for the growth of cotton and could lead to minimal thrips damage. Thrips will hang out in wheat until it dries down and becomes unfavorable, and then move to the more tender young cotton plants, before moving into corn around the silk stage.

Thrips damage can lead to stunted plants, delayed maturity, loss of apical dominance leading to bushy cotton plants that are hard to harvest and can even cause plant death. Visual symptoms of damage include silvering of the lower leaf surface, leaf deformations, and blackened leaf tissue. The economic threshold for thrips in cotton is one thrips per true leaf, and seedling with only cotyledons are considered to have 1 true leaf for this threshold. There are multiple management practices for thrips which include insecticide seed treatments, in furrow insecticides such as imidacloprid and acephate, and foliar insecticide applications for when the seed treatment and/or in furrow insecticide stop managing thrips populations.

CORN & SORGUM:

The milo acres in the scouting program are up and looking good. The biggest issue observed currently is excess soil moisture which is causing poor stand establishment as well as washouts covering seeds/young seedlings with too much soil. Sugarcane aphids have not been found in any milo field in the scouting program yet. The closets report of sugarcane aphids in milo is down in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. It is important to keep an eye out for sugarcane aphids and spray as soon as their population reaches the economic threshold.

Corn is off to a good start, however, some fields are growing slower than others thanks to the excess soil moisture in certain fields. This is leading to reduced plant growth including the roots, reduced uptake of key nutrients, and an increased risk for foliar diseases. Aflatoxin biocontrol products like AF-36/Prevail and Afla-Guard were being applied by ground last week, and expect some to start being flown on in the coming weeks as our fields get closer to the V6 to V8 growth stages. The increased humidity and rainfall, can be beneficial for the atoxigenic product to effectively sporulate on the medium, but some rain showers led to excessive surface runoff which could have washed these product out of the field.

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Authors:
Tyler Mays, Extension Agent-IPM Hill & McLennan Counties
Zach Davis, County Extension Agent-AG/NR

126 South Covington Street
P.O. Box 318
Hillsboro, Texas 76645
Phone: 254-582-4022
Fax: 254-582-4021
Mobile: 979-482-0111
Email: Tyler.mays@ag.tamu.edu



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