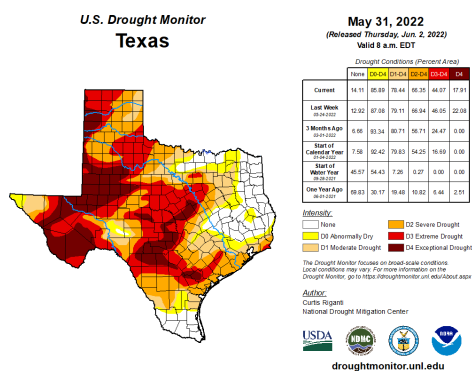


JUNE 3, 2022

General Status

Our status is double dry with a sprinkling of relieving rain on top. How much rain was received in the last few weeks varies from field to field, but the short answer is, not enough to bring us out of the drought. Our sub-soil is still bone dry while our surface soil sucks up all the moisture provided and is begging for more. Most areas received the blessing of beneficial rains from almost 2-inches up to a reported 5-inch hot spot that came happened to come with damaging hail. Temperatures have been on a rollercoaster the last month, swinging from hot and dry, to cold and



I have had issue with this map for a while. I do not think it shows the area severe enough.

dry. One constant from the environment has been the unrelenting extreme wind that keeps blowing from every direction more days than not. All factors together, and the environment has made establishing a crop quite the challenge. This is above and beyond a world that seems to have gone crazy with supply and market supply issues.

While we in West Texas are no stranger to tough times and extreme environments, few of us today have seen situations this extreme. There are plenty of stories and history from the 1930's that sound pretty familiar to today. I dare say we are in better shape this spring than most of those years. It is not because those years were that much more extreme than today. Far from it and a quick look at our historical weather will show the past several seasons easily fall within the dust boll's framework. Just as an example, I have recorded a few fields that the almost 2-inches received was the first moisture since July. I have several noted similar extreme situations through the area over the past several years.

But there are differences, and it begins with our producers. Today our cropping systems, field management practices, and conservation practices are much better. Yes our ability to irrigate is something we have today that they did not back then too, but our irrigation capacity is slipping by the minute and dryland acres are probably the bulk of our acres again. While we have had our share

of brown skies this year, I have not heard of mass hospitalizations for people with lungs full of dirt. Nor have I seen production fields full of nothing but dunes of blow sand. I do see dryland fields, while desperate, still have cover to hold the soil down and aid in soaking up and storing any moisture available. Now with just a few spits of rain, most of these fields have a solid chance of establishing a crop stand. This gives me quite a bit of hope and belief we can manage through the difficulties because we have obviously done it before. In fact, I am excited to see what new sustainable innovations we in West Texas will develop to better see us through this time. Where we will be tomorrow? For whatever my small part could be, I pray to be involved in seeing these innovations come to fruition.



New and good things happen in tough times too.

Cotton

We have not been able to get around all of our Plains Pest Management cotton acres this week. Partly due to rain delays, partly due to labor shortages, and partly due to weather and planting or establishment. Our cotton ranged from seed in the barn up to 2nd true leaf stage this week. Most of our fields are still establishing and at immediate risk of wireworm damage above and beyond the risk of drying out before emerging. With a few fields as shining exceptions, wireworms have not been a major issue. For the



Wireworm with bite damage to root.

exception fields, they are heavy enough that they may prevent a profitable population from establishing, and even if they do, the damage to the root system and seedling disease, entering the seedlings system through the bite wounds much easier, currently ravaging the plants, and the field's recovery time will be too long to be acceptable for higher yields.

Thrips have been a larger problem for established fields than I ever thought they would be given the drought situation and the lack of green wheat fields finishing out in the area. One particular cotton field near one of the very few good and heavily irrigated wheat fields in the area had 3.9 thrips



Moderately severe thrips damage this week.

per true leaf stage with reproduction already occurring at the 2nd true leaf stage. While that field was understandably high, most fields north of Plainview that are currently at 1-2nd true leaf stage has around 1 thrips per true leaf stage. Fields at cotyledon stage generally only had 0.1 to 0.5 thrips, which is still higher than expected. Most fields at 2nd leaf stage were already experiencing reproduction from the thrips, which means the insecticidal seed treatment has already played out.



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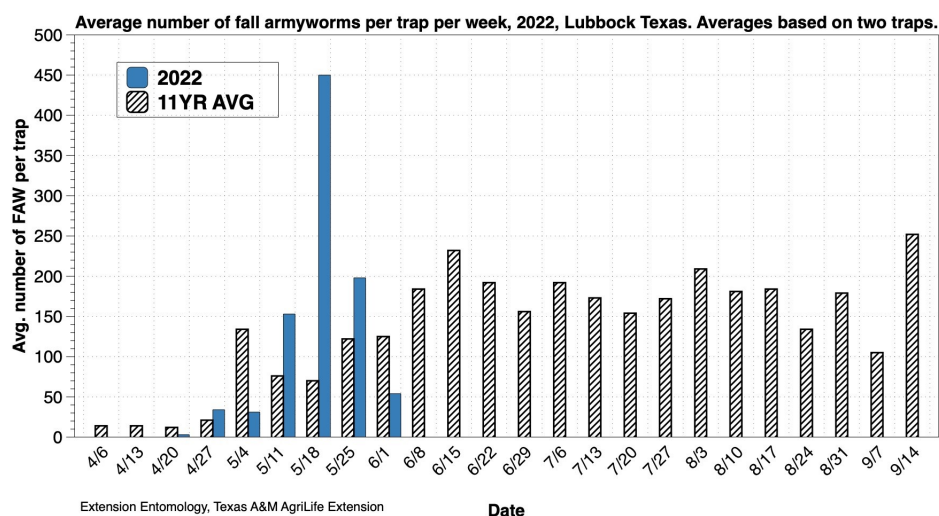


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Beneficial populations remain too light to impact pest populations yet. Meanwhile, weeds are flushing with each raindrop. It remains clear which fields have residual applied and even which have had ample time to properly incorporate, but some weeds are coming through. Most pigweed and morningglories are in their tiny cotyledon stages while surviving Kochia and Russian thistle has some size to them already.

Corn and Sorghum

We have very few corn and sorghum fields in our program so far this year. Our research plot sorghum is at V6 stage and our only corn field is at V5. Neither had any pest or disease issues of note today although we are on the lookout for foliar feeding based upon Fall armyworm moth trap data last month from Dr. Pat Porter in Lubbock. Both fields had heavy weed flushes with weeds growing rapidly. Many herbicide labels indicate that V5 stage in corn is the last safe time to apply these herbicides without risk of causing yield loss.



Blayne Reed