

JULY 14, 2017

## General Status

This morning at the Plains Cotton Growers advisory board meeting, Shawn Holladay's thoughts were shared about the situation. "We're finally to a point where we can stop putting out fires, so to speak, and really begin managing this crop." When I thought on the subject, I have had that same conversation with our Plains Pest Management growers at least a dozen times this week, "We are finally at a point where we are not working to keep cotton alive and can start to manage it a bit."

It is as close to impossible to try and cover this crop's status with a description as I can recall. Crop status varies not by the region, county, or area, but by the field and sometimes even the yard. There are also some tough replant choices being made out there on failed acres, which we do not have to move far to find. The reasons for the failed acres ranges from drought, hail, wind, flood, and disease. While this crop has been through a lot and our hard-working producers have been shuffling like zombies to keep up with pressing issues our surviving acres are not in bad shape. We noted our first PPM scouting program's cotton blooms this week on our oldest fields. Most other fields are not too far behind. While the July 4<sup>th</sup> target date for first bloom is a good goal to shoot for a



The first 2017 PPM cotton bloom found . Hale

July 20<sup>th</sup> deadline is much more realistic for most fields and most years. This range from July 20<sup>th</sup> to our average last effective bloom date of August 24<sup>th</sup> is still a very good window of effective blooming for profitable yields in West Texas. Even the few fields that I can find that are not likely to meet this deadline I note to be our lower input fields that can rarely take full advantage of the full effective bloom window due to moisture restrictions. If these lower input fields usually get dealt a smaller effective bloom window, does it matter very much if the window is shorter on the front end rather than the back? We will have to see what the fall brings before anyone will know with certainty, but from a heat unit and realistic yield expectations for these types of fields stand point, we should not expect major issues... hopefully.

Meanwhile, the pests are never completely quiet. We have started finding economic populations of fleahoppers in cotton, yellow sugarcane aphids in sorghum and mites in corn are increasing steadily, sorghum is still anxious about when and if the economic sugarcane aphids will arrive and we are bracing for fall armyworms and other Lepidopteran pests that are likely to immigrate from the South eventually.

### PPM 2017 Residual Cotton Herbicide Efficacy Trial

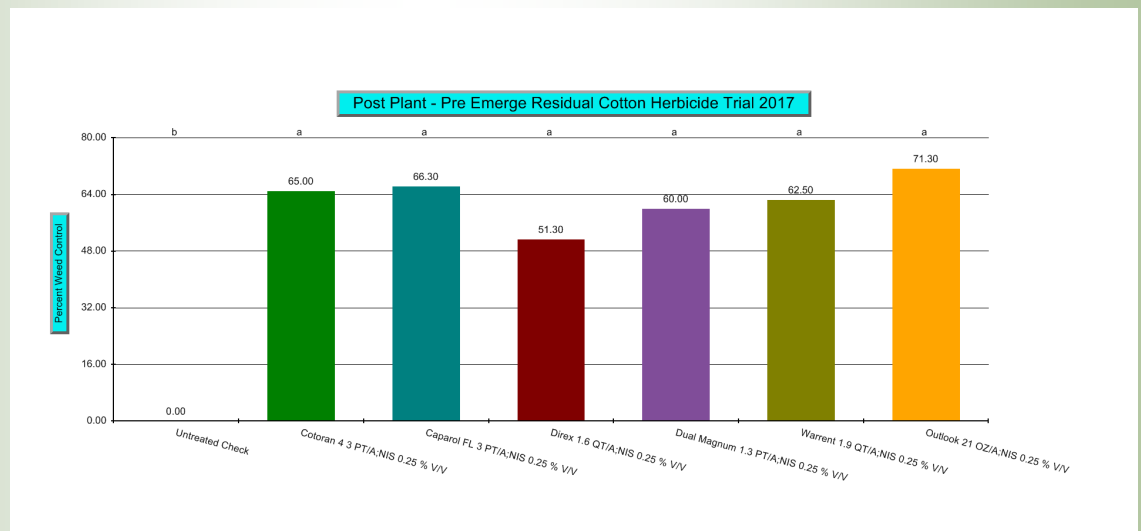
We are again conducting research on residual cotton herbicide efficacy. This season we are looking at available residual herbicides applied pre-emergence behind the planter. While this might not be ground breaking work with a sexy new herbicide, it is work that I strongly feel is important and needs to be done locally and under current field management practices and given our current weed / herbicide situation. This is attempting to answer the frequent questions about herbicides I receive and get you the best information for your operations.

#### **Background:**

The location is approximately 5 miles west of Kress in a conventionally tilled / row watered field. This field and every product plot was blanket treated with a max rate of yellow herbicide pre-plant by the cooperater and tillage incorporated via rod-weeder. This small plot trial was then organized as a completely randomized block with four replications. These plots are 4 rows wide by 38 feet long and treated post-planting / pre-emergence on May 24<sup>th</sup> via my backpack CO2 research sprayer at 12.8 GPA and a walking groundspeed of 3 mph. The maximum rate for each product was used.

#### **Data & Results:**

Since crop emergence, which is skimpy in spots due to drought conditions, we have collected data on weed emergence and crop injury. This is the first week the trial has yielded any real weed pressure data, as the



most recent rains were the first true accumulation of moisture the field has had since planting and today was the first opportunity since those rains we have had to evaluate the trial. No significant differences in crop damage from the treatments has been noted. Results from today's evaluation are in percent weed control compared to the untreated check. **There are no significant differences between any treatment but treatments with any of these herbicides look to improve weed control over the untreated check (yellow alone) by 51% - 71%**

# Cotton

This week our PPM cotton ranged from pinhead square up to 8.2 NAWF (nodes above white flower) with most fields coming in at 1/2 to 3/4 grown square stage. Our earliest cotton fields are coming into first bloom with that bloom at the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> node. Most fields are only now able to be managed for any factor other than weeds, emergency irrigation, and ‘blow’ prevention or some other surprising or pressing similar factor. Fertilizers are hurriedly being applied in a race to get the bulk of needed N out ahead of bloom and a few healthier and higher input fields are already in need of some plant growth regulator applications.

Fleahoppers were again spotty but did reach economic threshold in 4.1% of our PPM cotton fields this week. In these fields there were not enough beneficials to hold emerging fleahopper nymphs below threshold or had fleahoppers quickly move in field from preferred host destruction. There were a few fields we were concerned about fleahoppers coming into this week where beneficials had a helpful impact on the fleahopper population. For our problem fields, an already higher than liked natural square drop had a sharp increase in fresh drop caused by fresh fleahopper feeding. These troubled fields had an increase in square drop of 8% –

12% this week alone. Most fields improved in square drop this week with our fields ranging between 1.2% drop (98.8% retention) to 18.6% drop (81.4% retention) unless fleahoppers were an ET issue. In these cases drop increased

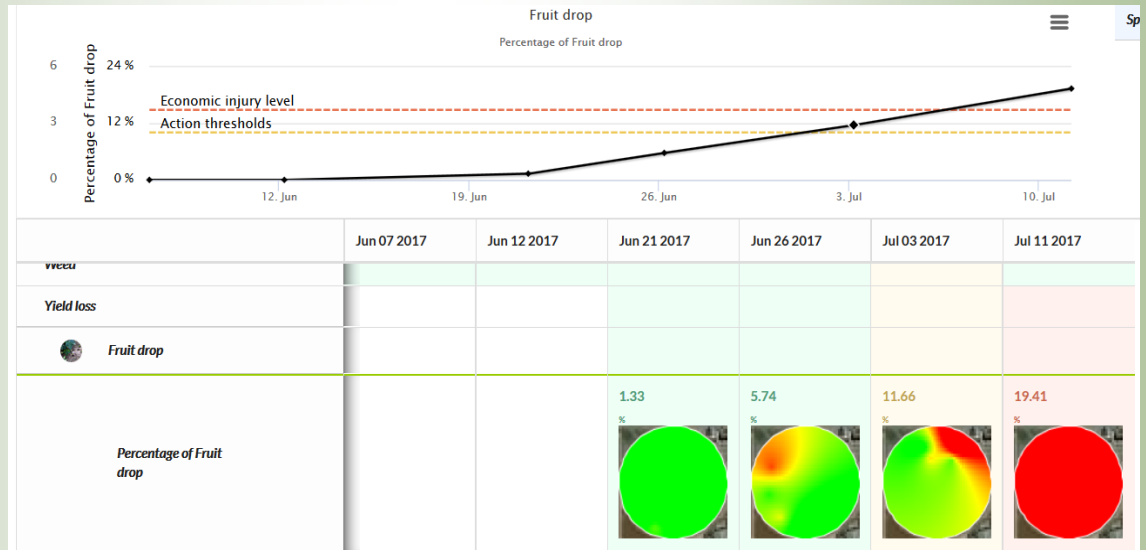


Chart and heat map showing square drop over time for one of our fields that required treatment for fleahoppers this week. Note natural drop highest on June 26 in NW corner following weather event then followed by fleahopper movement into the NE of the field on July 3 and across the field by July 11.

to 21% - 29.7% drop with more damage to be incurred soon without treatment. On the new Texas A&M AgriLife Cotton Fleahopper Guide is a list of fleahopper control products. This product list is backed by a 2016 efficacy Dr. Suhas Vyavhare conducted in one of our PPM Swisher fields last year. The link to the new Texas A&M AgriLife Extension cotton fleahopper guide is here:

[http://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2017/06/Cotton-fleahopper\\_ENTO073.pdf](http://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2017/06/Cotton-fleahopper_ENTO073.pdf)

We have started finding a few more Lygus in our fields, but the fleahoppers were the only pest of note this week.



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***We're on the air...***

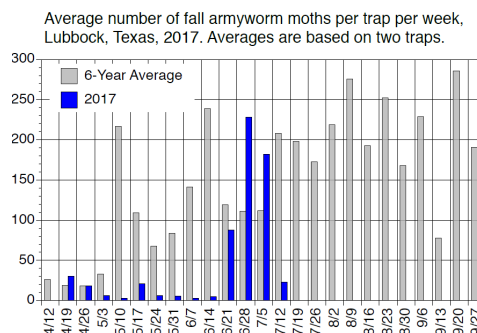
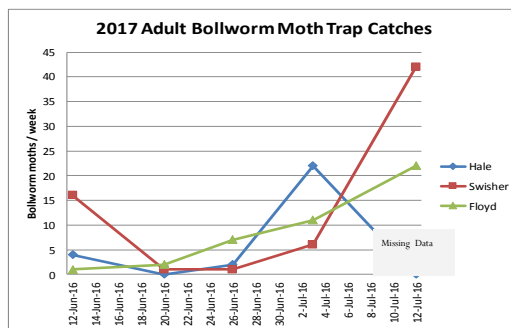
***"Tuesday's with Blayne"***  
from 6:30—7:00 AM  
on the HPRN network on 1090 AM KVOP-Plainview.

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

## Sorghum and Corn

Our youngest PPM corn is at V5 and oldest is at late blister stage. All of our pest focus is in the older corn as nothing of note was found in the younger. Our spider mite rating on our 0-10 scale actually dropped to 0.38 thanks to the arrival of mite destroyer beetles that cleaned many of the colonies from developing into an issue. We are still not finding any Lepidopteran pests of note even in blistering corn this week.

Our early planted sorghum fields are in range from boot to bloom this week. This places these fields at risk of midge and headworms, but we found no issues with these pests yet. The yellow sugarcane aphids increased slightly for most fields and ranged between 0.5 and 3 on our 0-10 greenbug damage rating scale, which is still below ET for these fields. Our youngest fields ranged in stage around V5 with some noted very light FAW feeding but no serious pests of note. All stages of our sorghum are on high alert for the sugarcane aphid, but none have been found in our fields and I have no reports of any found in Hale, Swisher, or Floyd yet. Reports from the South indicate a much lighter year for SCA in sorghum there.



Moth catches for bollworms took a slight increase this week but are still hardly significant compared to populations decades ago for July. FAW numbers were down with weather being considered a factor in egg survival.

*Blayne Reed*