

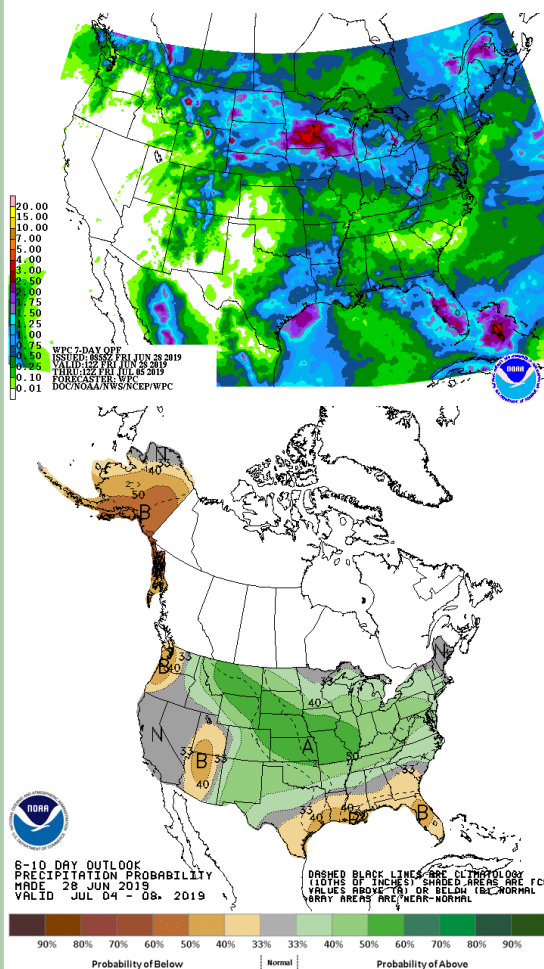
JUNE 28, 2019

General Status

Most of our fields received the type of weather this week our cotton really needed to recover. While fields and plants were making effective use of the respite, a few areas, mostly in eastern Swisher, northeastern Hale, and Floyd (and neighboring areas to the east) received hail and other events that took out even more fields, some for the second or third time. This event was a little more 'normal' for spring in West Texas but came on top of a very tough planting season leaving few summer crop options or time to bring any potential plan in to fruition. Otherwise, cotton has begun to recover and 'sluff off' so much of the plethora of issues that have been ailing it all season. While late, surviving cotton still has decent to good potential but our acres are greatly reduced. Grain crops are either faring well or getting off to a decent start. Despite lengthy cool and wet conditions, I can generally place our crops into three categories, hailed out, hailed on, or needing a rain. According to Pivot Track, the needing a rain areas have only seen about 5 inches of moisture since November 2018 with all of those inches coming between May 1 and the first week of

June. They were very dry going into that period. Areas hailed on or out look to have almost double that in the same period and some limited moisture during the same November until now period. Some very spotty and highly variable moisture areas in the area. On the pest front, we had few found this week, but there are many indications that issues are brewing.

These issues might be multiple and/or large, but only scouting and time will tell.



Plainview Heat Unit Calculator

Cumulative Heat Unit Calculator

Start Date		End Date
4/24/2019	Corn	9/10/2019
Total Heat Units		1189.80
Start Date		End Date
5/29/2019	Cotton	10/10/2019
Total Heat Units		370.65
Calculate		



Southern Hale field sporting a few MH squares this week.

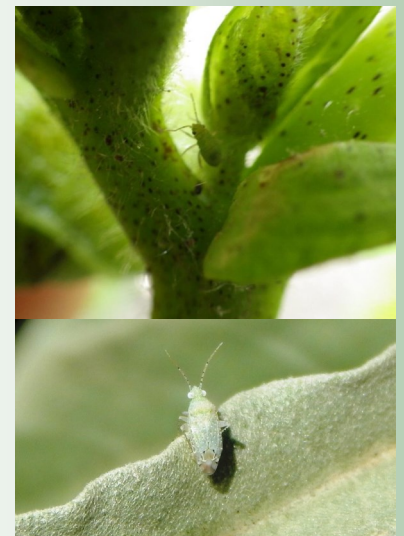
Cotton

Our program cotton ranged in stage from 2nd true leaf stage up to early matchhead square stage. Most fell between 3rd leaf and 5th leaf stage. We should be seeing most fields with pinheads by next week if progress continues, leaving the crop late but progressing well with potential. Without any additional ‘speed bumps’ we should still have a good effective bloom period before our last average effective bloom date of August 24th.

Thrips this week were greatly reduced compared to last week. We only had a few northern fields with economic thrips situations. These fields were late and again nearby wheat and among some of the last fields to be sprayed that far north. For the vast majority of fields treated, thrips populations never recovered or re-infested with so many other suitable hosts greening up for the summer. Few fields south of Plainview had populations of thrips that required treatment. Cotton, once squaring is initiated, is rarely susceptible to thrips damage any longer. With most fields nearing pinhead, this should be the last week for most fields to be a risk for damage. The latest fields will still be at risk for a time longer, and certainly do not need farther delays from thrips issues and should be scouted for safety sake.

Of our fields already initiating squaring, our square drop ranged from none to 8.9% with most fields showing some square loss, but all appeared to be weather related with zero insect caused loss. As we look forward, fleahoppers will be our next pest of issue of concern with Lygus not far behind. All out of field indications hint that this could be a bad plant bug season. Most of the area silverleaf nightshade, still looking healthy while producers struggle to establish fields in place of spraying, plowing, or hoeing this weed, is showing some fleahopper feeding injury and most of my weed checks indicate a high population of the pest ready to jump hosts as soon as the weed is controlled. Likewise, the Lygus population in the alfalfa we are checking and the area clover and on other weed type hosts look numerous. Remember that both of these plant bug pests are very flighty insects, so scouting for them requires a bit of patience. Here are some links to some videos the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension High Plains IPM team produced a few years ago that might help: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epVctkRkTHs>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfSM8jF_Rqs



Fleahoppers—top, the hard to find nymphs.

Bottom—the flighty adults.

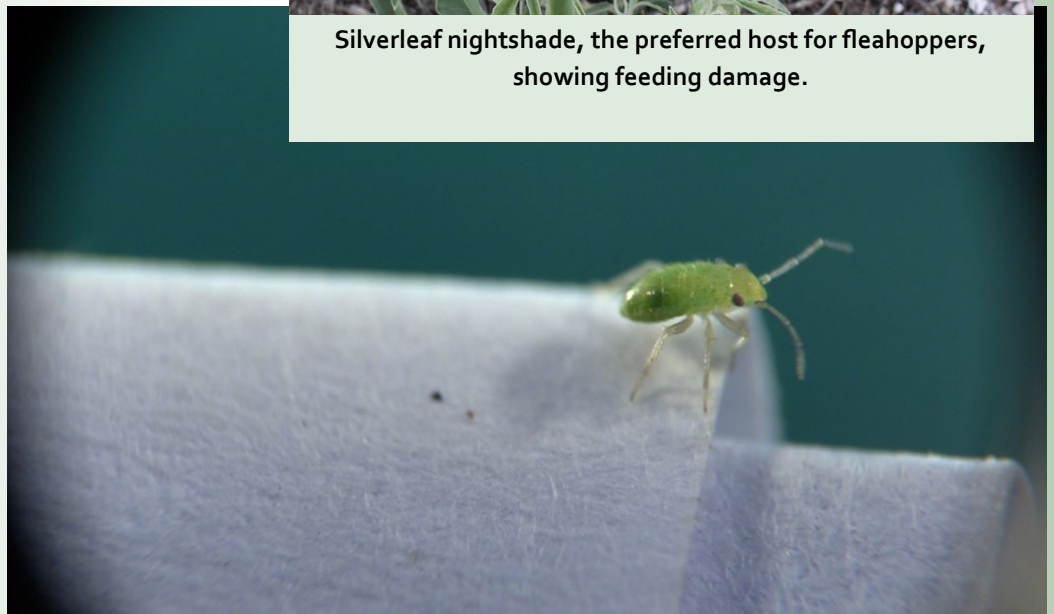
Early in the squaring stages, the economic threshold (ET) for fleahoppers is 35% terminal infestation with 5-10% insect induced fruit drop. For Lygus, the ET would be 8% infestation with the same percent fruit drop level. Once plants are large enough for drop cloth use, the thresholds change to 1 fleahopper per 1.5 row feet or 1 Lygus per 2.5 row feet with similar but evolving fruit loss and a few other field considerations that include pest age and beneficial population level. These percent fruit loss considerations change and increase as the cotton squares develop week by week, starting at about 5% insect fruit loss and increasing to 25% insect caused fruit loss at 1st bloom. For both fleahoppers and Lygus, the nymphs are generally considered worse than the adults, but not because they feed more than the adults, but rather because the nymphs cannot

fly or leave the field as easily for alternate hosts while also indicating a preference to stay and complete their life cycle in our fields.

Our beneficial populations are still on the short side but are building slowly. During the 2018 season, beneficials aided greatly in fleahopper control, likely preventing the widespread outbreak of serious issues. It was a close call, but ultimately, we only treated a handful of fields. For this reason, I suggest that we stop all blanket thrips applications and only treat that pest if they are a proven issue for any field from now on. Our late cotton might just need every beneficial it can hold on to the very first week of squaring if this year's population of plant bugs are as heavy as the out-of-field indicators show they can be.



Silverleaf nightshade, the preferred host for fleahoppers, showing feeding damage.



Fleahopper nymph showing his 'flea like' hind legs.

Corn & Sorghum

So far, our corn and sorghum program acres are progressing without much incident, hurriedly being planted behind failed cotton aside. Our program corn ranges in stage from hopefully heading to the field to be planted now up to V10. Most fields are jumping out of the ground pretty well unless soil moisture is an issue for the rapidly prepared and heavily plowed and disturbed seed bed. We are still finding small but increasing slightly in frequency Banks grass mite colonies still on field edges near CRP grass. We are also picking up some very light fall armyworm damage that is very far below ET. We are also seeing a few more corn diseases which now includes common rust, but nothing anywhere near ET.

Our program sorghum ranges from seed to V9. The FAW, at about the same level as in the corn are the only pest issues we are seeing in sorghum at this time.



Older and younger (replanted) PPM program corn this week.



Our Hale county bollworm moth trap with only 44 moths this week.

Pest Horizons

This week, we were getting multiple reports about bollworms requiring treatment in Bollgard III cotton in the Corpus Christi and coastal plains of Texas. Not the news we are wanting to hear, but not totally unexpected either. We should be shortly hearing stories about their bollworm scouting and spray recommendations for all types of Bt traits from these heavier pressure areas. While this is an area that our peak season or problem bollworm population will likely migrate from, we should only experience 3 to 4 weeks of economic bollworm pressure on our cotton. The area of serious concern today should normally experience 10 to 12 weeks of economic worm pressure. For this reason, their action thresholds should be more aggressive. For us, I cannot justify an egg or moth flight threshold for any Bt trait (including none). Too many times, even conventional cotton will not reach ET locally, but we should be very aware and prepared to scout and/or treat any or all Bt types with equal vigilance. The ET for bollworms locally re-



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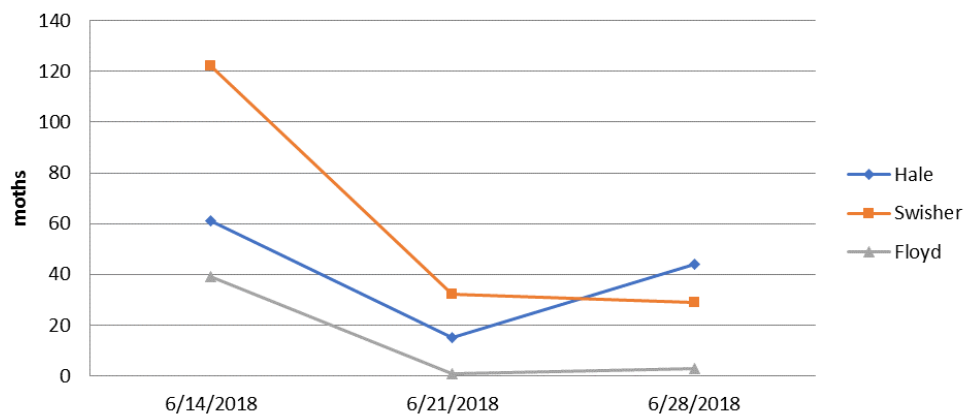
-mains at 8-10,000 bollworms per acre or 6% harvestable fruit damage (whichever scouting method you employ).

I have noted a large grasshopper hatch of multiple species emerging in our drier areas this week. They could very easily attack moister or irrigated fields and gardens very soon as preferred host plants continue to dry down in the absence of rainfall.



Bollworm larva attacking a boll and a differential grasshopper.

2018 Adult Bollworm Moth Trap Catches



Blayne Reed