TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Plains Pest Management

AUGUST 12, 2016

General Status

In West Texas, we never turn down a good rain. When it comes at peak water use for the majority of our irrigated cotton crop, it is ok to give a sigh of relief if not a shout for joy when it finally comes. Our irrigation wells and crops metaphorically did just that this week. From all information I can gather, the finally arriving general rainfall event earlier this week gave just about everyone in Hale, Swisher, & Floyd between 0.5-inch to almost 3-inches of moisture. I am aware of one storm on Monday afternoon that brought some high winds and hail to the Aiken, Lockney area but I am not sure how severe the damage is. The rains did come some days to weeks too late for much of the dryland crops of all types. While there are plenty of dryland fields that we had already given the last rights, I do not feel the rain was totally wasted on all dryland fields, but it was not as big a boon as it could have been if it had arrived earlier. Hopefully the moisture will not kickoff regrowth or other debilitating issues.

I would urge irrigated producers, especially of cotton, to not overestimate how far this rain will carry a crop in this critical 'crunch time' of 5 NAWF (nodes above white flower) to 3.5 NAWF that most area irrigated fields are currently in. Every drop of soil moisture is precious during this time as the plants are trying to set multiple bolls per plant daily. Even a few hours of undue stress right now will not just ding yields, but slice huge chunks off the top as plants will abort any fruit it cannot set at any given moment. We will not be making anymore squares that have any hope of making a boll for the remainder of the season. We will still have irrigation needs a few days or weeks from now but that will only be a fraction of what is needed right now. Once we are past 'crunch time' in just a few more days to weeks, our tired wells can take those much needed longer breaks without hurting the pocket book so much.

A plant from a Plains Pest Management cotton field. The load is good, but the plant can still set more good bolls from available squares and blooms, if it is given enough resources quick.

Cotton

This week our scouting program cotton ranged in stage from a first full week of bloom 6 NAWF to a diminutive little absolute cut-out with no blooms or squares left to set. In both of these situations, the fruit load can be described as really good. The type of load between these two fields is much different. One has a lot of squares to make into bolls in a very little amount of time, while the other has large, beautiful bolls filling branches from the tiny plant's top to lowest reproductive branch. In both cases, I can say that I wish they had a longer period of effective blooming. In the case of the younger field, it only has about 12 days max from the date of this writing of tight rope blooming and high water and fertilizer needs to set all the bolls it can without going rank. And then it needs a good fall and management to properly fill those bolls with quality cotton lint. The absolute cut-out field just needs maintenance irrigations and / or rains and is a prime candidate for a September gin date if optimum conditions prevail.

Field with good boll load that should be finished with effective boll set by next week.

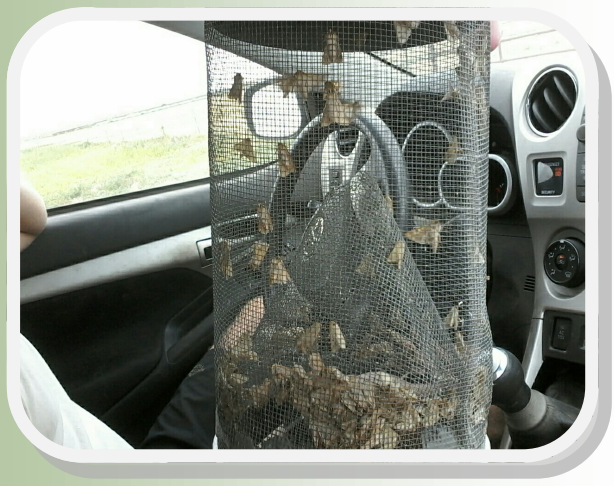
The vast majority of our program fields are still setting good fruit between the 3.5 NAWF absolute cut-out line and 5 NAWF peak bloom line. I feel that by this time next week, 90% of our fields will have set all possible fruit and be finished putting on yield a tad ahead of our last effective bloom date of August 24th despite a bit of a late and rough start. Boll set remains high but drop has increased as plants inevitably naturally shed what they do not have the resources to develop into bolls. While we strive to hold every boll through 'crunch time', this is realistically impossible and we should expect to lose some bolls naturally at cut-out no matter our inputs. Instead, we need realistic boll set expectations for the limited inputs we have and focus them as best we can during known critical times. Under good conditions like these, and in the absence of major pest issues sneaking by, our producer base in Hale, Swisher, & Floyd are known to turnout large quantities of some really good cotton bales when the right buttons are pushed during critical agronomic phases.

On the pest front, we did have an increase in Lygus pressure in cotton this week. This pressure was below economic threshold (ET)for our program fields and did not cause any additional fruit loss above the natural cut-out shed, but is worth keeping

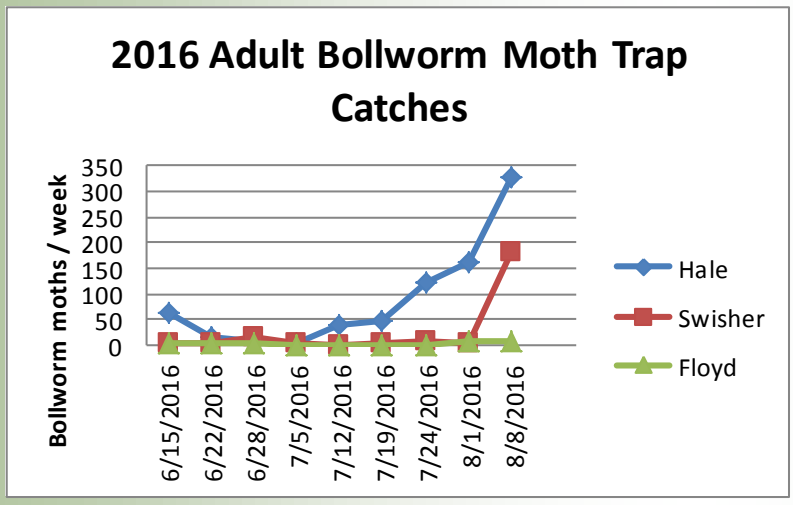
an eye on, especially because we found Lygus nymphs alongside adults indicating that the Lygus were reproducing in the field and intended to stay put for a while. In cotton already experiencing fruit loss at cut-out, I would consider a good ET to be 1 Lygus per 1.5 to 2 feet if they are causing fruit drop to fruit that would otherwise make harvestable bolls.

The PPM Hale County adult bollworm moth trap this week. A little worse for weather and wear, but still

Our Hale and Swisher adult bollworm moth traps experienced a huge jump in moth catches this week. This is likely the large population of bollworms (or corn earworms, or sorghum headworms if you like) that gave our neighbors down south through the rest of Texas so many problems earlier this year finally blowing in with some southern fronts that pushed the moisture up for the recent rain. We have not found any egg lay in cotton yet, but we did note moths in field. It is very likely these moths will be more attracted to the late corn or sorghum in the area, but there are no guarantees. Our numbers of headworms are already up some in sorghum this week and there is a reasonable probability that peak-blooming cotton fields, especially non-Bt fields without corn nearby, would be viewed as an ideal host.



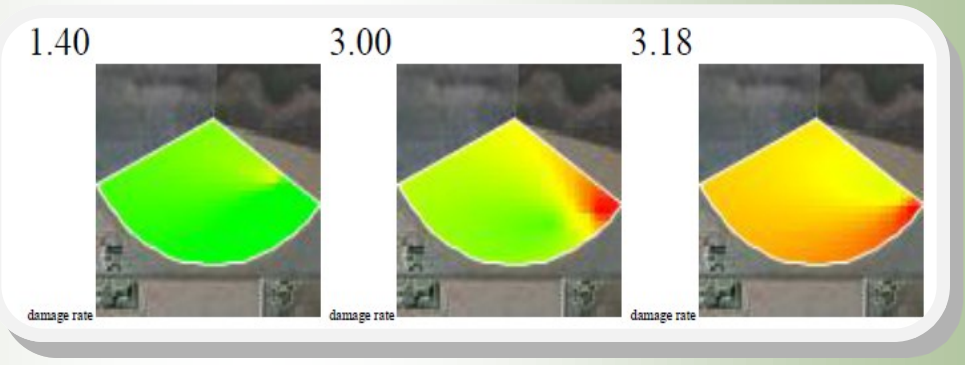
The both the Hale and Swisher trap had their highest moth capture week so far this season.



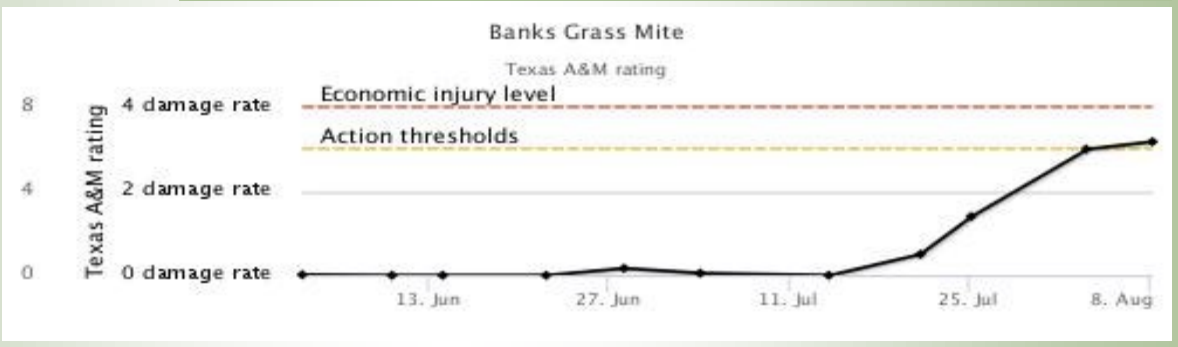
Our PPM Floyd Trap had a few moths in it, but no real increase in activity this week.

Corn

Our Plains Pest Management corn could be a carbon copy of last week's report, except the young VX plants are a bit taller, a few younger fields are entering green silk and tasseling, the older fields in dent are farther along in dent and more are joining that stage. We are still watching closely several older fields with spidermites (BGM) hovering near ET but not quite there yet with a battle with predators raging that could go either way until the corn develops past economic mite damage. BGM ET remains at 3.5-4 on the 0-10 damage rating scale. We are picking up more small bollworms (CEW) and eggs in the younger tasseling corn that should act like a sink crop to absorb this pest where they will be of no economic importance with the worms eventually settling on one per ear where only the tip of the ear is not economically damaged. We are also picking up a few more fall armyworms (FAW) in the younger corn per that species' moth flight of last week but so far this feeding is only on the tip as well. All Non-Bt or single traited Bt should be watched closely for FAW and any change in feeding behavior that moves down the ear or to the ear shank where the damage will become much more of an economic problem very quickly.

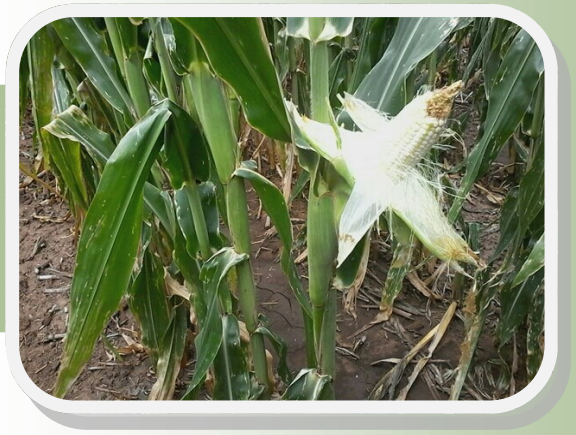


Heat map representation of the same borderline BGM corn field for the past 3 weeks.



BGM population for the same borderline corn field charted out. Predators are holding, just barely and the field progresses well without economic loss yet.

Photos from the BGM corn field near my data sets.



225 Broadway, Suite 6
Plainview, TX 79072

Tel: 806.291.5267
Fax: 806.291.5266
E-mail: Blayne.Reed@ag.tamu.edu

WEB

http://
hale.agrilife.org

For quicker pest alerts-

Plains Pest Bugoshere:

http://
halecountyipm.blogspot.com/

Pest Patrol Hotline, registration at:

www.syngentapestpatrol.com

We're on the air…

"Tuesday's with Blayne" from 6:30—7:00 AM on the HPRN network on 1090 AM KVOP-Plainview.

"IPM Wednesdays" from 1:00-2:30 PM on The FoxTalk 950 Ag Show. FoxTalk 950 AM - Lubbock.

"IPM Report with the Bruiser" from 7:06-7:15 PM on 1470 AM KDHN - Dimmit.

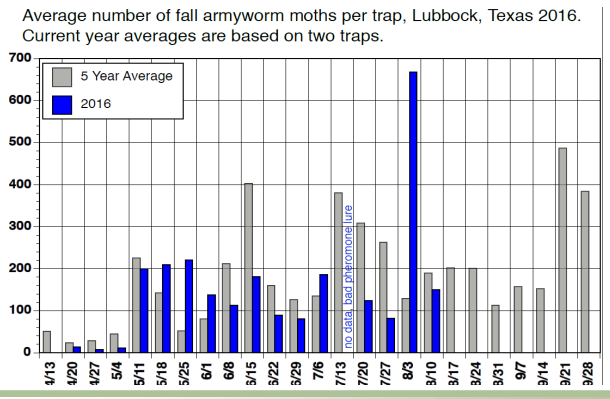
Sorghum

This week our program sorghum acres ranged in stage from VX to dough stage. We noted an increase in bollworm pressure in most of our sorghum fields but this increase was only in the neighborhood of 0 per head last to the highest field this week at 0.25 small bollworms per head with a good number of predators to impact the headworm population. We also noted an increase in FAW in sorghum this week but this was mostly in whorl stage plants with one field reaching up to 75% of plants feed upon. This whorl feeding, while alarming and unsightly, is rarely if ever economic as sorghum can tolerate a tremendous amount of foliage damage without impacting yield. In our post booted sorghum fields, our highest FAW population was 0.08 FAW per head. To watch a short how-to-scout video for these pest in sorghum that our IPM team produced this week, please go to: https://youtu.be/Exki0Veiu9Y

We are still not picking up any significant midge in blooming sorghum with our highest scouted population being 0.11 per blooming head but all sorghum fields currently in bloom remain at risk and should be checked daily while in bloom. For a how-to-scout video on sorghum midge our IPM team produced earlier this year, please go to: https://youtu.be/K4Flf4AdeNw

The sugarcane aphid (SCA) remains the top enemy for area sorghum producers. These pests are in all area counties but do not seem to be as heavy as last year. This week we made a blog entry dealing with just this pest. For the full story, you can catch it at: http://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/.

The short version is this, sometime around a 3 week period post pest detection via Texas A&M AgriLife Extension sorghum scouting methods most fields are reaching ET for SCA and requiring treatment. We have fields in our program that required treatment 7 days ago, which was at 21 days after detection, and a field at 28 days after detection that has not reached ET yet. We also have sorghum fields that do not have any SCA detected yet and several that we only detected light populations today. I recommend that if you need to treat for this threat, it will not be a pillow fight. I recommend you hit this potential gorilla as hard as you can with research proven best products available at higher rates with as much GPA crop coverage as possible.



Blayne Reed