

AUGUST 29, 2014

## General Status

It has been a hot and humid week with scattered, spotty, and fast moving storms skirting or streaking through on an almost daily basis. The nature of the storms makes it very hard to get a handle on how much of the needed moisture fell through the area, but I believe most of us received at least a few tenths and I have some reports of over an inch in localized pockets and strips. Regardless of the amount, no one is claiming they have had enough. All fields benefited from the moisture and all but the very latest and rankest irrigated cotton still need more pretty soon. In the areas that have not seen any since July, the rains gave the desperate dryland sorghum and hay crops a fighting chance if more rain comes soon. I have one report of some fairly heavy hail along the Hale / Floyd County line that came with last night's round of showers. We have a day or two more days with chances of rain in the forecast depending on who you listen to.



Northwestern Hale County, August 28, 2014

Meanwhile, our earlier planted corn and sorghum are finishing up nicely. Silage cutters are rolling everywhere they can and grain harvest for both corn and early planted sorghum will be underway in a matter of weeks. All of our program's early planted corn has moved past economic pest damage as have a handful of our April planted sorghum fields. The bulk of our early sorghum will be out of harm's way within 14 days. It remains the heat of battle for the late corn and

and sorghum fields. Both are still in intensive management and pest sensitive stages with several potential problems lurking. So far, only a few of those potential problems have materialized. Generally speaking, cotton has come through its 'crunch time' in better shape than most would have been able to hope for earlier in the season. There are several truly late fields in the area that need some serious 'reining in' with maturity management now and through September so that they can finish up the season without too many problems.

## Cotton

The vast majority of our program's cotton fields have reached absolute cut-out (3.5 NAWF) with a remarkable boll load. A good number of our fields reached this goal only recently. We have not spotted any open bolls yet.



From the data before me it appears that a fair number of fields from Plainview south can be deemed slightly late. With some slight management and/or a good fall these fields should not have major maturity problems. From Plainview north it appears that the fields are either solidly cut-out in a very timely manner, or they are very late. Only a small percentage of our fields fall into the late category, but they can cause quite a bit of heartburn as we start transitioning into harvest aid season next month. These late standouts all have legitimate reasons for being so late. Most were either replanted in June, or had severe damage early and were slow to recover and have gap issues. Those few late fields ranged in stage from 5 NAWF to 4.6 NAWF this week. Aside from being a few inches taller, and having a touch more PGR applied to them, these fields are right where their predecessors were a few weeks ago. Boll retention looks good and the pest pressure is light. Only now, we cannot guarantee that all of those squares that are about to turn into blooms will make it.

I feel the first step in managing these late fields is to cut the irrigation and let the boll load and heat do what they do best. It has been my experience that if we can let nature pull these fields into line quickly we are usually better off than spending additional dollars that may not return, if we are not too late. Fruit drop through early September will increase as we strangle the growthy plants for water, but those 'bolls' that will be dropping have almost no chance of maturing anyway. **Only after these fields reach cut-out would I consider returning with limited irrigation.**

Next could be a managed maturity treatment consideration. Each field will need to be evaluated separately at the time, but fields like these are usually prime candidates for utilizing minute amounts of Aim, or similar products, sprayed over-the-top to help manage maturity in late September through the first half of October. In minute amounts, these treatments can 'fry' off green leaves, excess growth, and small squares while stopping terminal growth. As a result the plants are forced into focusing all their energies on harvestable fruit just as the last of the season's heat units accumulate. Choosing, or sometimes being forced into choosing to make this pre-harvest aid treatment, will depend upon crop stage, desired harvest aid timing, weather, and predicted freeze date.

For the bulk of our program's cotton acres, we could be talking seriously about regular harvest aid treatments in three to four weeks. I find that amazing from where we started this season.

## Corn & Sorghum

As mentioned earlier, all of our program's earlier corn and a bit of our early sorghum have developed to a point that they are past economic pest damage and are drying down for harvest. I feel they are doing so with some pretty good yield potential although much of the sorghum experienced some drought stress during graining as the secondary crop to cotton during its 'crunch time.'

Our program's late corn ranged from green silk to late dough with the majority entering dough. Our late sorghum ranged from boot to dough with the majority being bloom to early soft dough. Both of these later planted grain crops are now in their 'crunch time' with plenty happening in field. Development looks good, but there is a touch more drought stress during this time than when the earlier fields passed through these stages.

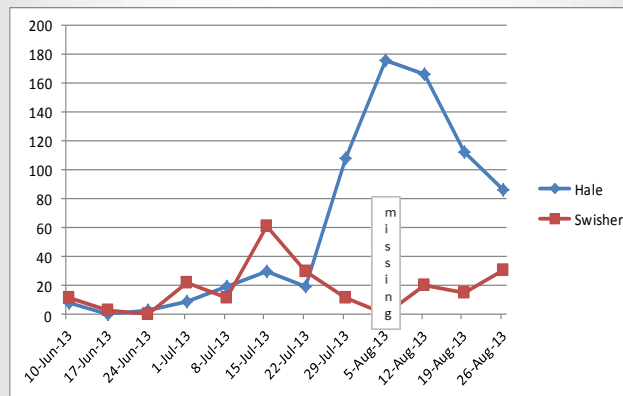


## Pests

Because most of the pests we are currently scouting for cross crop lines, I will attempt to sum them by species with what they are doing in each crop this week.

## Bollworm, alias Corn Earworm & Sorghum Headworm

Bollworms have not made a major splash as a pest this season, but their population has actually been higher in Hale County than we have seen in several seasons. Our Swisher County numbers of trapped moths has been far less this season. Regardless of location, the late planted corn continues to be a major 'sink' crop for the bollworm where they are not typically an economic threat. We are still finding a large amount of egg lay in our late corn. Nature continues to be 'survival of the strongest' in those corn ears as bollworm cannibalism is limiting the number we find per ear to 1 to 5. We have found a few eggs in cotton fields over the past few weeks, but predation and Bt have severely limited actual worm counts. We continue to find a few in both early and late sorghum, all well below ET. Our highest per head count was 0.25 small worms per head with most fields remaining at 0 per head. Greg Cronholm, retired EA-IPM Hale & Swisher (who is still independently scouting on his days off from retirement), mentioned this week that he had a millet field that required treatment for bollworms with, the highest per head population he had seen.

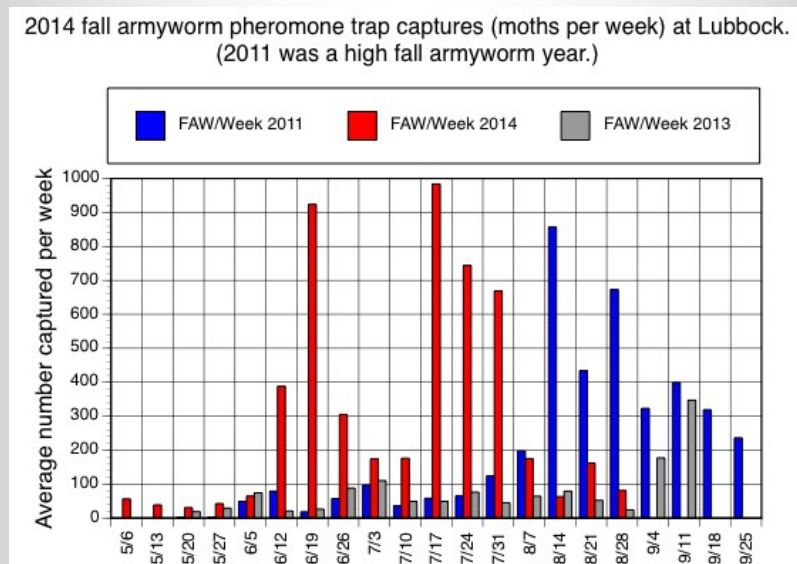


## Sorghum midge

As expected, several late planted blooming sorghum fields required treatment for midge again this week. It was rare for us to find a field with no midge this week in our program fields but our range went from 0 to 1.64. Most were sub-ET and between 0.08 and 0.4 per head. When we found the midge they were continually higher near an earlier maturing source. As an example, Greg Cronholm also mentioned a seed milo field he is checking that had 6 midge per head directly adjacent to an older sorghum field with Johnson grass present, around 1 per head in the middle of the field, and none on the far side of the field. I strongly suggest keeping any potential source for the midge in mind as we make daily midge checks to our blooming and at risk sorghum this week. As I travel the area, all but a handful of sorghum fields should be finishing up bloom stage this week.

## Fall armyworm

The long expected next generation of FAW might be fizzling into a limited threat. At least that is what is suggested by Dr. Porter's moth traps in Lubbock, and Gary Cross' moth traps in Hale and the fact that we just are not finding very many in the fields now. The few we are finding in-field are primarily in the late sorghum but even then the numbers have not neared ET. Conversations I have had with several area consultants this week seem to agree with our findings so far. Even so, I suggest keeping a keen eye out until fields develop past economic pest damage which will be some time out for the latest sorghum.



## Lygus

For the first season in a long time I have not had to recommend treatment for Lygus in cotton. There are a few fields in our program that we are keeping close tabs on, but I have just not seen the damage and heavier populations yet. Our heaviest Lygus cotton field this week had just reached absolute cut-out and only had 1 Lygus per 3.3 row feet. In this situation the plants were naturally dropping much more small bolls than the Lygus were, our could have been, damaging at this level. Most cotton fields exhibited only 1 Lygus per 13.5 row feet or lighter.

We did see quite a few Lygus in older sorghum this week. Most dough to late dough maturity sorghum fields are running 0.06 to 4.8 Lygus per head this week. There was one seed milo field near Edmonson that had grasshopper concerns that also sported 7.4 Lygus per head that was treated. The high value of the for seed grain combined with both pests prompted this somewhat unusual treatment. I believe the Lygus in sorghum threshold to be around 12-14 Lygus per head and most damaging during the early dough to dough stage. Typically the Lygus start moving into sorghum during the dough to hard dough stages.



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*We're on the air...*

*"Tuesday's with Blayne"*  
*from 6:00—7:00 AM*  
*& from 12:30—1:00*  
*PM on the 1090 Agri*  
*-Plex Report 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.*

## Spider mites

Mites look to be increasing in the late planted corn. In these fields our ratings ranged from 0 to 2. This is still well below ET and our key mite predators are still very good. It is possible that mites could become a late issue for a few late area corn fields this year. Several area consultants reported mites reaching ET and requiring treatment in a few sorghum fields this week. All of our data and reports indicate that control has been excellent when needed regardless of labeled product. Another area of mite interest has been in dryland sorghum and limited irrigation sorghum. I am not certain if the mites really increased that much or if drought stress desiccated leaves and forced mites farther up the plant. In situations like these, economical mite decisions are difficult. Any increase in soil moisture helps alleviate both problems and helps show better economic distinctions.

**Yellow sugarcane aphids** – to clarify, this is not an invasive species and is a quite common pest in area sorghum fields

Area YSCA populations are running fairly high and look to be increasing. In sorghum our general predator and key mite predators are rating pretty high, but our key aphid parasitoids are rating fairly low. Our program field ratings this week ranged from 0-1 up to 4 and very near ET. I have reports from area consultants and producers who did have a few area fields that did require treatment for YSCA. For YSCA, we can roughly utilize the green bug thresholds where a damage rating of 4 to 6, crop stage and beneficial insect level depending.

## Cotton aphid

Last week we had a few fields where we had found notable levels of cotton aphids. The aphids in those fields were not 'mopped up' yet but fairly well contained. This week we were finding just a very few cotton aphids in most of our fields on some of the uppermost leaves. This indicates to me that these aphids are moving around with the storm systems and spreading across the area. They should be worth keeping tabs on as we start to see open cotton bolls. I have also noted cotton aphids on okra and cantaloupe this week. - *Blayne*