TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Plains Pest Management News

AUGUST 28, 2020

General Status

Another hot and dry week has blown by here on the High Plains. If not for the crop development and farther desiccation, this week was much like the previous few weeks. There remain several pest species active and threatening fields, but few fields with economic pest concentrations. Please note that the statement is for few fields, not zero fields. For fields still susceptible to pest damage, they remain at risk for most of the pests on the books. And we have had to treat a few fields each week for most of the pests in the area. Not very many fields each week, but some and this week was no exception. We do have several fields finally developing past economic pest damage. Some are cotton, some corn, and some sorghum. In the area, we even have some grain harvested during the past few weeks. The majority of fields remain at risk for pests for at least a week or two with several 2nd crops that will stretch well into September. If it does not rain soon, maybe there will be enough water to make the finish line.

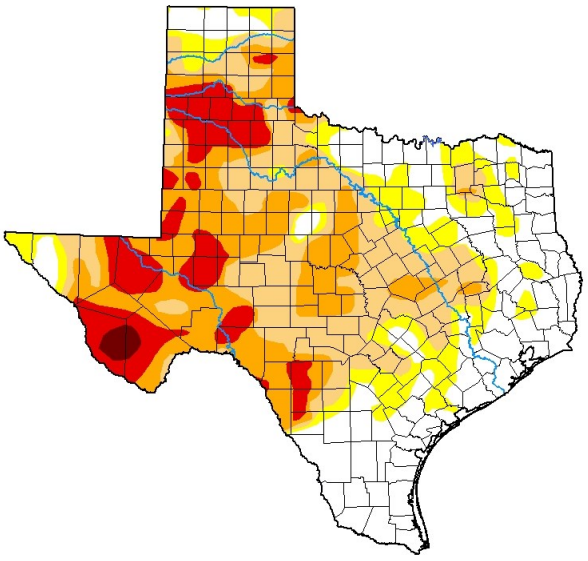
Lusher, more pest attractive field in SE Swisher this week.

Plainview Heat Unit Calculator

Cumulative Heat Unit Calculator

Start Date		End Date
4/20/2020	Corn	8/28/2020
Total Heat Units		3420.05
Start Date		End Date
5/18/2020	Cotton	10/10/2020
Total Heat Units		1946.75

Calculate



Cotton

This week our PPM program cotton ranged in stage from freshly reaching the absolute cut-out of 3.5 NAWF to about 5% open boll with most setting the last of their harvestable bolls this week shortly following cut-out. Bollworms and Lygus were our pest of note in cotton this week. The population of bollworms has been very light all season long, but we are finding about 1/3 of our fields with either light worms (non Bt) or some eggs. Our highest worm population was 3,500 small worms per acre and our highest egg count came in at 10,875 eggs per acre. None of the fields we found worms in this week experienced more than 2% harvestable fruit damage, even in the 3,500 worm per acre field with beneficials and other mortality factors taking their toll. Our highest Lygus population this week came in at 1 Lygus per 4.5 row feet with this sub-threshold population doing minimal damage to harvestable fruit and mostly focusing on naturally dropping fruit. Most fields held around 1 Lygus per 6 row feet or so with similar but lighter feeding patterns.

Field up top is passed economic pest issues, while the lusher field below will need intense scouting for a few more weeks.

We have several of our cotton fields moving past economic pest damage this week. This does not mean management and irrigation is finished with them for the season. Irrigations can move to more of a boll fill need rather than full production mode. Ideally and for example, this might mean irrigating for 4 days per week rather than 7. In the real world, this is impractical, so continuing for another 7 to 10 days before giving the wells a rest is advisable. After a respite of about the same length and weather depending, another pass to finish the bolls out fully would be advisable. Many producers often opt to keep the irrigation systems running for a full 2 to 3 weeks more and bank some of that water for the fall boll fill rather than going through the hassle of restarting the systems after such a hard summer. However, there is a danger of over watering at this point and causing regrowth, especially if any rains do come in September and early October. Cotton never plans for the future and thinks it is a tree in the jungle with 200 years to live. We have to do all the real management of this plant to get it to shut down without hurting yield of this fickle plant. A fine line.

Bollworms love to attack below bloom tags where protected and hidden.

The majority of our fields will be at risk for worms and Lygus at least for one more week. These fields should be joining their more developed neighbors soon and should be watched until the danger is past. For those fields that are 'past pest damage' and for those that soon will be, they are not completely out of the pest woods yet. Cotton aphids could still bloom with cooler weather late and cause sticky cotton issues and stink bugs can move in, damaging boll development. For our program fields 'past economic pest concerns' I will still be spot checking them for aphids and stink bugs every 10 to 14 days as I begin harvest aid evaluations.

Corn

Pest issues were relatively quiet this week with several of our older fields finally reaching 15% starch line and can safely begin dry down for harvest. Our youngest fields are several replants and currently in dough to late dough stages. Mites are still our largest concern on the younger fields, but the battle between beneficials and mite populations seemed stalemated just below ET. Disease remains light, even in the later fields. This could change once cooler temperatures and humidity and morning dews return someday. Again this year, I have noted on the older fields the odd mid-ear feeding that could be indicative of western bean cutworm feeding or overly zealous fall armyworms attacking late. Either way this damage is only 1 out of every 500-1000 ears was not noticeable until dry down started.

Sorghum

Our sorghum ranged from VX to black line this week with clusters of maturity at both extremes with one 1 field bloom and 1 at soft dough. Sugarcane aphids (SCA) were our largest concern again this week with a few more reaching threshold requiring treatment. Miraculously, one of our older fields on the verge of being past pest damage has hovered around 5 to 10% infestation rate for almost a month, never requiring treatment. If this holds for another week or so and the aphids remain out of the head for harvest, it will be the first May or later planted field that has not required SCA treatment since the aphid's arrival in 2015 that I have experienced. We continue to monitor this field closely.

Headworms turning up in my beat bucket this week from a sorghum head.

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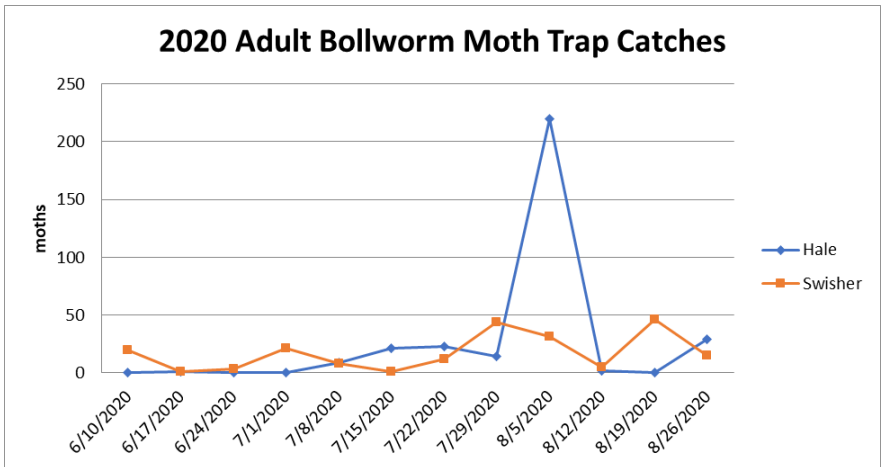
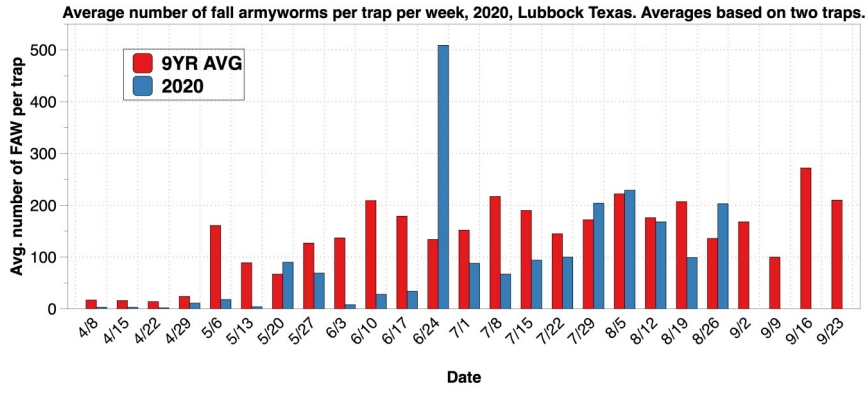
We have been picking up sorghum midge in our blooming fields for several weeks now, but the field we have currently in bloom reached threshold this week for both the midge and SCA and required treatment for both. We also picked up a few more headworms, all of them bollworms, in our sorghum this week. Lygus also increased in our sorghum heads as they mature. None of these were more than 1/3 of threshold for either pest, but the threat remains. Fall armyworm continue to be found in whorl stage sorghum only with mounting but sub-economic damage. We should continue to scout for all of these pests until the plant can safely start dry down for harvest and then even after for the SCA.

Heavy FAW damage during whorl has not caused any damage to the head.





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