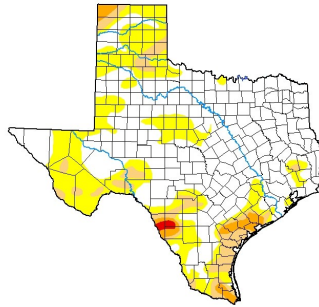


MAY 22, 2020

U.S. Drought Monitor
Texas

May 19, 2020
(Released Thursday, May 21, 2020)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:
None
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/about.aspx>

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droughtmonitor.unl.edu

General Status

Better following some moisture earlier this week. For some areas in Hale and Swisher, the environment was starting to look like 2011 with only 2-inches of moisture in the last 7 months. Other locations in the area

were not near that desperate, but the whole area was certainly drier than the drought monitor indicates. The cool, dry weather held most summer crop plantings off a few weeks or caused damage issues in most fields. Area wheat suffered an array of difficulties ranging from severe drought, freeze damage, and pest issues. With most of these issues rectifiable or minor we are poised to see what the season will really bring.

Wheat

With the economic situations being what they are and with economic uncertainty this year, more 'cover' wheat has been opted for grain or hay/silage production than usual. Despite some severe army cutworm pressure during February and March, yield potential looked strong moving into spring. Since that time, most area wheat fields have experienced challenges. Most have some level of freeze damage to the heads. The severity of the damage seems to be linked to the severity



Photo of freeze damage to dryland wheat in early May, Northern Swisher County.



Drought stress and freeze damage to dryland wheat in Swisher, early May.

of drought stress the field was under when the 'late' freeze events occurred in April and the time spent below freezing. Most dryland fields north of Tulia were severely impacted. In addition to the freeze damage, many area dryland fields, mostly in Swisher, simply did not have enough moisture to reach boot and desiccated before heading. Not all area dryland fields are in such dire straits, but some level of freeze damage can be noted in all area fields I have checked since the freeze events. For most of the remaining fields this damage should not be economic with less than 20% of the grain impacted. With all factors considered, I would estimate



Moderately irrigated wheat in Swisher, May 22. Freeze damage can be found in detail in the photo but should not be severe enough to reach hard economic severity or prevent grain harvest.

the irrigated yields to be short to above average and the dryland to be zeroed for insurance to below average. Much of the area wheat and hay crops have already been harvested. These yields seem to be slightly better than average with an increase in acreage.

Cotton

Few area cotton fields are established to date with a few exceptions. Much of the cotton planted early in the month was exposed to cold conditions. Many of these fields did not have enough moisture in the seed bed to initiate germination. It was intended for many of these fields to irrigate them up once weather warmed, but spotty rains hurried this process. Fields that were planted with adequate soil moisture or irrigated during the cold conditions are experiencing serious issues with cold shock, delayed emergence, leading to wireworm damage and seedling disease issues. I would urge producers that seedlings experiencing cold shock issues, even if established, should be replanted. These plants will have "knots," "kinks," and other vascular blockages that will act as cancer cells for the plants all summer long. These plants will be slow to develop and quick to shed fruit. There will be little chance to maintain a profitable margin for the field if enough of the plants are damaged this way. Other damage, such as wireworm feeding upon the roots and seedling disease should be a consideration also. Fields germinating following the



Early signs of cold shock last week in Swisher

the recent rain events and in the warmer conditions are not showing any of these symptoms, save some wireworm feeding, and are emerging quickly.

As noted, wireworm pressure is as expected and increased with delayed seedling emergence. Thrips pressure, moving from area drying wheat, is remarkably heavy. Fortunately, there are few area cotton fields established for them to inflict damage to. Any cotton that is established, should be checked closely for number of thrips per true leaf stage. Even if insecticidal seed treatments were used, and work perfectly, the pest will still need to feed to ingest the insecticide. If numbers are high enough, the insecticide could be overwhelmed and damage could still be enough to inflict economic damage. The seed treatments could use additional treatment support if damage is severe enough.

Corn & Sorghum

Our Plains Pest Management corn and sorghum fields range in stage from seed in the bag to V3-V4 with corn taking the oldest stages. The earliest planted of these fields experienced ridiculously hard and cold north winds and other weather. For a time, these fields looked very rough, but the growing point does not seem impacted and are growing out of any damage well. I note no major pest issues in either crop to date. Thrips numbers are high, but are very rarely economic in grain crops, particularly at this early stage. In fact, they may



Southern Swisher field at V3-4 this week.



A few weeds needing treatment soon in an area corn field this week.

also feed upon smaller pests, such as Banks Grass Mites, preventing their establishment. The presence of thrips in corn could also provide a food source for full time beneficials to build their populations for use against more economic concerns later in the season.

I would also note that most herbicides for corn and sorghum need to be applied prior to V5 stage. For the oldest of our fields, this is only days away. With cotton planting in full swing and many other simultaneous needs it could be easy to miss this important window and cause yield damage with a late herbicide application that will impact ear or head development.



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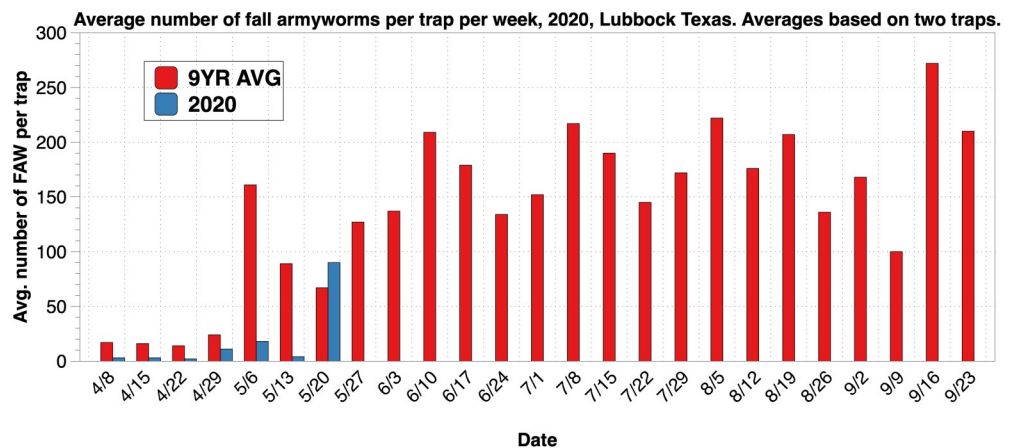
We're on the air...

"All Ag, All Day"

Check out our bi-weekly IPM update with the crew from All Ag, All Day—900 AM KFLP or 800 AM KDDD



A large 'dust devil' in southern Hale County on May 21, 2020 indicating instability in the atmosphere.



We will be starting our bollworm trapping in early June. Have a great week!

Blayne Reed