

JULY 24, 2015

General Status

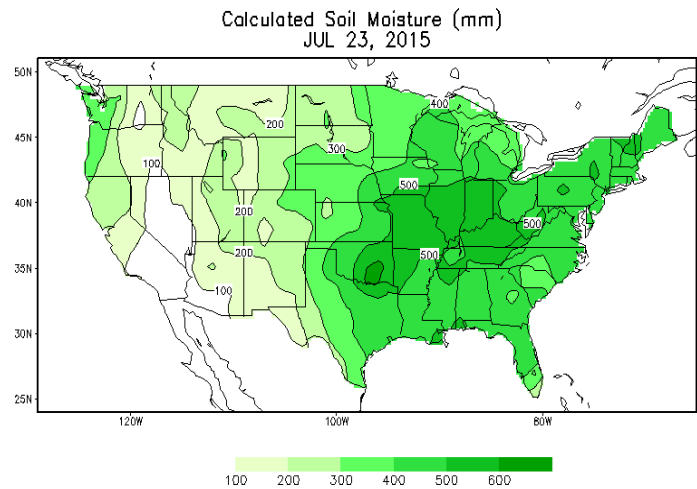
Our 'normal' pest pressure season continues with quite a bit happening in-field that keeps us on all of our toes. Plainview north received additional rains early in the week that kept irrigations systems off a few more days. Some of the area north of Edmonson also received crop ruining hail and damaging winds. The crop ruining hail was localized and spotty while most of us across the area received high winds from the storm. These strait line winds caused green snap and goose-necking in many grain fields. With a few localized fields aside, the wind damage was not a game ender and only looked worse that it really was once we got deeper into the field. Those that did not receive any rainfall are

giving their irrigation systems their first true workout of the season. The day to day pests and other concerns have been keeping us jumping. In cotton, we have been treating economic threshold (ET)

fleahoppers and making

educated judgement calls for

PGRs where needed. In corn, diseases are a concern as are a surprising spider mite population. In sorghum, the sugarcane aphid and the yellow sugarcane aphid are intensifying as midge season for our oldest fields has begun or looms very near. Our weed IPM war is unending but many more of the battles seem to be going our way this year. And finally, we found our scouting program's first cotton bloom of the season early in the week. Several more were to follow and the rest look to be blooming by the next round of scouting next week.



Cotton

This week our program cotton ranged in stage from $\frac{1}{4}$ grown square to 7 NAWF (nodes above white flower) with the majority coming in at $\frac{1}{3}$ grown square to $\frac{3}{4}$ grown square with several fields being 'at first bloom.' The first blooms for most of our fields were at 9 NAWF with a few starting at 7 and 8 NAWF.

Square retention this week depended primarily upon the level of plant bugs in field. With sub-ET levels of fleahoppers and Lygus, our square drop ranged from 0% to 10.8%. Where fleahopper, with the occasional Lygus added in a few cases, were at or above ET the square drop increased to 15.8% up to 28.3%. All totaled I estimate we have treated around 20% of our program cotton acres thus far, primarily for fleahoppers. Region wide we are experiencing a fleahopper population increase this week. This is quite normal for late July but we usually have more blooms in field by this time. Still, treating about 20% of our cotton acres for fleahoppers would be about average for any given year. This next week we will still have several fields at risk for fleahoppers in our program. Typically fleahoppers are a concern up until the cotton field can be gaged in stage by a NAWF reading. At that time fleahoppers will typically begin feeding of pollen for their protein source and leave the harder to feed upon squares alone. So far our general population of Lygus seems fairly high, but their noticeable occurrence in cotton has been very low and usually in conjunction with fleahoppers. Hopefully this is a trend that will continue. We will be scouting for Lygus and bollworms in cotton as primary pests from now until the fields have reached cut-out with all bolls receiving at least 350hu.



First bloom of the season, captured by our PPM 2015 head field scout, Johnathan Thobe, near Abernathy.

I took the opportunity to speak with Clay Golden, independent crop consultant based in Floyd County, about his Floyd County cotton this week. Clay explains that most of his Floyd cotton is between 7 NAWF and 9 NAWF with little at risk for fleahoppers any longer and that Lygus have not been an issue yet. His biggest concerns in cotton have been PGR decisions and weeds.

Corn

There was more happening in our program corn this week than I had expected. Our corn's very wide stage range started at V6 and covers up to early dent stage. The bulk of our earlier planted corn rests from blister to dough while our younger corn mostly comes in at a VX stage that should be one or two leaves away from tassel. There is even a very young group of fields in our program that is coming in between V6 and V8.

Spider mites increased drastically in our program corn this week despite humid conditions. The average mite rating of all our program fields increased from 0-1 last week up to 0-3 this week. In layman's terms, the mites went from a few barely noticeable small colonies on the very lower leaves up to finding them with regularity in quarter sized or larger colonies all the way up to the second leaf below the ear leaf. This is not an ET population yet but if this trend continues, I would expect to find a few of our older



Spider Mite Destroyer

fields requiring treatment for mites next week and perhaps the majority the week after. We rated most of our mite predators as moderate with thrips (various sp. including six spotted) being the primary beneficial. The mite predator and mite pathogen is something that can increase rapidly for our benefit but this pest and beneficial interaction is something we should keep a close eye on. As my conversation with

Clay Golden this week

turned to corn, Clay shared with me that he had several Floyd County fields where our Hale & Swisher fields were just a few weeks ago, but that they have now treated several corn fields for ET mites already and could see more very soon. Clay also mentioned that they had a corn field reach ET for fall armyworms in Floyd that they treated.

Corn diseases have been running high this season. I am re-printing an article that I published on our Plains Pest Bugoshere earlier this week

about these pathogens. This blog is where I will occasionally post pressing news that might not wait or fit with a weekly newsletter format or make announcements about upcoming events. To subscribe to the Plains Pest Bugoshere, please go to [http://](http://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/)

halecountyipm.blogspot.com/.



Six Spotted Thrips feeding on mite.

2015 Corn Disease Risk

Our above average rainfall this season has obliged most of our grain crops this season. Although many of our Hale & Swisher fields are later than we would prefer, irrigation systems have remained quiet for the most part. This has saved untold millions of gallons of irrigation water while maintaining a solid yield potential. These wetter than 'normal' conditions also come with a downside, particularly in corn. Corn 'diseases' in our area are running high. This stands to reason as most of these diseases are fungal related and require moisture and humidity to spread and certainly for the spores to germinate. Continually keep dribbles of water present on the leaves and the diseases thrive.

On that 'usual' year, the only disease we can count on seeing in our area corn year in and year out is Common Rust. This pathogen is not usually economic for us but can become economic in the right conditions. With the additional rains, morning dews, and higher humidity, the conditions have certainly been right for Rust this season. For most of our Plains Pest Management scouting program corn acres, I am estimating a 2 – 3 fold increase in common rust as of this week. That is not the only pathogen we are finding in field, and certainly not all we are getting reports of.

We are also identifying Southern Rust, Northern Corn Leaf Blight, Grey Leaf Spot, and a handful of other 'blights' to lessening degrees. Several of these lesser blights have flared on a few spots or in some cases for just a few days and ceased when conditions dropped back below 'ridiculously wet' with little impact made other than the knee knocking turmoil of potential trouble brewing in the field. The Southern Rust and Northern Corn Leaf Blight look to have more staying power this season with the conditions we have, and potential to become economic if they have not already. In our older or more developed program corn fields the impact of all of these diseases has been minimal so far, but these fields have all been treated with fungicides in a preventative manor recently before any real harsh problems developed. This is not the case for all area fields.



Last week we were getting reports from across Hale, Floyd, and farther south that Northern Corn Leaf Blight (NCLB) looked to be hitting post tassel corn pretty hard with long term affects to be felt in yield and harvestability later. Emergency treatment applications were soon about for those scouting closely enough to catch and identify the problem in time. The NCLB now seems to have slowed this week with ‘the line in the sand drawn’ through good scouting and slightly dryer conditions predominating the area.



Still a growing concern today is Southern Rust. Clay Golden, independent crop consultant based in Floyd County, spoke with me recently about what he is seeing in Floyd County, “We have quite a few fields that we treated with fungicide two weeks ago and quite a bit for NCLB last week. There are a few fields treated two weeks ago that are now in the dough stage. We have Southern Rust rebuilding now (that residual from our treatment is running out). We really don’t want to, but we might be forced into making a second application in a few spots if the trend continues.”

I also spoke with Dr. Jason Woodward, extension plant pathologist district 2, this week about the increase in corn disease pressure this season. Dr. Woodward explained, “The wetter weather has increased the corn disease pressure throughout the region and there has been a lot of fungicide go out to combat them. Much of the older corn in the Lubbock area has reached dent stage and I feel pretty confident stating that those fields *should* be on the downhill side of the rust and blight risks. Even if those post dent fields have an increase in disease it might not be an economic situation as that field starts to dry down, especially if they have already been treated. On the other hand, the whole region has quite a bit of late corn that hasn’t even tasseled yet. Those fields are going to be a major concern for disease issues as we move forward if the moist weather persists. As the days start growing shorter, the nights cooler, and morning dew becomes common, in conjunction with a continued wet weather pattern, and we could see some major issues with several of these corn diseases over the next few weeks and months on those younger corn fields as they progress through key and later reproductive growth stages... Now that many of these diseases are present in the region at a noticeable level, I might even expect to see even higher disease problems in pivots compared to say drip fields where we will be making applications of water to the plant even if the much appreciated rain patterns slow.”

This situation described by Dr. Woodward certainly holds true for the late corn fields in our scouting program corn acres and looks valid throughout Hale, Swisher, & Floyd with greater than normal late corn acres due to be hitting those key reproductive stages soon. We really do not want to chase away any future rain fall that we know we will need but we should be aware of the potential problems that could arise with the blessings of a good rainfall pattern.

Sorghum


Most of our sorghum acres can now be described as VX but our oldest fields are at the flag leaf to boot stage. For these oldest fields, midge season should start next week. Looking around the area, there are many fields already blooming and there, but I have not had any reports of midge issues yet. Due to the economics and biology of the sorghum midge, we really should be checking these fields daily. Our primary pest concern in our program sorghum this week has the yellow sugarcane aphid (YSCA) with several fields nearing the ET, if the established greenbug damage rating system is applied to the YSCA. Making use of this rating system for YSCA in the absence of a designated and proven YSCA rating system has worked well for me in the past. It is possible that we will be forced to treat a handful of sorghum fields in our program for YSCA next week unless predators turn the corner on this pest.

The sugarcane aphid is also on the increase. Speaking for Floyd County Clay Golden reported, “Just about all of the sorghum fields under my care in Floyd have sugarcane aphids present. The YSAC seem to be the larger threat for now but the sugarcane aphid is increasing rapidly. The population of sugarcane aphids has been low enough that I haven’t bothered with taking counts yet, but I estimate them to be averaging less than 5 per leaf with their typical higher pockets being where they are located... but they are just about across the county. They really started in the southeastern part of Floyd and there are a few fields in that area that area that I have at 40 aphids per leaf. We are watching those, getting ready to pull the trigger if we need to. They really seem to jump in population after boot this year.”


We confirmed a few more of our program fields with the sugarcane aphid this week, two fields were all the way in southwestern Swisher, but the majority of our fields remain sugarcane aphid free. Our highest population of sugarcane aphids only averaged 1.12 aphids per leaf. We will be watching these guys closely also. The action threshold for these aphids remains at 50 – 125 per leaf.



Adult Sugarcane Aphid



Immature Sugarcane Aphid



Winged Adults

NTD-043
5/15

**TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE**

Scouting Sugarcane Aphids

Robert Bowling, Michael Brewer, Allen Knutson, Mo Way, Pat Porter, Ed Bynum, Charles Allen, Raul Villanueva*
*All of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, except Brewer and Way, of Texas A&M AgriLife Research.

Timing effective treatment to control sugarcane aphids (SCA) in sorghum depends on the size of the SCA population. To estimate the number of SCA in a field, follow these steps for scouting the field and use the **Sampling Protocol** (below) and the **Quick Aphid Checker** (on back) to make treatment decisions.

First Detection: Is the Field at Risk?

- Once a week, walk 25 feet into the field and examine plants along 50 feet of row.
- If honeydew is present, look for SCA on the underside of a leaf above the honeydew.
- Inspect the underside of leaves from the upper and lower canopy from 15–20 plants per location.
- Sample each side of the field as well as sites near Johnsongrass and tall mutant plants.
- Check at least 4 locations per field for a total of 60–80 plants.


If no SCA are present, or only a few wingless/winged aphids are on upper leaves, continue once-a-week scouting.

If SCA are found on lower or mid-canopy leaves, begin twice-a-week scouting. Use the Sampling Protocol and the Quick Aphid Checker to determine if aphid densities exceed the economic threshold.

Sampling Protocol: Making Treatment Decisions

Examine the underside of one completely green leaf from the lower canopy and the uppermost leaf (or the leaf below the flag leaf at boot to heading) and estimate the number of SCA per leaf, using the Quick Aphid Checker. Examine 2 leaves from each of 5 random plants per location. Repeat at 4 locations, for a total of 40 leaves. Use the Quick Aphid Checker to calculate the mean number of aphids per leaf.


- If the field average SCA infestation is 50–125 aphids or more per leaf, apply an insecticide within 4 days and evaluate control after 3–4 days. Consider treatment at 50 aphids per leaf if limited to once-a-week scouting.
- If the SCA infestation is less than the threshold level, continue scouting twice a week.



A



B



C

Quick Aphid Checker

Estimate the number of sugarcane aphids (SCA) per leaf to help time foliar insecticides for SCA control on sorghum. Each photo represents an estimate from the table. For example, photo A shows about 12 aphids.

Estimate the Number of Aphids per Leaf		
Photo	Range	Estimate
A	1–25	12
B	26–50	38
C	51–100	75
D	101–500	300
E	501–1000	750
F	>1000	1500


Field Average = $\frac{\text{Total of All Estimates}}{\text{Total \# of Leaves Examined}}$

Learn more about sugarcane aphids at <http://txscan.blogspot.com>

Photos courtesy of Travis Ahrens, Mike Brewer, and Pat Porter. Funding provided by the Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board and the USDA NIFA Southern IPM Center and Crop Protection and Pest Management Programs.

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F



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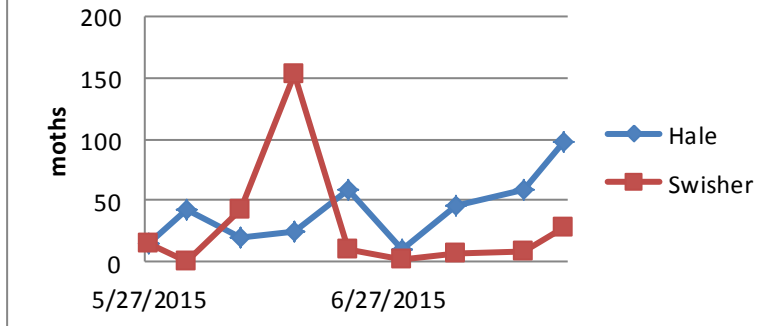
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We're on the air...

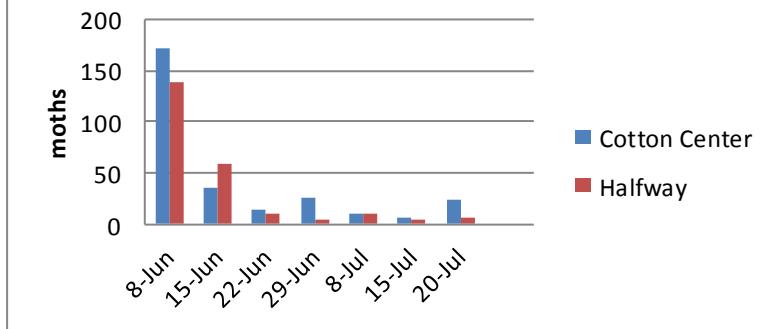
*"Tuesday's with Blayne"
from 6:30—7:00 AM
on the HPRN on
1090 AM KVOP-
Plainview.*

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

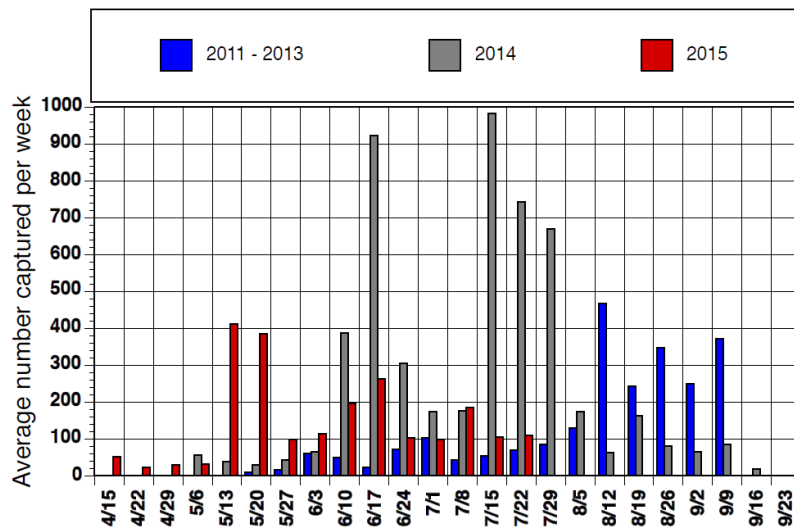
2015 Bollworm Moth Trap Catches



2015 FAW Moth Catches - Hale



2015 fall armyworm pheromone trap captures (moths per week) at Lubbock. Average of two traps.



Thanks for the help in Floyd and for sharing with us Clay!

Blayne Reed