

General Status

It's that time of year when agricultural entomologists in West Texas can typically make one more round scouting the fields just to make sure nothing is sneaking past us after a long, hard fought summer and take an admiring breath surveying our producers and our hard work showing in the fields before harvest aid and harvest season get fully under way. Not this year, at least not yet. Several pests, and not just the sugarcane aphid, are taking a page from the weed play book and not going down quietly. We still have the season's largest bollworm moth flight still ongoing, aided by a late crop still susceptible to the pests thanks to cool-wet weather. These bollworms threaten cotton and sorghum alike.

We still have the sugarcane aphid in sorghum that has waited until now to fully 'blow up' for some reason. We have diseases in late planted corn to be mindful of as they increase in pressure through the moist conditions and the usual cotton diseases are making their presence felt, some



September 3, 2016 photo from a Swisher cotton field that is still at economic risk for bollworms. By not reaching cut-out in time, worms have fruit to successfully start on, then move to harvestable bolls.

more than usual. We should still be on the lookout for stink bugs in cotton, we have something new chewing on our few soybean acres, and we still have the weeds pressuring as hard as they can. All totaled, the majority of our crops are still at risk for yield and revenue robbing pests when we would like to be starting to think about harvest aids and or harvest. We are not without allies in the field. The beneficials have saved us multiple treatments for multiple pests, in multiple crops this year. These predators and parasitoids are one reason most of us can consider the pest pressure, or at least what we have been forced into treating, relatively light, so far.

Soybeans & Alfalfa

We do not have any soybeans in our PPM scouting program, so this information has come from phone calls and spot checks from and for area producers, primarily in Floyd County. Typically, insect pests of soybeans in West Texas are few. When we do scout what few soybeans we still grow in the area, it is primarily for disease issues and for anything potentially feeding on the pods. Those would be stink bugs, Lygus, and possibly some bollworms ('podworms' in this case). We would also keep an eye out for foliage feeders, which is much more than likely serious pod feeders in soybeans across the nation, but locally it is not usually a serious issue. Enter the green cloverworm. The green cloverworm is a new pest to me, but it takes foliage feeding to a whole new and devastating level, especially at the population levels we have found this week. Here is a ménage of photos to highlight the point:



From what we are quickly learning about this new pest, it will attack alfalfa also. For soybeans, University of Tennessee has this information: http://www.utcrops.com/cotton/cotton_insects/pubs/PB1768-Soybean.pdf

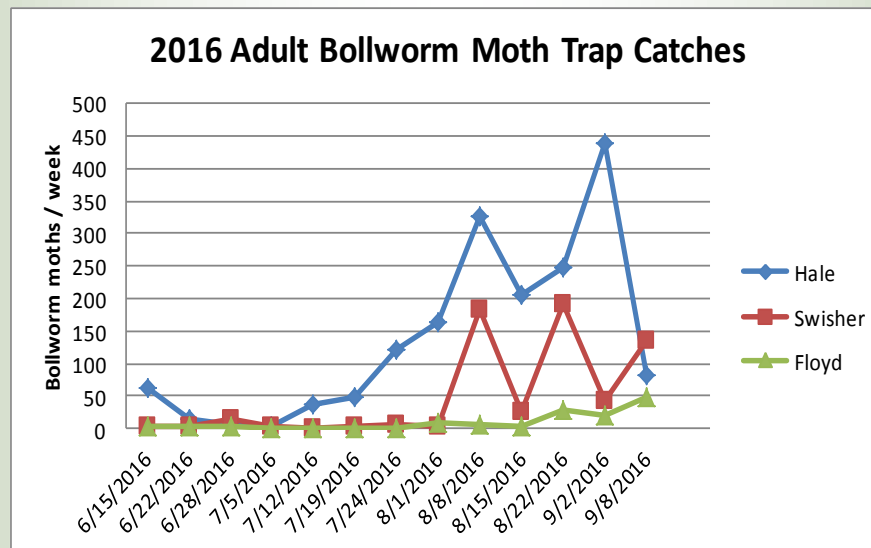
For alfalfa Oklahoma has this information: <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2364/CR-7150web.pdf>

We obviously have no research data in-house regarding control of this new pest. Of the treatment products found in the sources above for green cloverworm, some of our local producers have already tried Lorsban and Baythroid on soybeans. These products both looked lackluster in control at best after 3 DAT. The best we can forward on short notice are company confidence in Belt and Prevathon at labeled rates and with labeled surfactants.

Cotton

This week our program cotton ranged from just barely cut-out and lush with plenty of blooms still trying to set, down to cut- out and regrowing, and in a very few instances, 1st open boll. The amount of regrowth, caused by the cool, wet weather of the past two weeks, seems to be directly linked to how much boll load the field has. All fields do seem to want to kick start, or at least not completely stop, vegetative growth, but it does appear to me that the correlation lies with a lighter boll load translating into greener and fresher regrowth. Fields more recently cut-out or those with a fuller boll load seem to be still filling bolls with the moisture and are just starting to think about going into regrowth. The biggest question is what to do about it. I am unsure any amount of PGR would be worthwhile on already regrowing cotton but might have an outside chance of keeping regrowth shorter on a field that is about to restart vegetative regrowth. I do not think either is the goal we really would like to accomplish. I would expect that the lusher fields thinking about regrowing would be prime candidates for a managed maturity conditioning treatment in a few weeks to a month. The fields that are already actively regrowing vegetation will likely require a beefier harvest aid treatment when the time comes whether we can afford it by that time or not. Either way, the still active cotton pests must be dealt with first.

From our bollworm moth trap data, it is hard to tell if we are finally on the backside of the second moth flight, or if they are still emerging and / or arriving from farther south. What I can state is that the moths are still very active and laying eggs in corn, sorghum, and lush cotton. In our scouting program, we have had only one field reach ET for bollworms.



Our lone ET cotton field was a non-Bt field in southern Swisher, and very lush with squares, active blooms, and plenty of small bolls for the worms to establish into. This field had 11,400 eggs per acre, 7,260 small bollworms per acre, and 1,427 medium bollworms per acre for a total of 8,687 bollworms per acre with at least some more on the way and a predator population that had

really cut into the population but fallen behind just enough for the worms to be an economic issue. For the most part the late corn 'sink crop' has been very effective in absorbing many of these worms, even to the point of notable detriment of some of those fields, but our predators, in both cotton and sorghum, have been spectacular in downsizing this threat. One extreme example we had this week goes like this, another Swisher cotton field had 48,651 eggs per acre on September 3, but on September 8, had 8,833 eggs and 907 medium worms



Swisher cotton field with high egg lay and predators that held the bollworms in check, for now.



Adam Keshiemer, 2016 PPM field scout, records his data into his Strider from an at risk Swisher cotton field this week.

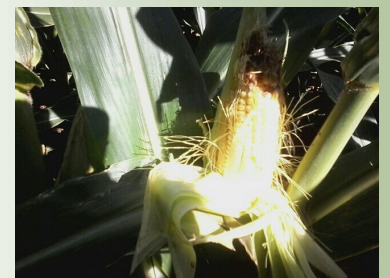
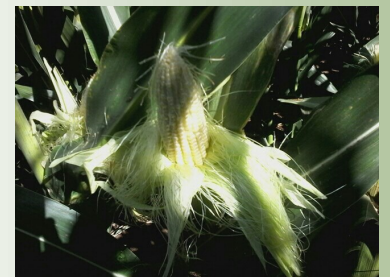
per acre and a lot of happy predators. This means that,

with in our scouting program we had to treat 1.78% of our cotton fields for bollworms so far. The rest have been covered by predators, Bt holding, or were cut-out past the point of insect damage. I do have reports from our outstanding independent crop consultants of non-Bt cotton fields in Southeastern Floyd and norther Crosby reaching threshold for bollworms despite the calendar date there as well.

So far, we have not had any stink bug issues, but a population is active in the area.

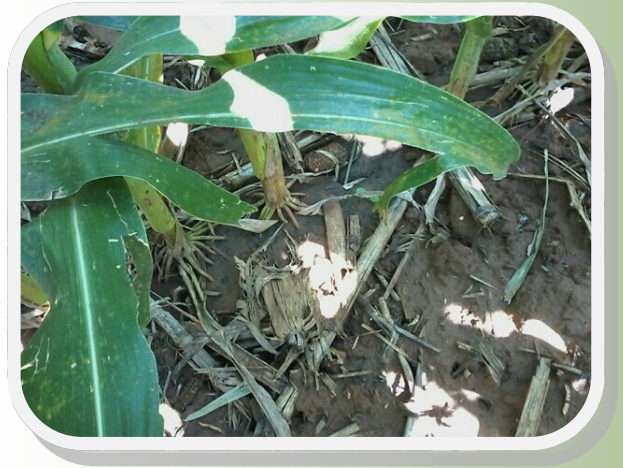
Corn

All of our PPM earlier planted corn is now drying down for harvest and is past economic insect damage. All of our later planted corn is coming in between blister and late dough stage. It is clear that this late corn is very attractive to the bollworms at its current stage. Fall armyworms (FAW) could be a concern on these fields too if the FAW had a population anywhere close to what the cannibalistic bollworms (CEW) have at this time. There are plenty of fields with over 15 CEW eggs per leaf and up to 5 small CEW larva per ear already. As mentioned in the cotton section, the 'sink crop' effect for the late corn is in overdrive. So much so, that some fields have accumulated higher than normal CEW damage. I remain confident that the 'survival of the fittest' strategy of the CEW will play out without too much economic impact. The fact that there are just 5 larva per ear is a testament to how much this population has already trimmed itself. There is a notable increase in damage to many of these ears though, and it



could be possible that a few area late corn fields could reach an economic level just from these CEW. Deciding which few of these many late fields become or are at ET will be very difficult and likely noted after the fact.

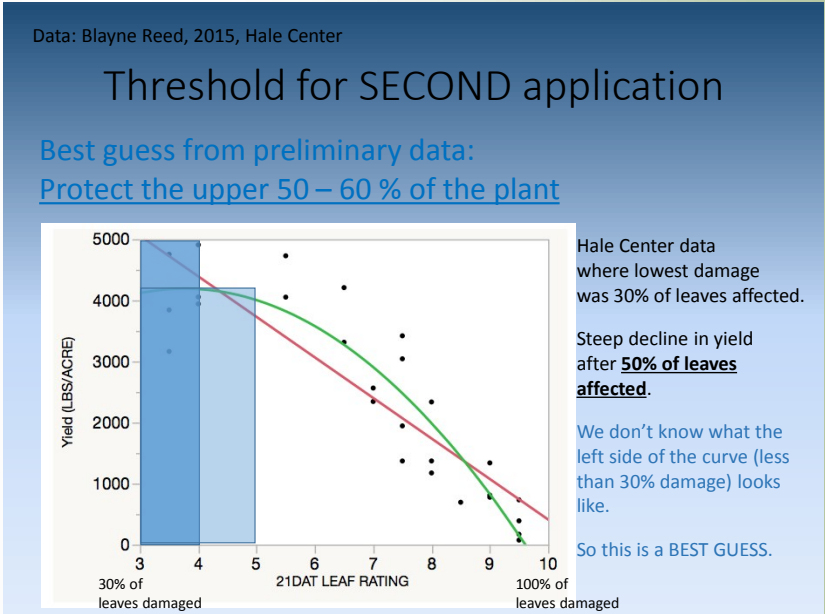
Spidermites are steeply declining in these our later fields. With the recent moisture the Neozygites fungus has played a large role in this mite crash along with a pretty strong mite specific predator population. Diseases are on the increase, most notably common rust and Southern rust with Southern rust being the most important factor of these two to watch. None of our PPM fields are at ET for disease yet, but some are very close. Without some bright, dry, and sunny days a few of these fields might require a fungicide treatment, which might also hamper the Neozygites fungus in its mite control.



Increasing rust pressure on lower corn leaves this week, Hale.

Sorghum

Despite the bollworm problems, considered headworms in sorghum, it remains the SCA that gets the most attention. For whatever yet unknown reason, the SCA have turned the switch to full on this week. Yesterday I noted the first SCA 'fog' of winged aphids moving across my office's parking lot. These were quite common last season. In the field the increase is proportionate. We have now treated 100% of our PPM sorghum fields for SCA although we do not have that many in the scouting program. Some have been treated for several weeks now and aside from some coverage issues in pockets within fields, control has been very good with all of the good treatment criteria having been met satisfactorily. We are currently watching for an aphid rebuild and potential second treatment. Many of these fields are going into a late dough stage so the decision does turn into something of a race against a very speedy insect. Our 2015 research data strongly suggested that in these situations, we could use a rating system we developed in these situations. The correlation is shown here with a 5 or 6 rating being a suspected second application, late dough stage sorghum ET.





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<http://hale.agrilife.org>

For quicker pest alerts-

*Plains Pest
Bugshere:*

<http://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/>

*Pest Patrol Hotline,
registration at:*

www.syngentapestpatrol.com

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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.*

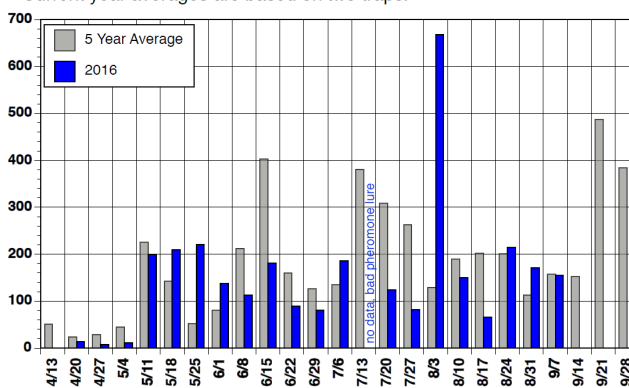
*"IPM Report with the Bruiser"
from 7:06-7:15 PM on
1470 AM KDHN -
Dimmit.*

This second threshold for the Texas High Plains is one thing we were working at firming up with our 2016 research. Until recently, the SCA would not even cooperate with that. Thus, we are very busy with trials at this time also. These photos are from a surfactant impact trial we are running at the Helms farm at the Halfway Experiment Station. We will share results once the trial's sponsors have seen the data and results are in so we can at least put it to use for the 2017 season.

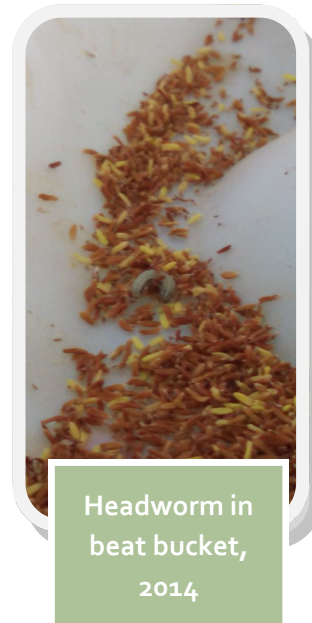


Just because the SCA has stolen the show, it is not the only pest we have in sorghum. The bollworms, or here referred to as headworms, have been making economic plays in sorghum too. We have now had to treat 34% of our PPM fields for headworms, all in the last two weeks. Much like the cotton and corn, the beneficials have been key to preventing an overwhelming attack from this pest and the CEW vastly out populates the FAW in sorghum. The economic threshold for headworms will vary depending on crop value, pest pressure, and cost of control. To help you figure this, there is a headworm threshold calculator that is very helpful at: <http://bug.tamu.edu/apps/sorghumheadwormcalculator/index.php>

Average number of fall armyworm moths per trap, Lubbock, Texas 2016. Current year averages are based on two traps.



Blayne Reed



Headworm in beat bucket,
2014