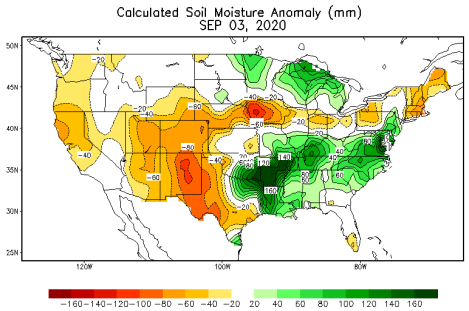
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

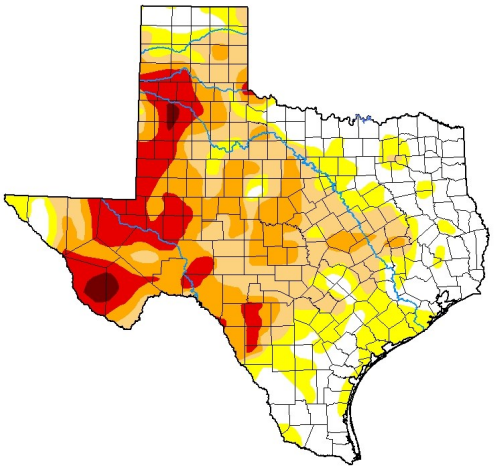
Plains Pest Management News

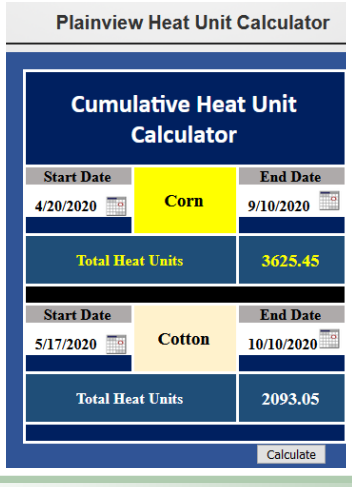
SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

General Status

It seems hard to remember today, but we did see some widespread and beneficial rain this last week. For many fields that were already so far behind, it was a nice start. According to Pivotrack Rain Page, this was only the second rain event to deliver over 0.3-inches for many gauges since last September. As best I can estimate from the Pivotrack page, this also brings area rain totals somewhere between just over 5-inches to just under 8-inches for 2020. While it was a bit late, especially for already harvested grain crops, it did help many fields in the later stages of development. Many of these fields moved "past" pest issues this week. Or at least the typical, major pests should not be able to establish. We had several corn and sorghum fields ease into a dry down for harvest mode and most cotton slip into a finishing boll development and simpler maintenance phase. Meanwhile, there are many pests still active. In fact, our bollworm trap numbers are up this week. With fewer and fewer fields still lush enough to attract and support these and other pests, we might start to see several moderate populations concentrate on those few fields and cause major issues if we do not maintain vigilance. While 2020 growing season feels to be winding down (both from exhaustion and development) those cotton fields still sporting a few blooms, sorghum not at hard dough, and corn still in dough might be at higher risk now.







Cotton

Our program cotton had all reached absolute cut-out of 3.5 NAWF several weeks ago and 25% are now sporting open bolls. For fields this far along, we are only giving quick spot checks for cotton aphids and stink bugs. These should be the only pests that are now able to economically threaten these fields. The aphids could do so through making sticky cotton through honeydew excretion and the stink bugs through older boll damage causing malformations, loss, and hard lock. In these fields, we found neither. We did see a few aphids and stink bugs in lusher cotton and, for stink bugs only, in late sorghum. The threshold for cotton aphids in fields with open cotton is 12 per leaf. Our only field hosting any aphids was too lush to be a concern for a light aphid population and it held 0.004 per leaf.

In our lusher fields still attractive and at risk to the spectrum of pests, we did find a few bollworms, Lygus, those stink bugs, and a few foliage feeding worm species. Our highest bollworm count came in at 3,948 worms per acre with 726 of these being medium worms, or those between ¼-inch and ¾-inch. Last week, this field held 3,500 small worms per acre indicating a 79.3% natural mortality rate in this non-Bt field from small to medium worm stages in a week. Our only other cotton field where worms were found held 968 medium worms, down from 3,450 with a 71.9% mortality rate. Neither of these fields were treated and both exhibited less than 1% harvestable fruit damage. Both held what I consider good beneficial populations.

This bollworm, and the nearby fleahopper with it, came off in a drop cloth from one of our lusher cotton fields this week.

Field that will still be at risk for all pests at least another week.

Lygus were harder to find in-field this week, but our high came in at a nervous 1 Lygus per 4.5 row feet with most fields not holding any detectable Lygus. Stink bugs were just as scarce, but when found were in clustered groups that totaled about 1 per 13.5 row feet or so with no detectable boll damage yet. All foliage feeding larva, cabbage loopers with a few BAW, were all below 1,000 per acre with ET being about 50,000 per acre, or common damage to harvestable fruit around the 6% level.

Corn and Sorghum

A corn earworm found in our late corn this week.

All of our corn not already in dry down this week is in late dough stage. Banks grass mites (BGM) were still our only pest of note this week. With some rains and a few dewy mornings, mite diseases returned and aided in mite control, dropping our 0-10 damage rating in our highest field from a 2.89 field average rating to a 1.88. So far, we have had no field require mite treatment this season in our program, while several surrounding areas have treated most corn fields. It is a bit rare that mites would still threaten this late, but this is 2020 and these later fields are a few weeks from being out of danger. We did note bollworms, or corn earworms in this case, in most of our non-VIP corn. It seems we have had enough late corn to attract and 'sink' most of our already light worm pressure into the corn where they are of limited to no economic importance. This has helped our cotton and sorghum economics again this year.

Our sorghum that is still susceptible to pests ranged in stage from VX to hard dough this week. Sugarcane aphids (SCA), were again our main focus but not the only pest of note. We were still finding sorghum midge on blooming sorghum, but no field reached treatable levels like they did last week. Our midge high was only 0.125 midge per blooming head. Headworms (all bollworms) were in most fields, but only up to a very light high of 0.05 small worms per head and far below ET. BGM were again a concern and rode dangerously close to ET for some of the older fields finally ready to begin dry down, but not at a level that caused concern over stalk integrity. This might have been made possible by the natural mortality from predators and environmentally kicked off mite diseases here too. Fields not ready to begin natural dry down with maturity need to be watched for BGM carefully. Heavy mite populations causing premature desiccation often cause lodging issues. This week we had no fields require treatment for SCA. This is the first week this have been true for several weeks. In fact, we now have had two fields reach maturity without requiring treatment. The aphids crashed in these fields this week after flaunting the ET line for a while. If this stands, this will be the first time SCA have not required treatment in May or later planted sorghum in my experience since their arrival in 2015.

Much of the High Plains IPM team working together on our SCA trial data this week at Halfway.

AgriLife Extension Service / Texas Pest Management Association

225 Broadway, Suite 6
Plainview, TX 79072
Tel: 806.291.5267
Fax: 806.291.5266
E-mail: Blayne.Reed@ag.tamu.edu

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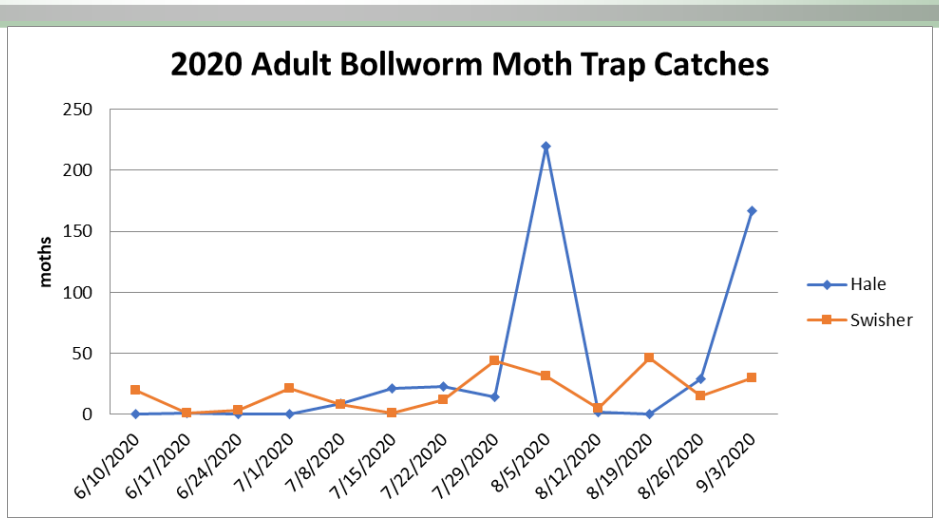

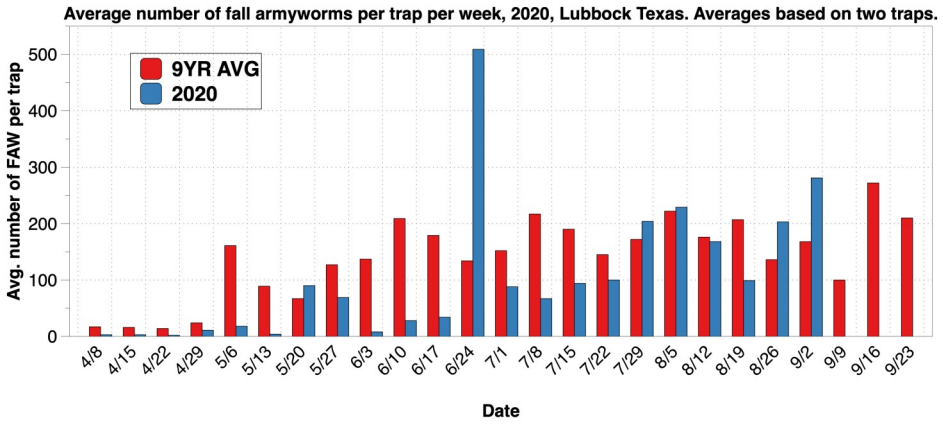

Dr. David Kerns, State IPM Coordinator, has been working this year with bioassays of SCA sent to his lab in College Station from across the State, trying to monitor any resistance to Sivanto. Here are some of his LC50 results. While Halfway and South Texas are elevated, they are still well within expected susceptible levels.

Location	LC50	dose range
Halfway	5.63	4.54-6.80 ppm
Olton	1.32	0.73-2.07 ppm
Muleshoe	1.73	1.20-2.37 ppm
South Texas	5.26	3.81-7.33 ppm
College Station	1.78	1.35-2.28 ppm
Corpus	2.66	1.85-3.66 ppm
Hillsboro	2.03	1.43-2.77 ppm
Ballinger	0.69	0.44-0.99 ppm

Blayne Reed