Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

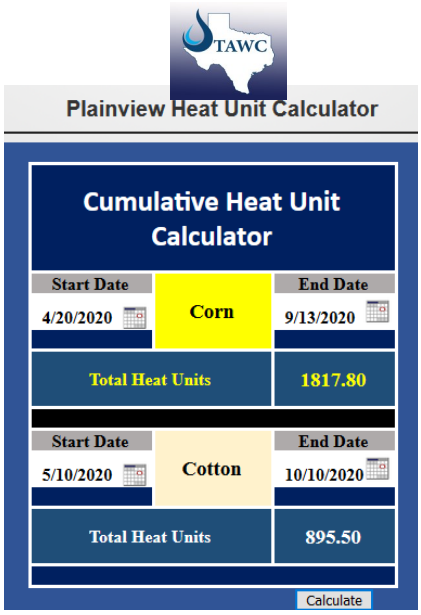
Plains Pest Management News

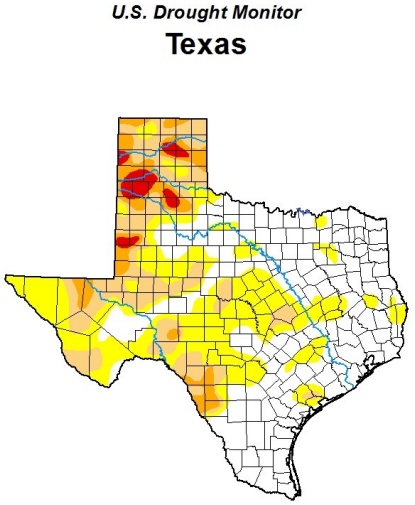
JULY 10, 2020

General Status

A very hot one from mid-week on and into the forecast. And the area finally received some *beneficial* rainfall last weekend/early this week. It seems amounts varied by location from 0.3-inches up to about 2.5-inches with most fields receiving about a 0.5-inch. In many cases it took 2 or 3 showers to reach this total but there were no major damaging weather events I am aware of. Combined with some calmer, less windy days, and decent water availability our surviving crops are making solid progress. This is coming at the expense of soil moisture use at a very high rate. This week, insect pests continued to creep up in intensity to cross the line in a few rare cases while weeds remained in your face and often indifferent to control measures.

First ragged bloom of the year for the PPM scouting program.





July 7, 2020
(Released Thursday, Jul. 9, 2020)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	46.85	53.15	24.84	8.50	2.23	0.00
Last Week 06-30-2020	42.41	57.59	27.97	9.60	2.87	0.00
3 Months Ago 04-07-2020	74.84	25.16	19.22	10.49	2.50	0.14
Start of Calendar Year 12-31-2019	44.69	55.31	36.12	9.19	0.74	0.00
Start of Water Year 10-01-2019	31.74	68.26	46.05	22.33	6.32	0.00
One Year Ago 07-09-2019	95.13	4.87	1.30	0.20	0.00	0.00

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

Cotton

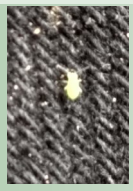
Our scouting program cotton ranged from a wildcat cotton 4th true leaf stage up to an inconsistent 1st bloom. Most fields came in between 1/3 and 3/4 grown square stage with solid chances to be at a legitimate 1st bloom by next week. This paces most of our fields for a good 4 to 6-week effective blooming period, if water needs can continue to be met. This will become of paramount importance as fields reach the 5 NAWF (nodes above white flower) and peak water use.

Thrips were almost completely absent from our youngest cotton. The fleahopper population increased in almost all fields with over 90% having at least some level of pressure. Only 1 field reached economic levels with a population that increased rapidly from 1 fleahopper per 32 row feet last week to 1 fleahopper per 1.4 row feet while the fruit drop increased from 6.58% up to 16.39%. A handful more fields were a growing fleahopper concern with 1 fleahopper to 3 row feet or so with 8 to 12% fruit drop, but not economic yet with beneficial populations having a good chance of preventing a treatment. Most fields remained safe from fleahoppers this week with 1 fleahopper per 10 row feet or fewer and fruit drop holding below 10% consistently. A few more Lygus were found in a few fields, but largely remained a non-issue so far. As a note, several area alfalfa fields, the Lygus most preferred host plant, were cut late this week. This could cause an exodus of Lygus that would be looking for a suitable host soon. We also picked up a few foliage feeders this week, but the highest population we found were beet armyworms only up to 680 worms per acre, far below the 50,000 per acre threshold.

Table 4. Cotton fleahopper action thresholds

Region	Fleahoppers	Cotton growth stage	
Blacklands	10–15 per 100 terminals (terminal inspection)	During squaring	
Coastal Bend Winter Garden Lower Rio Grande Valley	15–25 per 100 terminals (terminal sampling) In development: 20–40 adults and nymphs per 100 plants (beat bucket sampling)		
Panhandle South Plains Permian Basin Rolling Plains Trans Pecos	25–30 per 100 terminals (terminal inspection)	Week of squaring	Square set
		1st week	< 90%
		2nd week	< 85%
		3rd week	< 75%
		After 1st bloom, treatment is rarely justified.	

The threshold for fleahoppers utilizing the drop cloth method of scouting should be 1 fh/1.5-2 row feet with a corresponding level of square drop from the above chart calculated from plant inspections.



Closeups of a fleahopper nymph and a black fleahopper on our drop cloths from the field. The majority of the fleahoppers we are finding this year are of the 'normal' green species, but black can be found also.

Corn and Sorghum

View from inside our oldest corn field this week. It is just now entering peak water use.

Our corn and sorghum ranged in overall stage from V1 to green silk with the vast majority somewhere in the whorl stages. Our youngest corn came in this week at V6 and our oldest sorghum came in at an inconsistent flag leaf/VX. Most pests still remain very light to absent, as do most diseases. We noted the heaviest pressure from fall armyworms in the whorl stage sorghum, but even this pressure was far below ET of 30-35% foliage loss. Our fields were a fairly consistent 1-2% foliage loss with only about 5-10% of the plants showing any damage at all. Spider mites remain strangely absent considering the heat. Only about 20% of our corn fields had any level of detectable mites so far. I do expect that once these fields move into or farther into reproductive modes, the mites will increase rapidly in this environment. We also have no sign of the sugarcane aphid in our fields, but a very light level of yellow sugarcane aphid feeding damage can be noted in most sorghum fields.

The YSCA damage shown here is VERY light, but can be detected by yellowing of the lower leaves.

Odd Insect Year

I have noted a lot of 'odd' insects about the area this season. While none of these are invasive species, they are not all that common in the area or seem to have a higher population this year. My hypothesis is that the high winds from this spring and early summer blew some of these insects into the area in numbers or it has been dry enough to make a fairly robust population looking for 'greener' pastures. On the next page are some photos of some of these insects that could prove to be an issue in the back yard, garden, or specialty situation.

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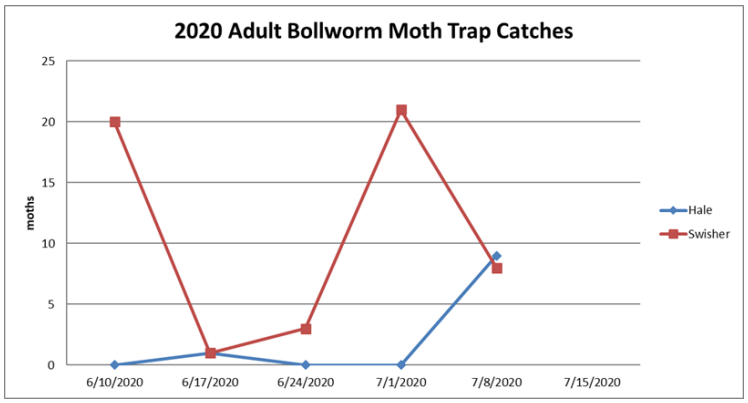
Achemon Sphinx. Larvae could be a rare issue for horticultural vines.

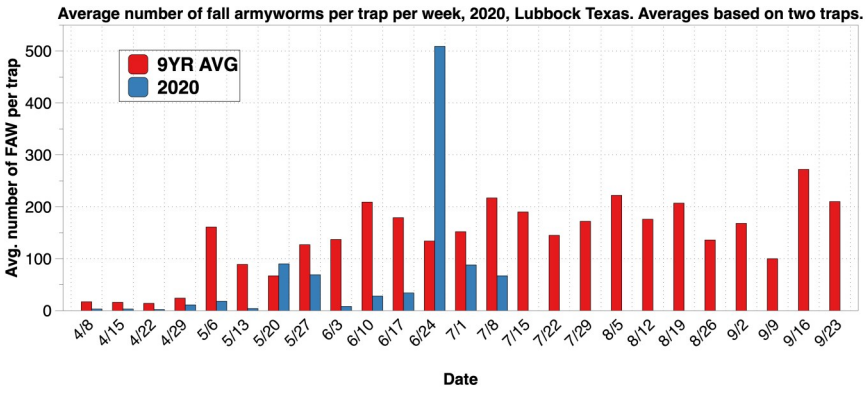
Mozena Obtusa. Primarily feeds on mesquite, but can be an issue on black-eyed peas and trees.

Garden webworm. Seems to mostly feed on pigweed locally, but could be an issue in gardens.

Assorted grasshoppers. High numbers can seriously damage any foliage including pastures.



Bollworms remain very light so far in 2020.



Blayne Reed