

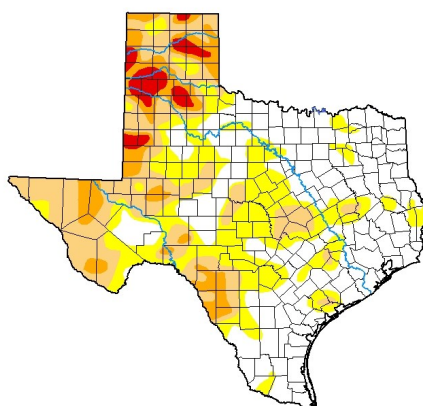
JULY 17, 2020

General Situation

Hot, Hot, and dry, dry. We experienced several more days of 100°F + temperatures again this week, but this time without any sniff or trace of rain. Irrigation systems continue to work overtime with a diminishing water source trying to keep up with demand while the few dryland fields still surviving are having difficulty not desiccating, let alone developing. Weeds seem unfazed, while pest populations hover near minimum in grain crops despite the arrival of the sugarcane aphid in area sorghum. Several of our area grain crops are now entering peak water use stages and all droplets of water are vital. Plant bugs have steadily increased in most cotton fields with a few requiring treatment. With so much to manage and decisions to make, despite the environmental situation, the best thing to apply to our fields remains our shadow.

U.S. Drought Monitor Texas

July 14, 2020
(Released Thursday, Jul. 16, 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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NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



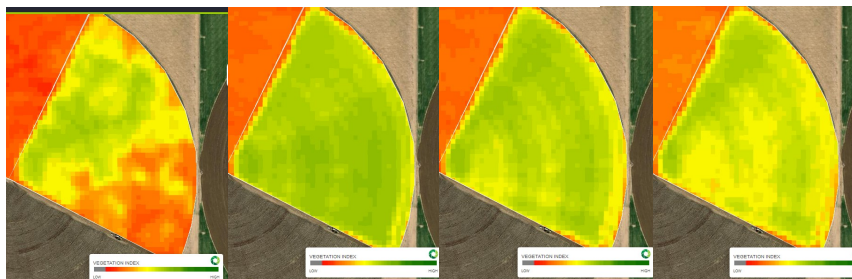
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Plainview Heat Unit Calculator

Cumulative Heat Unit Calculator

Start Date		End Date
4/20/2020	Corn	9/10/2020
Total Heat Units		2229.25
Start Date		End Date
5/17/2020	Cotton	10/10/2020
Total Heat Units		1146.85
<input type="button" value="Calculate"/>		



July 9,11,14, and 16 satellite images of one of our Plains Pest Management scouting program corn fields at R2 stage highlighting how quickly our crops are burning through irrigation water and how much impact an irrigation can have during key stages.

Cotton

Our scouting program cotton ranged in stage from wildcat pinhead square up to 7 NAWF (nodes above white flower). Most fields were far enough along that we could capture a NAWF average for them. These blooms were not 'consistent' enough that we could consider these fields safe from fleahopper damage. We still had to look for the blooms with most plants very close. Unfortunately, our fleahopper population continued to increase across all our fields.



Most area fields are sporting blooms, but they still have to be 'found'

Most of our cotton fields came in with a nervous 1 fleahopper per 3 row feet down to 1 fleahopper per 8 row feet with a tamer 8-12% fruit drop. A solid beneficial population in several fields likely helped hold fleahoppers barely in check. In a few fields the fleahoppers outpaced the predators and the heat to economic levels of more than 1 fleahopper per 1.5 row feet with an increase 12-15% plant bug caused fruit drop above last week's 10% loss. These fields, with populations of fleahoppers that high, with this 20-25% fruit drop, are situations that certainly warrants treatment despite the presence of the occasional bloom. Especially when we throw in an occasional Lygus that only increases the fruit loss.



Several fleahopper nymphs and dropped small squares in a Swisher field this morning.

Fleahoppers are an odd pest that can be very dangerous at about 1st bloom. The fleahopper's preferred host is not cotton, but silverleaf night shade and similar weeds. Once these are controlled in or near our fields, they readily move to cotton where they seek out certain proteins to meet their diet needs. Our young cotton squares happen to roughly satisfy the fleahopper's needs, but not ideally. The fairly small fleahoppers have to work pretty hard to feed on cotton squares. As soon as an easier food source is available, the fleahoppers happily adjust. This usually happens once blooms are available to the pest. Then the fleahoppers will feed on the more readily available pollen from cotton blooms and cease to feed on squares. Later in the season the fleahopper can actually be moved into the predator category as they will actively hunt and feed on the protein rich small bollworm in addition to bloom pollen. We now have several reasons to not want to spray for fleahoppers in July. Here is where the danger of 1st bloom comes in if fleahoppers, particularly the less mobile nymphs, are present in-field in notable numbers. If the blooms are not consistently available at minimally 1 per 4 or 5 row feet, the fleahopper nymphs and most adults are not aware they are available and will continue to feed on smaller squares causing irreplaceable damages to our yields.



Fleahopper adult

We only had a few fields so far this year we had to treat for fleahoppers. Determining which fields will reach ET and which fields will be safe from fleahoppers via blooming and predators this next week could be the difference in profitability and a loss of most of a field's investments.

We were finding the occasional Lygus this week in an increasing level to about 20% of our fields or so but without fleahopper support the

Lygus were not near ET alone. A few more foliage feeders were noted in a few fields again and some fields still contain several false chinch bugs to distract beneficials from the more financially important plant bug pests.

Most of our early NAWF plant growth measurements came in as showing the plants were about to experience drought stress (no surprises there). There were a few that were calling for some light PGR applications. While this is the case, and were recommended, any application of PGRs in this heat should be very strategic and where heavy irrigations (or rains somehow) can be relied upon. In those cases, it is advantageous to use PGRs to help keep the plants shorter and potentially more efficient later that might aid in boll set during peak bloom and water use. Still, unless something changes soon, this would not be the season to fill up barn space with cases of purchased PGRs.



8.2 NAWF field this week.



5507032

Here are some of the main beneficial predators aiding several fields in fleahopper control this week. Big-eyed-bug (left) adult, egg, and nymph. Scymnus ladybug (middle) adult. Nabid (right) adult.



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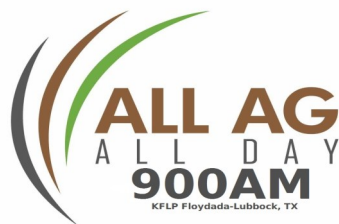
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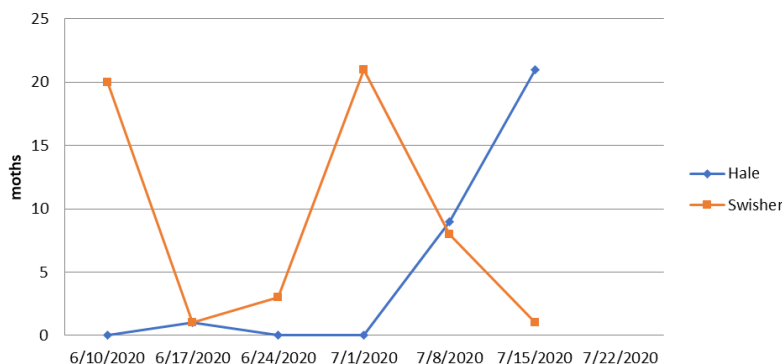


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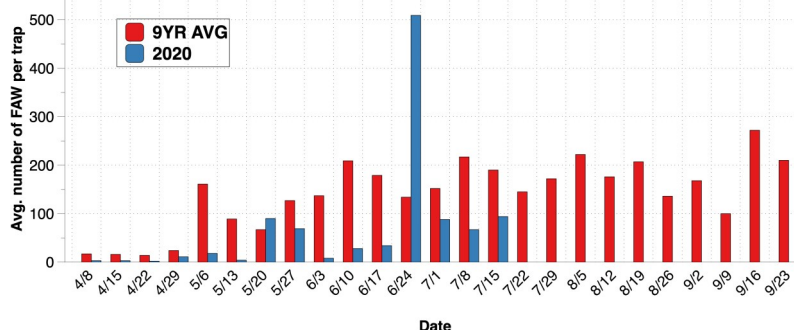
Corn and Sorghum

This week, our oldest corn was in early blister stage, while our youngest was V10 with the bulk of our intended corn fields just starting to tassel. Our oldest sorghum is just entering boot stage, while our youngest is at V2. The oldest of our grain crop fields are only now entering peak water use stages. Pests in both crops remain minimally quiet with all of the very few bollworms/earworms sinking into tasseled corn with some non-economic egg lay (non-economic unless the field is sweet corn for food), the sugarcane aphid making its first appearance this week, and a few fall armyworms still pecking on whorl stage sorghum fields. The sugarcane aphid was only found in about 20% of our fields so far, but several of our outstanding independent crop consultants are reporting slightly higher populations in southern and eastern fields and areas farther in those directions.

2020 Adult Bollworm Moth Trap Catches



Average number of fall armyworms per trap per week, 2020, Lubbock Texas. Averages based on two traps.



Blayne Reed