

JULY 14, 2023

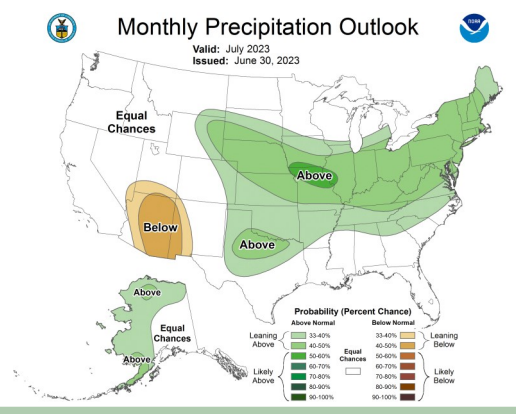
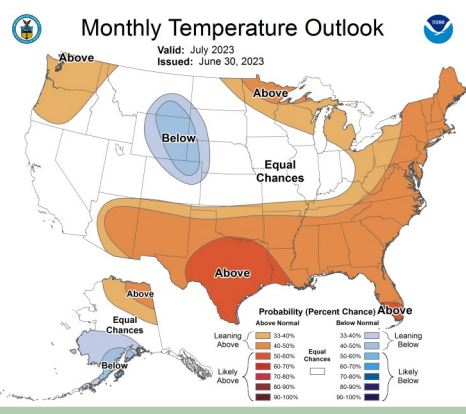
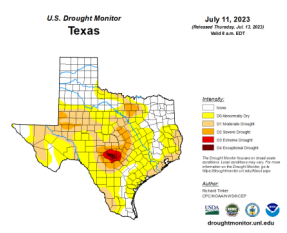
General Status

Here we are in the middle of July, and it seems like we have finally gotten all of our summer crop plans in place, and we have done so while in action and under pressure. Our crop stages are all over the place ranging from a touch late all the way to I need a December freeze. Generally, fields are in pretty good condition, but we are battling quite a few things as the management needs continue to pressure us. One being that our soil moisture is not as full as most of our impressions of what the soil profile should be. Earlier rains were plentiful and recent rains have been coming, but we are falling farther behind as our crop use rate far out paces the light rains that have come. We have had very high temperatures the past few weeks. This has been mitigated by some high (for the area) humidity. This has been miserable on producers and field scouts alike, but the crops have been flourishing under it and the sips of rainfall. Many fields will be hitting peak water use very soon, and we should be preparing to alleviate that potential stress soon. Insects have also been flourishing with the moisture and conditions. As the environment slowly dries down, many species are moving into our fields. Many of these are pests and are very unwelcome, especially with the amount of damage we have seen in some fields coupled with time, funding, and



View while walking back in 106° temperatures in Swisher this week.

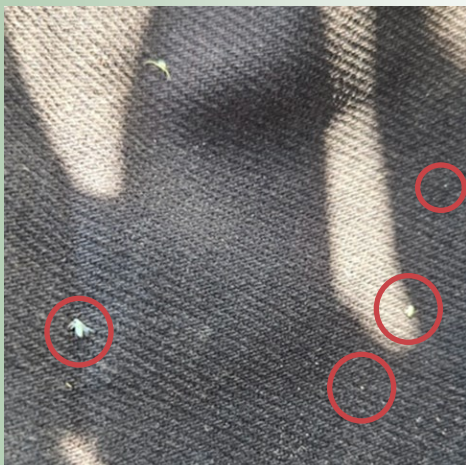
management stains most of us are already under. Fleahoppers are hitting the surviving cotton very hard across the region this week as grain pests start to make their presence felt.



Cotton

This week our Plains Pest Management scouting program cotton ranged in stage from a hopeful dryland 1st true leaf through 3/4 grown square stage. Most of our fields came in around 1/4 grown through 1/2 grown square stage. While I can say most of these fields are late, with fields sporting 1/2 and 3/4 grown squares, we should be finding a few blooms by next week. This is not too far off from a normal year, but it also means we do not have nearly as much time to recover any early lost fruit as usual, especially for those fields a touch later. It is this environment for the fleahoppers to spring out with as heavy and as widespread an issue I have seen from them in 30 years of cotton field scouting on the High Plains.

Our program fields ranged in fleahopper population from none found up to 95% terminals infested with 46.7% fruit drop with most fields being over threshold with 40% - 45% or so infested terminals and 20% - 39% fruit drop. The number of surviving cotton fields that required treatment experienced drastic increases in fruit drop that only last week was running about 5%. We have had some fleahoppers in most fields the past several weeks, and until late last week, most had been adults. This week we are finding



Fleahopper adults and nymphs of various ages from our most eastern field and our most western this week.

huge numbers of nymphs with most being less than a week old. Fleahoppers lay their eggs on the inside of leaf edges, so there is no real way to scout for eggs or make predictions about next week's potential pressure, but the sheer volume of nymphs we are seeing, I expect this massive hatching in our fields to continue for some time and for fleahopper pressure to remain high until all fields have easy to spot blooms present. Therefore, I recommend using products with longer residual that are safer on beneficial species for best control results. There are products that cheaply provide quick knock-down of fleahoppers, but they offer limited residual control and are very harsh on predators also. Please consult our Managing Cotton Insects in Texas for a full list of labeled products.

There remain ample Lygus to be easily found alongside these fleahopper populations, but alone the Lygus are not economic. The Lygus damage should be considered cumulative along with the fleahopper damage. Most fields came in with 1 Lygus per 9 row feet or so. Beneficial populations are building rapidly, and having good impacts, but are just overcome at the moment. With help, this beneficial population would be very

useful for the remainder of the season for all pests, which do include a few aphids we are finding here and there.

Sorghum and Corn

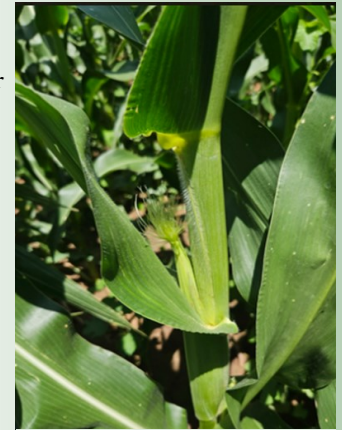
There was far less excitement in our grain crops this week, but there are plenty of situations to watch. Our program corn



Small BGM colony in S. Hale this week.

ranges in stage from V2 up to silking stage with most fields around V11 to VX. Much of our

V11—VX fields had a notable amount of wind caused green snap this week. These stages put these fields at or very near peak water use for pollination while our daytime high temperatures are soaring, and the welcome but light rainfall cannot keep up alone. We are also picking up small, establishment Banks grass mite colonies in our older corn with a touch more regularity. This remains nowhere near thresholds today, but their populations tend to flare with slight drought stress post pollination. Diseases remain oddly light or outright absent in corn considering the moisture and humidity available this year.



Our oldest corn field silking this week.



Green snap in corn this week.

The bulk of our program's sorghum and silage sorghum acres can be described as late and was planted on the majority of our typical cotton acres across southern and central Hale

County and took a sizable portion of our northern and Swisher typical cotton acres. Most of these

fields came in around V6-7 this week. Our oldest



YSCA damage from our oldest sorghum this week.

sorghum came in at a VX stage that I do not believe will be in boot by next week.

Pests were truly light across these sorghum fields with fall armyworm whorl feeding

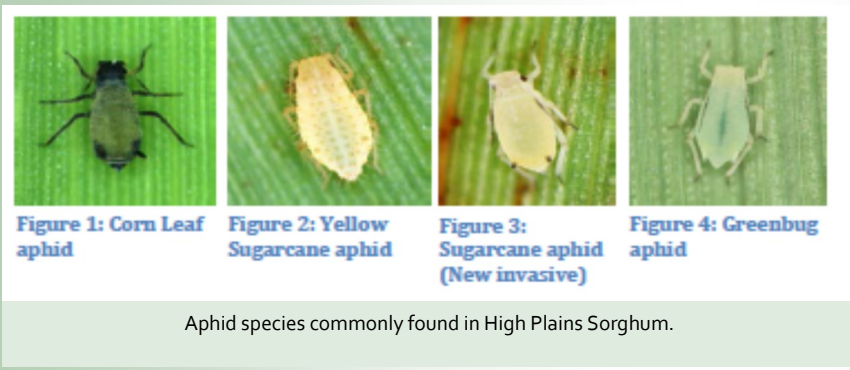
present in most fields but hard to find and bollworms almost completely absent. In

our older sorghum, the yellow sugarcane aphid increased to very near threshold levels and we are watching it closely.

Just today, our field scouts came in with aphids from a cotton field they could not identify. These were very young aphids, but they looked through magnification to be the sorghum aphid or the pest formerly known as the dreaded sugarcane aphid.

This would not be too surprising if these truly turned out to be sorghum aphids as the winged aphids are known to give birth to young on whatever they land upon. This does not mean they can survive there, and we know they cannot survive on cotton.

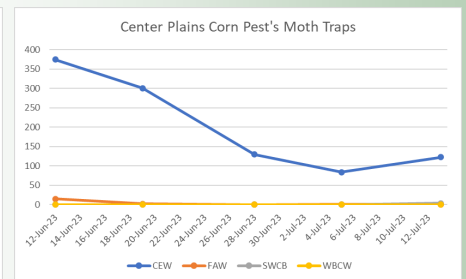
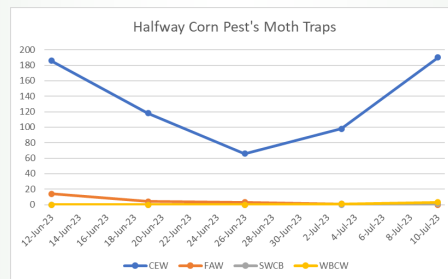
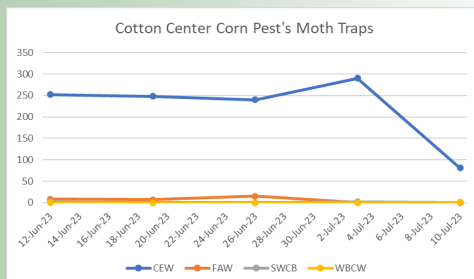
This does mean that we should start paying much closer attention to our sorghum fields for sorghum aphid establishment and infestation. This is the typical time for them to arrive in the area from the south. To add weight to this thought, I received a report last night from Brad Easterling, EA-IPM Glasscock, Reagan, Upton Counties, of a sorghum field that is either at or very near threshold in his territory directly to our south just passed I-20. While the sorghum aphid is not the threat it once was, it still packs a punch, especially on late sorghum and sorghum type crops.



We will be able to tell soon if the aphids found today are truly the sorghum aphid. It is hard to identify from newborn aphids under stress of capture and several hours of rough handling spent in a vial. If these are sorghum aphids, I would refer you back to the hard earned lessons of how to effectively control this species found in our Managing Texas Insect and Mite Pests in Sorghum guide and the now proven High Plains Sorghum Aphid Thresholds.

Moth Traps

Our Texas Corn Producers corn pest moth traps and our standard bollworm traps are showing almost the exact same data we held last week, with some variability in earworm numbers near corn. I would like to point out the impossible to see western bean cutworm data again this week. Last week we captured 1 WBCW moth at Halfway, this week we captured 3 at Halfway and 1 at Cotton Center while our trap at Center Plains was damaged and missing this weeks data. These numbers are low compared to the CEW, but I urge producers and consultants to scout intensively for this pest during and shortly following tassel and pollination stages. I might suggest a zero-tolerance policy for this species. We really do not want it establishing in this area.





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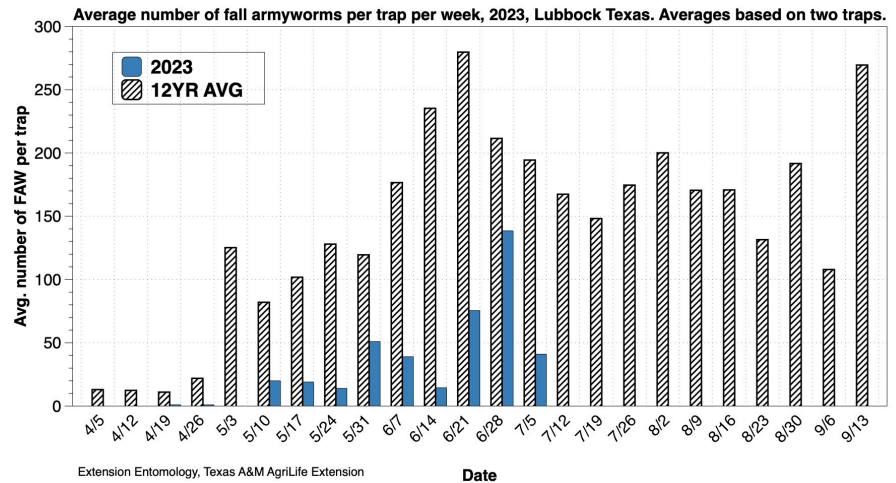
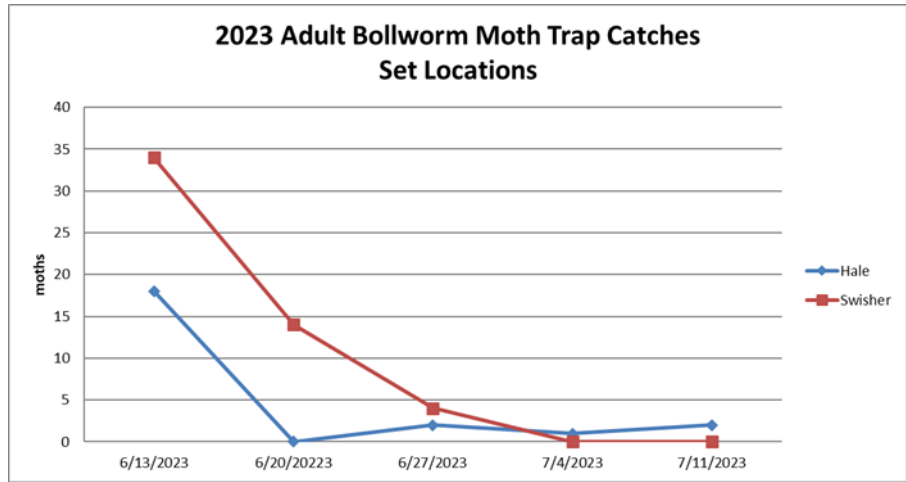
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