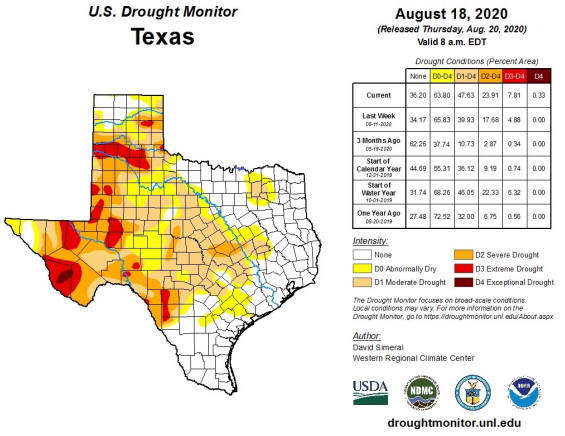
Plains Pest Management News

AUGUST 21, 2020

General Status

It is still hot and dry. Not much has changed over the past week, crop development and desiccation notwithstanding. We even found several fields with open bolls in cotton this week, but I fear very few of these were a natural boll maturity opening but rather a sunburnt blistering opening of some unshaded bolls. In most of these cases, these bolls were not the oldest on the plant and exposed to the most sun in the afternoon. How much impact this will have on fiber quality is unknown, but I am estimating 40% of our cotton fields



A prematurely opened boll this week.

are showing at least some of these blistered bolls. There are still lots of pest species active in-field this week. We are entering what is traditionally the most important week in cotton IPM for the High Plains. But few fields are actually having economic issues. The same can be said for most grain and hay crops, sorghum with sugarcane aphids aside. I also have reports of sorghum type hay crops with enough fall army worms feeding in the whorl and on leaves heavy enough to rob enough foliage to require treatment. It looks like there is enough potential problem out there that this crop, in this crazy season, will need heavy monitoring and guidance all the way to the finish line, less it crashes on final approach. Despite all the issues this year, there remain some fields in the area still looking pretty good.

Plainview Heat Unit Calculator

Cumulative Heat Unit Calculator

Start Date		End Date
4/6/2020	Corn	9/10/2020
Total Heat Units		3323.65

Start Date		End Date
5/10/2020	Cotton	11/6/2020
Total Heat Units		1879.00

Calculate

Cotton

Southern Hale Cotton at 1st open boll stage, holding and developing all the bolls the environment will allow.

All but one of our scouting program cotton fields has reached absolute cut-out of 3.5 NAWF, including our wildcat cotton. Our lone field that is not in or well past cut-out is a heavy-watered drip field at 4.75 NAWF. Some of the cut-out fields are certainly farther along than others. Our most advanced fields are sporting about 2% open bolls with our latest having just recently reached cut-out. A few others have developed past economic insect damage (except for stink bugs and aphids) having all possible fruiting sites set with large bolls and no squares, blooms, or small bolls left to develop. In these fields, bollworms will have a hard time establishing on large bolls and Lygus will be unable to penetrate bolls with more than 750 heat units of development. The majority of our fields are still setting their top crop, but natural drop remains high as plants hold all the fruit they can sustain.

The period of time between August 20 and August 27 is commonly considered the most important time for High Plains cotton IPM. This is the week that bollworms are historically most likely to become problematic as they migrate in from the south or move from drying corn. We also typically have to deal with a hyperactive Lygus population hindering the last of our fruit set and a possibility of a myriad of armyworm species that have built during the summer hit cotton with a crescendo of possible difficulties.

Bollworm egg on stem. These days, bollworm eggs could be lain anywhere on the plant.

This week, we are seeing all of these species, but few in economic numbers. Bollworm eggs were surprisingly found in about 20% of our fields, and not always in the lushest areas only. Our highest egg counts reached about 7,250 eggs per acre. We spotted even fewer establishing bollworms, and this was only in 2 fields. Our populations for these two fields were only 3,175 small worms per acre and 726 small worms per acre. Both were well below ET with this light population just establishing and shortly out of the egg. One of these fields is non-Bt, the other is a Bollgard II line. I would like to remind everyone that bollworm in Texas have proven levels of resistance to all Bt types except the VIP trait. While not economic and only in establishment, these fields highlight the need to scout all types of Bt

fields and apply our High Plains bollworm thresholds to all fields with established worms. The High Plains bollworm thresholds remain at 8,000 to 10,000 bollworms per acre or 6% harvestable fruit damage.

To give you an idea about how well the various Bt traits are working in the field, here are the few results we have from our Sentinel plot data with BASF and the Floyd Crosby IPM Unit from last week.

11-Aug-20	**Non Bt**	**TwinLink**	**TwinLink Plus**
% damage to harvestable fruit	1.2%	0.4%	0.4%
bollworms found per acre	1,733	0	0

It should be noted that the August 11 date is the only date we have found any bollworms in the trial for the entire season so far. This includes the August 18 date when no worms or damage were found again.

Southeastern Swisher field where some of our bollworms were found this week.

For the first time in several weeks, we did not have to recommend treatment for Lygus in any of our fields. There were some fields nearing ET. Our highest population came in at 1 Lygus per 3 row feet, very near ET. We determined that in this case, the Lygus were only causing about 20% of the fruit drop that were already coming off the plant due to the natural cut-out increase in drop. Just as we have started seeing some open bolls, we started finding a few more cotton aphids. These populations were nowhere near the ET of 50 per leaf or the amended for open cotton late season ET of 12 per leaf, but should be of note as fields mature and open cotton bolls increase. Keeping the aphids below the 12 per leaf level has proven to limit the accumulation of honeydew on the lint, preventing a sticky cotton situation. We are still finding some stink bugs in about half our fields. These numbers remain low with at most 1 stink bug per 18 row feet or so. I suggest that if stink bug numbers increase to less than 1 stink bug per 6 foot or so, you might want to initiate boll damage assessments to evaluate stink bug feeding damage. Details on stink bug damage to the boll, boll dissection, and thresholds can be found in our Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Cotton Insect Management Guide. https://agrilifecdn.tamu.edu/texaslocalproduce-2/files/2018/07/Managing-Cotton-Insects-in-Texas.pdf

Assassin bug; a great bollworm predator found in our fields this week.

Corn

A quarter sized BGM colony at the –1 leaf this week.

Our corn ranged in stage from green silk to 15% starch line and passed economic insect damage. Spider mites were again our largest concern in corn, yet none were at ET. This is different from many surrounding counties with more corn in the system with most fields having been treated weeks ago. Our highest damage rating came in at 3 and our lowest at 0.83 with most fields falling between 2 and 3 on the 0-10 mite damage rating scale with 3.5 – 4 being economic. Specific mite predators and disease are battling these mites with some fields slipping and others increasing. There seems to be enough late corn to absorb or sink many of our already light bollworm population into where they are of no or limited economic concern for field corn. Disease remains light.

Sorghum

Our program sorghum ranges from a VX stage up to dough. All but one of our sorghum fields passed boot stage have been treated for the sugarcane aphid. All treatments are working remarkably well in our fields and research test plots so long as coverage is not an issue. We started finding small colonies in the drought stressed whorl stage fields this week. These fields are already in severe drought stress. Fortunately, the SCA is not at ET yet, but unless the situation changes, there might be some very hard decisions to make regarding the profitability of treating these fields soon if the situation does not improve. Beneficials have been doing a remarkable job aiding in SCA control so far, slowing aphid coverage and development. We are finding headworms, primarily of the bollworm species, in our headed sorghum fields, but here too they remain very light. Our highest population came in this week at 0.2 per head. We are finding sorghum midge in our blooming heads with regularity this week, but these also remain fairly light for us. Our highest midge count came in at 0.39 midge per head and mostly around field margins. Fall armyworms continue to be found primarily on whorl stage sorghum, doing little economic damage, but serious visual feeding. In sorghum hay type crops, this foliar feeding can easily be an economic issue. BGM continue to be a concern in sorghum this week, but we have had no economic fields yet.

Southwestern Hale seed milo field treated for SCA last week with remarkable success.

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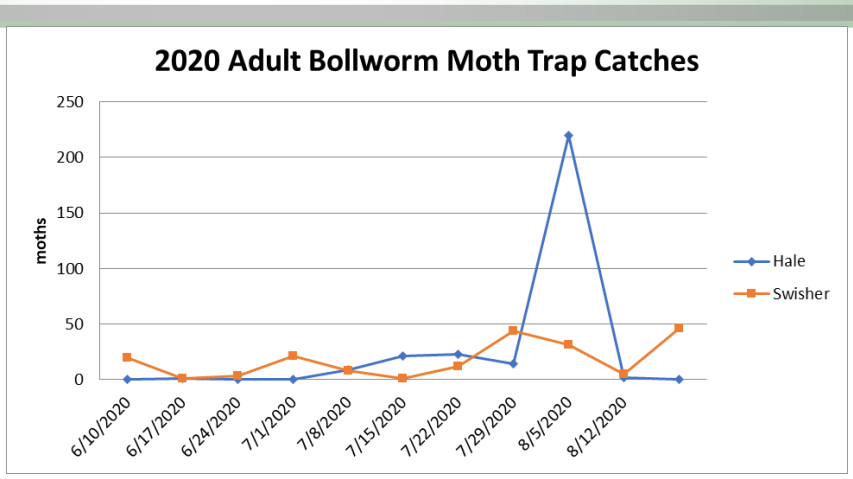
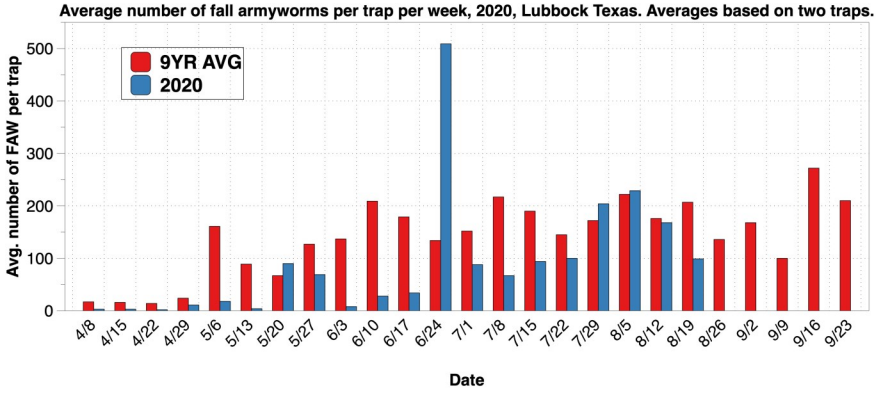


For the third time this year, our Hale County trap was damaged or **tampered** with. This week's numbers should be considered as missing data for that site.



SEPT 9 2020
8:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

WEST TEXAS AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS INSTITUTE

Annual Meeting going VIRTUAL in 2020!

Speakers
- Dale Scott
- Peter Dotray & Wayne Keeling
- Suhas Vyavhare, Kerry Siders & Blayne Reed
- Terry Wheeler
- Cecilia Monclova Santana
- Glen Ritchie, Murilo Maeda, Emi Kimura & Katie Lewis

Topics:
- Section 18
- Mitigation if we don't get Section 18 on Dicamba
- IPM and Agronomic Panels

Registration Fee
$50

REGISTER ONLINE

1) Please visit:
http://bitly.ws/9pRv
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2) Once registered, you will receive a invitation to join the Zoom Webinar

Topics:
- FOV4 Update, Seed Care, Nematode & Disease Update
- Updates on Graduate Research

For more information, contact Corey Thompson.
http://www.wtaci.org/

Blayne Reed