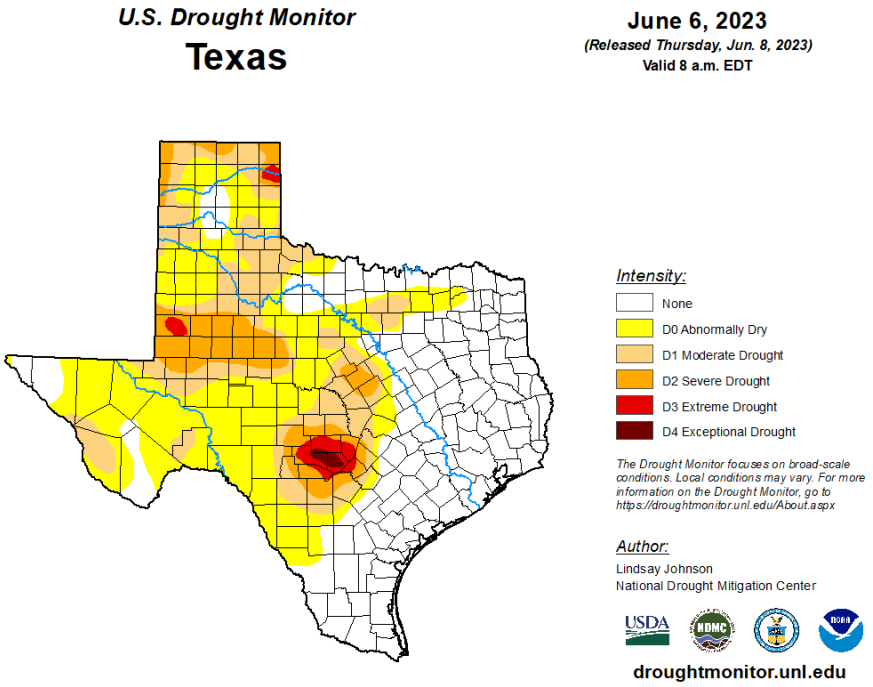
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Plains Pest Management News

JUNE 9, 2023

General Status

Hale & Swisher is beginning to dry from the deluge of rainfall the past month. A few northern and southern areas of the counties received even more rainfall this week, but the majority of producers are finally able to head back to the field as of late this week. The crops look roughed up, and could use some sunshine, but generally speaking, remain in pretty decent position for advancement. Corn and sorghum are a bit tattered but developing well. Established cotton has been developing very slowly in the cooler temperatures of late and has a multitude of issues ranging from weather damage, seedling disease, and thrips damage none of which should be insurmountable for most fields. We have found a few fields in the area that caught some exceptional hail and or high winds that caused the plant stands to drop below acceptable levels. We will see what producers decide to plant this late in those failed fields and the, so far, prevented from planting acres. While the fields are late, there is at least moisture to work with.



Despite heavy rainfall and even flooding over the past 5 weeks, much of our area is still officially showing drought conditions and some room for additional soil moisture.

Cotton

Our Plains Pest Management cotton ranged in stage from germinating to 2nd true leaf stage with most showing some level of regrowth from weather damage. All fields planted before the bulk of the rainfall has gone through quite a bit, and it looks it. Plant stands remain strong with just a few failure exceptions. Most field's largest hurdle might seem to be seedling disease. While widespread, the level and severity observed is not drastic and most plants should overcome the seedling disease hurdle with sunshine and warmer temperatures. Thrips might actually be the largest issue for fields to overcome. Thrips, while they will not kill plants, will delay development through their unique feeding damage to the tender developing foliage.

Swisher field with slowed development from weather, seedling disease, and insect damage looking to rebound quickly.

Our thrips numbers have been running about 1 thrips per plant regardless of plant stage. For most fields this range is from 0.64 thrips per true leaf stage to 1.8 thrips per true leaf stage with the higher numbers always being near wheat, even failed wheat fields. We have seen a shift of thrips from cotton to other green host plants such as pastures and out of field weeds in field margins following the rains. In our heavier wheat production areas of northern Hale through all of Swisher, there remains a large enough population for these thrips to disperse and still threaten cotton development. Seed treatments have been effective thus far, and would usually last through the 2nd true leaf stage, but as development has been slow, the residual for these treatments looks to already be running low with thrips larva (immatures) found in most fields indicating that the thrips are surviving now long enough to reproduce in the field. Beneficial numbers remain low in cotton so far. I suggest that if the field has been severely weathered, you might consider tolerating a few less thrips for these fields to help them get developing sooner. Later planted cotton fields that were somehow planted more recently while dodging rain fall events are emerging well and look great with just a touch of wireworm damage.

Adult thrips

Weeds are flushing behind the rains. Fields with earlier applied residual herbicides seem to be fairing better than fields where the herbicide was applied around planting, but all fields have a few weeds pushing through that threaten to out pace our recovering crops.

Weeds are developing alongside this Hale cotton.

Corn and Sorghum

Little has changed for our corn and sorghum report from last week. No pests of note were found in either crop within our scouting program. We should start picking up on the earliest establishing spider mite colonies, particularly Banks grass mites around edges, near wheat, and grass but we have not noted anything yet. We hypothesize that the wet, humid environment thus far has kept the pest in check with fungal diseases. Likewise, we would expect to find a few corn leaf aphids in corn or sorghum too, but none have been noted. This is actually disappointing as these aphids cause such limited damage, we actually like to encourage their establishment to feed and build beneficial populations to deal with more serious pests later in the season. It is possible similar pathogens could be holding these aphids back, but it is more likely they are still enjoying their less preferred spring host plants following the heavy rainfalls.

V4 corn on the Hale/ Swisher line this week.

Our oldest corn was V6 stage this week with most corn coming in at V4, just before the critical V5 labeled cut-out spray date for many grain herbicides. Our established sorghum ranged from V3-V4. We expect many thus far unplanted fields to go into corn or sorghum soon.

This week we set our bollworm moth traps and our corn pest traps for both Hale and Swisher. We should be sharing data from them next week.

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Jimie Reed Honored

Jimie Reed, a producer in southern Swisher County, was honored this month by Plains Pest Management for his 50-year involvement with the organization, 35-plus of those years serving as an elected officer on the steering committee. As an officer Jimie represented his fellow member producers and helped guide the program's direction. Jimie and his father were active in the organization of Plains Pest Management, the larger, State-wide, Texas Pest Management Association, and the foundation of the Texas IPM Program in the early 1970's. These organizations work in partnership with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Integrated Pest Management Programs to address evolving pest issues, advance agriculture, and offer integrated pest management education through pest monitoring and independently conducted local research trials.

Ronald Groves, Plains Pest Management President and Hale County Producer recently addressed the group's membership at the group's spring meeting, "Not every county has an IPM Program. Just counties that need that specialized education and are willing to work with and even help fund an agent. The Hale and Swisher IPM Program has been critical in seeing us through many problems and continues to do so. We have had a strong IPM Program for many years and continue to do so with good agents and great volunteer members like Jimie Reed."

Jimie Reed receiving a gift from Plains Pest Management President Ronald Groves for 50 years of work with the IPM Program.

Jimie retired from the Plains Pest Management steering committee in 2023 with his nephew, Jeremy Reed being elected by the membership to be his replacement marking three generations of family volunteerism to the Hale & Swisher IPM program.

Thank you Jimie!