



Improving Lives. Improving Texas.

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

*Richard Minzenmayer
Extension Agent-IPM
613 Hutchins Ave., Room 302
Ballinger, Tx 76821
Phone (325) 365-5212 Fax (365) 365-5212
TPMA Website: <http://www.tpma.org>*

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E-mail: r-minzenmayer@tamu.edu
Website: <http://ipm.tamu.edu>
Mobile (325) 365-1292
Runnels County Website: <http://runnels-tx.tamu.edu>*

GENERAL SITUATION

Much of the Concho Valley received some much needed rainfall last night and today (Thursday). Reports of 2 to 4 inches in Runnels County and lesser amounts in Tom Green County. It came at the perfect time. Most of the cotton is squaring and a few cotton fields began blooming this week. Generally, we are in great shape. May be a week or so behind in maturity but the cotton plant can easily set a significant fruit load in the next three weeks.

Cotton ranges in growth from 5 TL to bloom stage. Cotton fleahopper numbers jumped way up this week. Numbers ranged from 0 to 58 fleahoppers per 100 terminals. Producers are encouraged to begin scouting regularly for the presence of fleahoppers. Remember, we want the square sets at 90% or better the first week of squaring and 80-85% the second week of squaring. Average in scouting program is 96%.

Growers need to stay on top of weed control. It sure seems like there are a lot of (misses) in some fields. These “misses” need to be destroyed quickly or a **REAL PROBLEM** is going to present itself. Sharpen up those choppin’ hoes men...

GRAIN SORGHUM

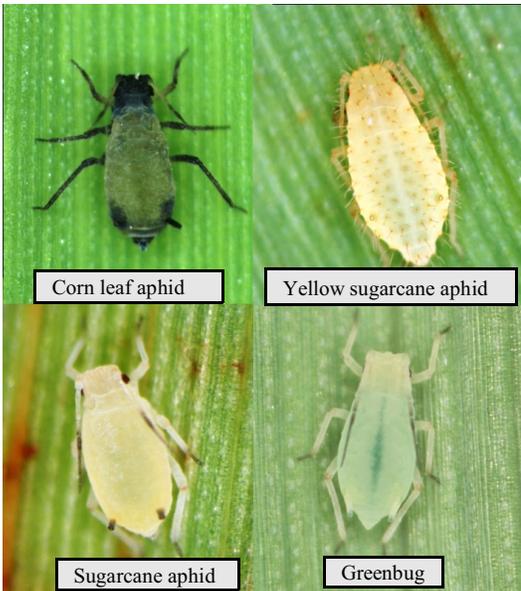
Sorghum looks great and many fields finished blooming this week. Begin checking for headworms using the beat bucket method. I discussed this method in a previous newsletter and discussed the Sorghum Headworm Calculator last week but some growers have asked for a simple economic threshold (ET) where a computer or smart phone does not have to be used. So, a simple ET for sorghum headworm is 12 one-half inch or larger larvae per 25 heads or 1 one-half inch or larger larvae per 2 heads. Stinkbugs are also being found in many sorghum fields and the ET level is 1 stinkbug per 3 heads or 8 stinkbugs per 25 heads.

Sugarcane aphids continue to spread and are causing significant problems in the Blacklands according to Marty Jungman, EA-IPM in Hillsboro. I visited with two growers in San Saba County on Tuesday and Wednesday and they indicated they had major problems in their sorghum fields and needed help. Photo’s sent to me indicated that these fields may be infested with sugarcane aphids. These infestations have NOT been confirmed. It’s difficult to confirm with just a few photos. The point here guys, we need to monitor our sorghum fields regularly for the present of this potential pest. Let me know immediately if you suspect a potential problem. I want to take this time to thank the Sugarcane Aphid Task Force for creating a publication and grower awareness for this new invasive pest in Texas. The following information is taken from the Sugarcane Aphid Task Force publication: “Sugarcane Aphid: A New Pest of Sorghum”, ENTO-035, 2/14.

Description and Biology..... The sugarcane aphid is described as being grey to tan or light yellow in color. (Figure 1). Unlike other common aphid species that feed on sorghum, the cornicles (paired, tailpipe-like structures at the rear of the aphid) are dark in color and the tarsi (feet) are also dark as seen at high magnifications (see Figure 2 for comparison of different aphid species). These dark cornicles and tarsi contrast distinctively with the lighter body color of the sugarcane aphid. Sugarcane aphid can be distinguished from greenbug because it does not have the distinctive darker green stripe down the back of the greenbug. It is NOT the yellow sugarcane aphid and can



Figure 1. *Melanaphis sacchari*, Sugarcane Aphid Photo: Dr. David Kerns



be distinguished by the absence of numerous hairs on the body, as can be seen with magnification. Also, the sugarcane aphid legs and head are not as dark as they are on the corn leaf aphid.

Figure 2. All aphids reared by Dr. Scott Armstrong, USDA--ARS Lab Stillwater, and photographed by Dr. Rick Grantham.. Oklahoma State University Insect Diagnostic Lab, Dept. of Entomology and Plant Pathology. Stillwater, OK.

Early in the infestation cycle, sugarcane aphids colonize the underside of the more mature, lower sorghum leaves. Then progressively move upward infesting all leaves and may eventually colonize even the seed heads (panicles) (Figure 3). Small colonies quickly grow to large colonies which produce large amount of sticky honeydew on the leaf surface.



Figure 3. Sugarcane aphids colonizing grain sorghum leaves. Photographer: unknown

Damage from Aphids... The aphid injects a toxin while feeding which causes leaves to turn yellow to red or brown

(Figures 4 and 5 on last page). Large infestations can kill young seedling plants and can prevent the formation of grain. Additionally, the high amount of honeydew produced will support growth of the black, soot mold fungus (which interferes with photosynthesis). Since the infestations this past year were late in the season, the extensive amount of honeydew caused problems with harvesting. The honeydew coated leaves and stalks were sticking to the inner parts of the combine and prevented the grain from being threshed off the sorghum head, causing the heads to “ride over” and fall to the ground. Producers reported up to 50% losses in yield in 2013.

Management and Control.... The natural beneficial insects that are associated with other sorghum aphids were also found feeding within the sugarcane colonies. These natural aphid enemies were lady beetles, syrphid fly larvae, green lacewings, and parasitic wasps. Unfortunately, the aphid populations increased so quickly that the beneficial insects could not prevent damage and yield losses. Insecticides will be discussed if pest becomes an issue.



Figures 4 and 5. Damage symptoms from sugarcane aphid feeding. Photographer: left– unknown, right – Dr. David Kerns

UPCOMING MEETINGS

TURNROW MEETINGS..... Wall Coop at 9:00 am on July 22nd. Ballinger Courthouse, Third Floor, Large Room at 8:30 am on July 23rd. See you there.

2014 BIG COUNTRY WHEAT CONFERENCE coming Thursday, August 14 beginning at 8:30a.m. at the Taylor County Expo Center, Big Country Hall. 3 CEU's 1 IPM, 1 General, 1 L&R. Event is free of charge if you register by August 12th or \$20 at the door. FMI or to register, please call 325-672-6048. For agenda go to:
<http://today.agrilife.org/2014/07/09/big-country-wheat-conference-set-aug-14-in-abilene/>

A MULTI-COUNTY FARM BILL MEETING is set for Wednesday September 24th. It will be held from 8:30-12:00 noon at the Tom Green County 4-H Building. This is a very necessary meeting. Many changes are coming and almost everything you do will pertain to internet and computers. A decision aid has been built by Dr. Joe Outlaw,, and his group to assist producers in making management decisions on their individual farms. Here is the website you can go to now and get started setting up your account and learning about the new farm program.

2014 Farm Bill-Farm Program and Insurance Decision Aid

<https://www.afpc.tamu.edu/models/decisionaid.php>

1. Must click "I Agree" at bottom of this page. User is agreeing that the information and decision tools are provided for educational use only. Users should be mindful that the results are highly dependent upon their assumed commodity prices over the lifetime of the farm bill. Users are urged to analyze their choices over a wide range of possible future prices.
2. Set up an account under "My Account"
3. Compile data under "My Data"-information needed from FSA and your Insurance agency.
4. Decisions Aids are located under "FSA Program"- data entered under My Data is used by decisions tools. Once data is confirmed by user the tools will make calculations for users to consider.