

*Pest Management News
News About integrated pest management for
producers in Runnels-Tom Green Counties*

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GENERAL SITUATION

Cotton planting is finally completed. Planters were running full speed last week to meet the June 20th deadline. Cotton ranges in growth from cotyledon to matchhead square stage.

Rain showers continued over the weekend dropping 0.25 to 1.0 inches of rainfall. Fell nice and slow “Thank God” and was perfect for all those acres recently planted. Now we need sunshine and heat units. I am not going to say much about heat units because that is one thing we are seldom short of in this area.

Insect pressure on cotton is very light at this time. Not finding much of anything on cotton. Weed pressure is the major problem. I have seen a lot of sprayers running this past week or so. Some weeds serve as host plants for cotton fleahoppers and therefore once cotton begins to square you should focus on square retention and cotton fleahopper numbers. As these weed hosts die, the fleahopper will move into cotton.

Grain sorghum looks great. Not much insect pressure right now but scout regularly. Fall armyworms have infested haygrazer and forage sorghum fields. Grain sorghum could be next. Dr. Pat Porter, Extension Entomologist in Lubbock, reports very high fall armyworm trap catches. He is sending me pheromone and we will begin trapping next week. Monitor your sorghum fields closely for whorl damage.



The fall armyworm infests the whorls and grain heads of sorghum plants. Larvae hatching from eggs laid on sorghum leaves before grain heads are available migrate to and feed on tender, folded leaves in the whorl. To find larvae in sorghum whorl, pull the plant and unfold it. Frass, or larval excrement, is present where larvae feed within the whorl. Damaged leaves unfolding from the whorl are ragged with “shot holes.” Although this may look dramatic, leaf damage usually does not reduce yields greatly, and control of larvae during the whorl stage is seldom economically justified. Also, larvae within the whorl are somewhat protected from insecticide.

An insecticide application may be justified if larval feeding reduces leaf area by more than 30 percent or is damaging the developing grain head or growing point within the whorl. Folks that have coastal fields need to check for the presence of fall armyworms. They can cause significant damage to hay crop in a short period of time.

If treatment is warranted, some suggested insecticides would include Beseige, Prevathon and Belt. Keep in mind these pests are in the whorl of the plant and good coverage is essential for adequate control.

Fleahopper..... I don't think we will have widespread problems with fleahoppers but I think we certainly need to monitor our cotton fields regularly for presence of fleahoppers once fruiting begins. We don't need any delays.



Image Citation:: James Smith, Mississippi State University,
Bugwood.org Node Affiliation: University of Georgia

Adult fleahoppers are about 1/8 inch long and pale green. Nymphs resemble adults but lack wings and are light green. They move very rapidly when disturbed. Adults move into cotton from weed hosts when cotton begins to square. Both adults and nymphs suck sap from the tender portion of the plant, including small squares. Pinhead size and small squares are most susceptible to damage.

Management and Decision Making.... The decision to apply insecticide should be based on the number of fleahoppers present, the squaring rate and the percent square set. If conditions are conducive to the rapid build up of cotton fleahoppers in alternate hosts, scouting intervals should be shortened (i.e., monitor fields every 3 to 4 days).

During the first week of squaring, the economic threshold is 25 to 30 cotton fleahoppers per 100 terminals combined with less than 90 percent square set. In the second week of squaring, the economic threshold is 25 to 30 cotton fleahoppers per 100 terminals combined with less than 85 percent square set. Starting with the third week of squaring up to first bloom, the economic threshold is 25 to 30 cotton fleahoppers per 100 terminals, combined with less than 75 percent square set.

As plants increase in size and fruit load, larger fleahopper populations can be tolerated without yield reduction. In most years, treatment is rarely justified after first bloom. However, occasionally, when cotton plants do not set an adequate square load during the first 3 weeks of squaring, fleahoppers can prevent the square set that is needed for an adequate crop.

TURNROW MEETINGS

TURNROW MEETINGS..... Wall Coop at 9:00 am July 8th. Ballinger Courthouse, Third Floor, Large Room at 8:30 am on July 9th. See you there.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!!!