TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

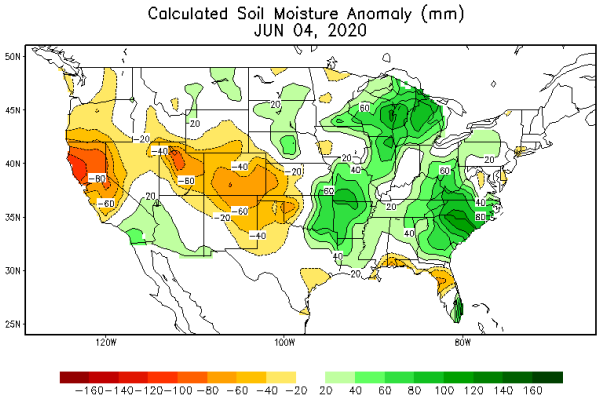
Plains Pest Management News

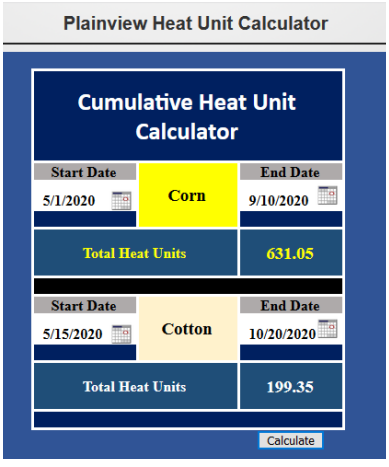
JUNE 5, 2020

General Status

The biggest event of the week happened last night with a rainstorm finally moving through the area. While widespread, rainfall totals varied from "at least we finally smelled rain" up to 2-inches. The largest totals were also accompanied by a focused and pounding hail. Everyone experienced more high winds that were again often damaging. By my best estimates, unless a field was under one of the cores of the storm and receiving hail, the rainfall totals were less than 0.3-inchs, if any were received. We will need a few days to tell how many fields the severe weather destroyed and how many fields the rainfall helped. Up until last night, the area had been very dry. I had lost faith that, with very few exceptions, there would be any dryland crop of any kind in our territory. With some light rains a little over two weeks ago, I held out hope for much of the dryland assuming some additional moisture would come. It is doubtful that last night's rain came in time to help fields that had seeds in the ground for those earlier sprinkles of water. It is also doubtful that the 0.3-inches or less that most of us received will carry us very far. But the wind is still with us today. Most irrigated crops were off to a decent though rough start. It had already become clear by early this week that without rainfall support even the irrigated might be in trouble pretty quick as irrigation systems were already falling behind these young crops.

Area cotton seedling off to an OK start but has been through a thing or two.





Cotton

A central Swisher cotton field this week post thrips treatment.

All data presented here are pre-rainfall. This week our Plains Pest Management Scouting Program Cotton ranged in stage from dry seed in the ground to 3rd true leaf stage. Most fields fell between cotyledon stage and 1st true leaf stage. Thrips have been excessively high from a Hale Center line north and above normal to the south. Our counts ranged this week between 0.59 to 6.72 thrips per true leaf. About half of our cotton fields south of Hale Center were over the economic threshold (ET) of 1 thrips per true leaf while all fields north of Hale Center were over the same ET unless recently treated over the top for the thrips. The insecticidal seed treatments generally seem to be having a solid impact in preventing reproduction through the 2nd true leaf stage. There have been many fields with infestation and migration levels so high that the fields were over ET simply from continuous re-infestation. Multiple thrips treatments might be needed this year to prevent development delays.

Southern Hale Cotton showing moderate thrips damage to the true leaves

Wireworms have been fairly quiet this week. Typically, wireworms have limited economic impact once cotton establishes a stand. Several area fields were replanted earlier with wireworms being one of the factors causing establishment failure, but with additional measures taken, the wireworm impact seems to be lessened.

The Thrips damage rating scale from 0-5.

225 Broadway, Suite 6
Plainview, TX 79072

Tel: 806.291.5267
Fax: 806.291.5266
E-mail: Blayne.Reed@ag.tamu.edu

WEB

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hale.agrilife.org

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Central Hale Corn field this week.

Corn & Sorghum

Our PPM corn fields ranged in stage from seed to V6 with established fields ranging from V3 to V6 while our sorghum ranged from seed to V4 with most established fields hovering around V3. We found no pests of note in the corn or sorghum this week. Thrips were high in these crops also, but are rarely an economic concern. We noted no field where thrips were an issue. The high populations might actually be holding up the establishment of Banks grass mites by feeding indiscriminately across new colonies killing the mites along the way. There were some minor disease levels detected and some roughing up from weather and heat, but no additional issues were found. I have very limited concern for any young corn or sorghum field that were under last night's severe weather. With the growing point being so low to the ground, or even still below the soil surface, these grass crops in these early stages can be physically destroyed almost to the growing point and recover with limited if any economic issues.

We placed our Bollworm moth traps this week. We should have data by next week.

Blayne Reed