

JULY 8, 2022

General Status

Crop progress continues under general drought conditions despite several popcorn or cotton showers that have been rummaging through the past week or more. These convective showers have been beneficial, but by their nature have not been widespread or dropped much rain with plenty of acres not receiving anything except a bit of cloud cover and outflow winds. Amounts of moisture that I have hastily gathered indicate a range from none up to 0.75-inches with most receiving less than 0.25-inches if any was received. While nowhere near a drought breaking rain event, especially with extreme temperatures this week, any amount is helpful as irrigation systems struggle to keep up with heat units and the first half of crop development. Most area summer grain crops are showing drought stress during the heat of the day with peak water use and pollination just around the corner, if not already started. Irrigated cotton seems to be holding up but the few early fields in the area that started sporting their first blooms this week put those blooms on between 5 and nodes above white flower. Meanwhile on the other end of the crop development spectrum, the few late planted grain fields are germinating well in the temperatures, but many younger cotton fields need irrigation just to develop but are drinking everything applied and focusing a bit too much vegetative growth rather than rooting well and setting young fruit. Several pest species are in our PPM crops, doing well in the heat, but have only been in the periphery or caused only nickel and dime damage.



The earliest 1st bloom stage cotton fields in the area came into bloom at 5-7 NAWF.

Cotton



Drip cotton on the Hale/Swisher line this week.

Our PPM field scouting program cotton ranged in stage from a very late and stressed 4th true leaf stage up to an early 1st bloom with most fields coming in around ½ to ¾ grown square stage. Fleahoppers again were our largest concern. With most fields in at least their 3rd week of square set, few fields did not have some level of fleahopper pressure. Some of these fleahoppers were again of the black type in addition to the usual green species. Our highest field came in with an equivalent to 14.3 fleahopper infested terminals with our highest fruit drop came in at 16.5%, neither were at our thresholds to trigger fleahopper treatment. So far almost all of our fleahoppers found in our data sets have been adults. This is odd to only see adult fleahoppers for 3 weeks in a field with little to no reproduction and resulting nymphs. These developing nymphs typically are not as mobile as the adults and can only remain in the field and on the plant terminals raking up damage and triggering control measures. For whatever reason, we are just not seeing very many nymphs. Sometimes, predatory arthropods lend a helping hand in managing these nymphs, preventing farther control measures, but we just are not seeing that level of predator populations so far. Without additional information, the current drought and environmental situation seems like our best hypothetical culprit regarding the lack of nymphs in-field. We might be seeing some minor benefit to the environmental conditions.

In about 20% of our cotton fields we have started picking up Lygus also. All of these have been adults also. I fully expect to find a field that will need to be treated for plant bugs soon and I suspect it would be of a mixed population of Lygus and fleahoppers with both species of nymphs present.



A few black fleahoppers are in the mix again this year.

Table 4. Cotton fleahopper action thresholds

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

Table 7. Lygus action threshold

Cotton stage	Sampling method	
	Drop cloth	Sweep net
1st two weeks of squaring*	1–2 per 6 ft-row with unacceptable square set	8 per 100 sweeps with unacceptable square set
3rd week of squaring to 1st bloom	2–3 per 6 ft-row with unacceptable square set	15 per 100 sweeps with unacceptable square set
After peak bloom	4–6 per 6 ft-row with unacceptable fruit set the first 4–5 weeks	15–20 per 100 sweeps with unacceptable fruit set the first 4–5 weeks

Sweep net: Standard 15-inch net, sample 1 row at a time, taking 15–25 sweeps. Recommended before peak bloom.

Drop cloth: Black recommended, 3-foot sampling area, sample 2 rows. Recommended after peak bloom. Stop sampling and treating when NAWF = 5 + 350 DD60's.

*In West Texas, insecticide applications for lygus are rarely needed in prebloom cotton as lygus generally stay in roadside weeds and vegetation until cotton begins flowering.

Tables from our Managing Texas Cotton Insects Guide for Lygus and fleahopper control decisions.



Bollworm found this week in cotton.

We also picked up a few bollworms and cotton square borers in our non-Bt fields and some feeding damage in other fields a good distance away from corn fields. We are still not seeing any worms or feeding in cotton near corn fields, a vastly more preferred host plant. Our highest worm population was 726 small worms per acre which resulted in a 1.1% harvestable fruit damage. This is very early for these pests to move into cotton and we should adjust our thresholds accordingly, but this field was not treatable yet.

Corn & Sorghum

In our scouting program, we have some additional late planted sorghum that went in just this week and is just now germinating. Our older sorghum is at VX stage with just a few flag leaves popping out. We still are not seeing any sorghum aphids, formerly known as the sugarcane aphid, although populations have been noted in Lubbock and Muleshoe areas. Fall armyworm feeding remains light and in the whorl so far, with only about 1 in 10 plants hit and foliar damage on those plants remains below 1% foliage loss. We have picked up a few yellow sugarcane aphid damaged lower leaves, but this remains well below ET too.

Our corn is also in VX stages with a few tassels poking out also. Banks grass mites (BGM) continued to expand across the field, but only on the lower 1 or 2 leaves (-6 leaf or so) and in small dime to quarter sized colonies giving them a 0.5-1.5 damage rating depending on location in the field. If the mites continue this expansion, and it is expected they will as post tasseled, slightly stressed corn usually results in an ideal conditions for them, we could be at or near ET very soon. ET on the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension mite damage rating system would be a 3.5 to 4 (30-40% leaves with colonies covering about 30-40% of the leaf). No other pests of note were found in our corn, not counting the heavy corn earworm (bollworm) eggclay that has been witnessed. Only under extreme situations are CEW economic in High Plains Corn. Looking at number of eggs and trap numbers near corn, including the FAW, and we should be watching for excessive pressure on the ear (more than 1 worm per ear) and looking carefully for side-ear feeding, which is known to be much more damaging than tip feeding alone as it also introduces disease much worse.



Our PPM VX stage corn hoping for a quick return of the pivot from the far side of the field during the heat of the day this week.



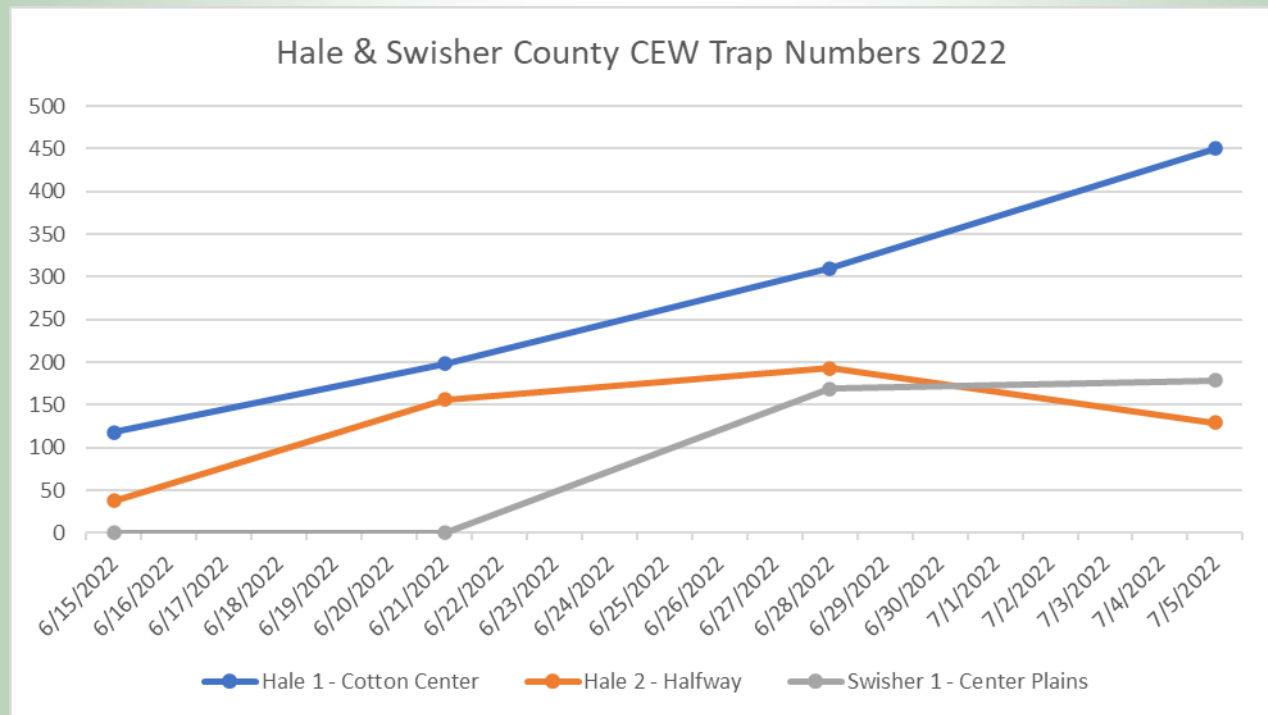
Nymphs attacking rose bushes.

Grasshopper situation:



Grasshopper nymph helping demolish monkey grass.

I am still uncertain how widespread this issue is, but pressure on green areas in pastures nearby gardens and horticultural areas southern Swisher are certainly experiencing a heavy grasshopper nymph population move into them. I captured these images from a non-ag site visit this week in the area. Hundreds of grasshopper nymphs of varying species had moved into a rural horticultural area a few days before, devastating vegetation. These few actually stayed in place for photos. It remains to be seen how much or if the light recent rains will help this situation as it has progressed this far.



Our traditional adult bollworm moth traps remain almost non-existent with trap numbers while our Corn Producers traps near corn fields remain very high with bollworm moth captures. We are suspecting lure issues and are changing them for our traditional site wire traps. Meanwhile, the small plastic traps near corn plainly show heavy moth presence and our field experience is showing they are laying eggs in area crops.



AgriLife Extension Service / Texas Pest Management Association

225 Broadway, Suite 6
Plainview, TX 79072
Tel: 806.291.5267
Fax: 806.291.5266

E-mail: Blayne.Reed@ag.tamu.edu

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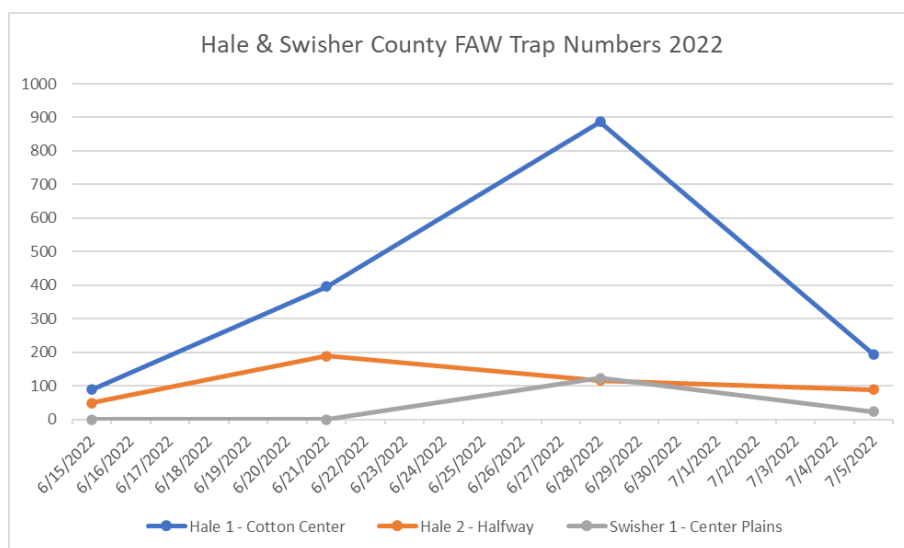
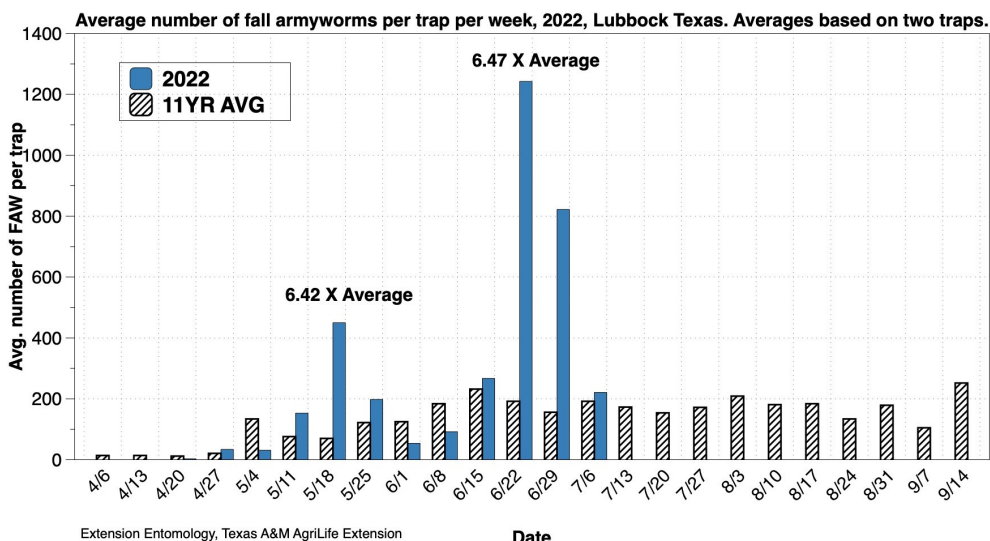
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Dr. Pat Porter's Lubbock FAW numbers are starting to decline to 11 year normal levels while our southerly traps are showing the same trend. Our northern traps are still capturing what most would consider high numbers, just not as high. We are not seeing FAW damage correlating with the trap numbers. We suspect whorl stage Bt corn might be controlling them well, but we remain watchful for excessive whorl feeding.

Blayne Reed