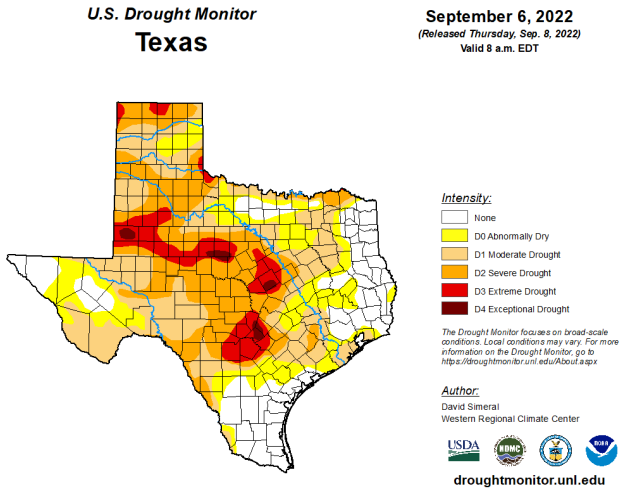
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Plains Pest Management News

SEPTEMBER 9, 2022

General Status

Things continue to quiet down in the area for our summer crops. Nothing has gone fully silent yet with just a few late fields, mostly sorghum, still developing harvestable yield. With the rains of a few weeks ago, weeds seem to have flushed multiple years of seeds all at once changing many fallow fields in the area to lush jungles needing tillage or other control measures before the field can move forward without future nightmare weed issues. With limited sub-soil moisture before the recent rains and field stages all over the map, decisions on irrigations to finish out fields is on a field by field basis. Pest populations continue to focus only on actively growing fields, whether this is by lush, late, or a few cotton fields with excessive regrowth, almost all insect activity seems to be consolidated in these remaining fields. It is hard to even detect insect activity, pest or beneficial, outside of this shrinking minority of fields this week. With harvest aids and winter crops on our beckoning for attention, we still have enough summer crop management concerns to keep us in the fields.



A few of the fields still active with insect activity that will still need scouting attention a bit longer.

Cotton

There was only one Plains Pest Management cotton field found this week where insects could still be an issue by next week. This one field will be at risk for stink bugs only. In this field we found 1 stink bug per 9 row feet with 23% of susceptible bolls with stink bug damage, which is well below ET. Bollworm moth activity was noted in several fields, but a much-reduced number of actual viable eggs were found in the at-risk fields with only one field being found with eggs. No established bollworms were found in any field, but a few scattered cabbage loopers were found in a few non-Bt fields. Very few Lygus were found as at-risk field's uppermost developing and harvestable bolls mature past a level that Lygus can feed on them. Lygus seem to be moving from cotton almost fully heading toward alternate host plants which clearly include headed sorghum. We did note one field with unusually high regrowth ongoing a very heavy population of cotton aphids developing in pockets of the field. This is the only population of cotton aphids found but does show a danger to fields with open cotton that could be tainted into being sticky by the aphid's honeydew.

Even some of the lusher fields are popping bolls open in high numbers this week.

Stink bug nymph in Swisher this week.

With a rare pest field aside, the next major hurdle for cotton will likely be harvest aid considerations. The amount of regrowth I am seeing in most fields is less than expected so far, but exists in all fields in variable extents and either in the form of terminal growth or in an abundance of lush green leaves hanging to the plant with no obvious thought about shortening days or fall weather around the corner. This is very likely to make harvest difficult if ignored and harvest aid costs higher than needed this year. The latest cotton harvest aid guide should be available through the Lubbock Station site: https://lubbock.tamu.edu/

Cotton aphids in Hale this week.

Harvest aids should be the next hurdle for most cotton, but plants look hardened off and might be difficult to get ready for harvest when the time comes.

Sorghum

Blooming sorghum in southern Hale this week.

Our late sorghum ranges in stage from 25% bloom to soft dough stage with blooms still in field. All are susceptible to sorghum midge, but we only found 50% of the fields with detectable populations with the highest being 20% heads infested. Headworms (100% bollworm / corn earworm) were very attracted to these fields this week, but none reached treatable levels with a solid beneficial population following them into these few fields. Our highest field this week held 0.88 medium worms and 0.12 large worms per head, which was below about 2/3 the way to threshold for this field. To determine your field's worm per head ET, here is a link to our sorghum headworm ET calculator: https://extensionentomology.tamu.edu/sorghum-headworm-calculator/ This calculator should be very useful in helping determine treatable levels for the area dryland sorghum fields, planted post failed cotton, that emerged and barely survived with a very, very light and skippy population until the rains a few weeks ago. Now many of these fields look like they might be worth harvesting if grain prices hold or raise and if they have time and resources to boot, bloom, and mature.

Boot, blooms ,and all the way through soft dough in this NW Hale Field today.

Sorghum aphid (formerly sugarcane aphid) continues its battle with a solid population of those leaf inhabiting beneficials also. We have treated about 25% of these so far with the remainder of the fields holding below ET up to just below the ET of 30% of plants infested with colonies of 50 or more for this stage of sorghum. Lygus and stink bugs have begun to find these fields as attractive now and are moving in. Our current threshold for stink bugs is 4 bugs per head while the best data we have suggests it would take 12 Lygus per head before treatment is justified. It is suspected that grain would be most susceptible to damage in the soft dough stage. This week, both of these pests were found in all fields, but only from 0.12 up to 0.84 per head for both species.

Figure 30. From left: Brown, conchuela, rice, and southern green stink bugs

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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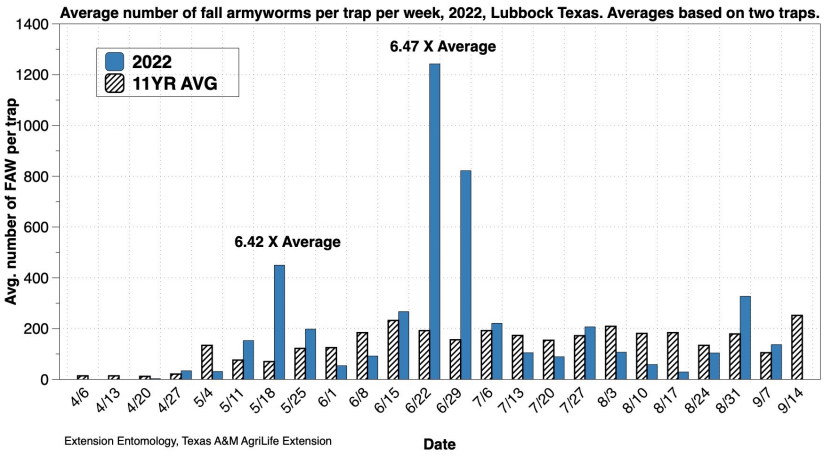
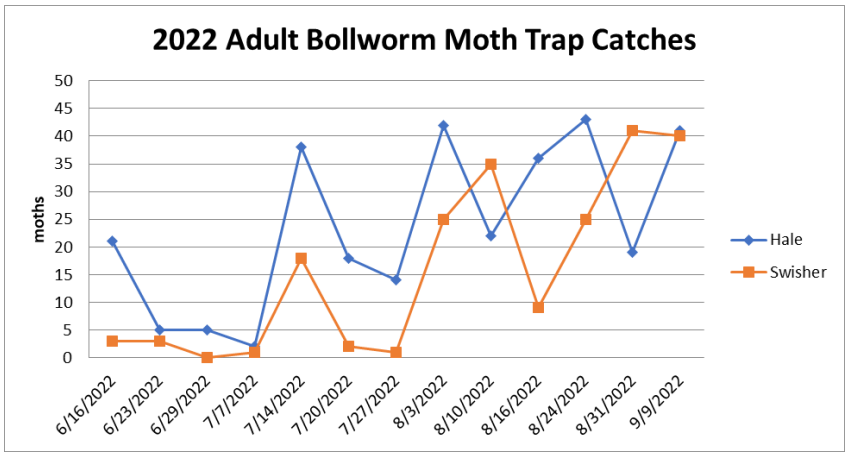


Our Texas Corn Pest Trapping concluded last month, and we are not able to share any data from those traps this week. We have continued collecting from our wire traps located traditionally for the last decade. This week's data remains low, as the entire year has. However, the numbers are as high as they have been all year indicating these moths are still looking for acceptable host plants.



Unless we have a major issue, this could be the last Plains Pest Management Issue for the 2022 year. Be sure to subscribe to the High Plains IPM Podcast Updates and keep up with us for short updates through our Plains Pest Bugoshere blog at: https://halecountyipm.blogspot.com/ . You can also follow Plains Pest Management on Facebook, Twitter, or Blayne Reed on LinkedIn and look for us through the Hale County shared social sites soon.

Blayne Reed