

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

General Status

Our general status is that we are really ready for this season to be over. It is still hot, passed dry, and our fields show it. While we have good fields in the area, most are not what they could have been given the brief respite we received from the drought situations at the start of the season. Meanwhile, pest populations remain high and focusing on lush fields, forcing us to protect fields we would really prefer to let finish out quietly and as cheaply as possible. Thankfully the majority of our fields have developed passed most economic pest situations. These are mostly our nearly on time planted cotton with large bolls up top and a few open bolls on the bottom this week. Unfortunately, we have quite a number of fields that the rains forced serious late plantings that need to be watched closely for several more weeks and some pest populations in the area, such as stink bugs, that could damage even our most mature fields for much longer that we are accustomed to scouting fields on the High Plains. Of our Plains Pest Management field scouting program 25.7% of our fields are the late June and early July planted fields and are still at high risk for all the usual suspects. These are all grain crops and primarily sorghum or sorghum silage that still need all the attention and inputs we can afford to send them. We will be dredging on to try to bring all of these fields in as best we can. With a hopeful change in weather pattern this coming week, we will see if we can get aid and relief for these late fields, prepare for wheat and winter crop planting, without causing too much late moisture as to cause regrowth or other harm to our more mature fields.



Open bolls and mature grain from around Hale and Swisher this week in fields that should be passed most economic insect damage.

Cotton

This week all of our PPM cotton fields finally reached absolute cut-out, even our July planted wildcat field. Still we had a notable maturity range from about 1% open boll down to freshly cut-out fields blooming out of the top. About 40% of our fields are at least at 1st open boll and about 80% of our fields are passed traditional insect damage. To determine if a field has reached this point, there should be no squares, blooms, or young bolls smaller than a quarter still maturing on the plant. Lygus will not be able to feed on bolls with 350 heat units or more while bollworms will not be able to start on bolls larger than one's thumb. For fields in this category, we will be letting be this next week but we do not need to leave them completely alone until harvest aid checks start.

Most of these fields have light aphid populations in them. While unlikely, the predators could move away and allow these aphids to build. This is dangerous with bolls popping open where aphid honeydew could spoil the exposed lint causing sticky cotton. We also have a healthy stink



Figure 41. Boll wall warts.



Figure 42. External signs of stink bug feeding.



Figure 43. Lint staining caused by stink bug feeding.

bug population in the area. While this pest remains somewhat unfamiliar to us, those farther south deal with this pest annually. They encourage us to maintain some level of scouting for stink bugs all the way until harvest aid application. Stink bugs have been proven to damage bolls almost until just before the boll cracked. Our management guide lists a time before this late stage but some respected entomologists urge for scouting until, “you cannot pop open the uppermost harvestable boll by two-handed hard squeeze method.” We are still conducting studies to better understand this growing stink but potential issue, but some prudence in scouting through September and even early October should be advisable for most cotton fields this year. We will be making spot checks in all fields at least bi-weekly and opportunistically during this period. Our

thresholds for stink bugs are based upon actual puncture feedings which require boll dissection. These thresholds can be found in our management guide here: [https://lubbock.tamu.edu/](https://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2022/07/managing-cotton-insects-in-texas.pdf)

[files/2022/07/managing-cotton-insects-in-texas.pdf](https://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2022/07/managing-cotton-insects-in-texas.pdf)



Central Swisher field still has a few harvestable bolls that Lygus or bollworms could damage next week.



Live bollworm moths in our Swisher Trap this week.

For the remaining 20% of our fields that are still at risk for Lygus and bollworms, we will be continuing our weekly scouting in them next week. All of our fields had Lygus in them, and as recently as late last week, we had quite reluctantly determined Lygus were or were about to cause economic and recommended treatment. This end becomes less likely with each passing day as bolls with realistic chances of becoming a harvestable boll develop. I need to underscore this point here as we enter the second week of September, we are not scouting to protect squares, blooms, or dime sized bolls at this point. They have zero chance of maturing into harvestable bolls. They could however support a young flush of bollworms to establish before moving onto bolls that will actually go into the stripper basket. While our bollworm egg lay has been relatively light in cotton, it is still ongoing. We are still finding most lush fields with 5,000 to 15,000 eggs per acre this week.



Lygus have been a common issue in August and September.

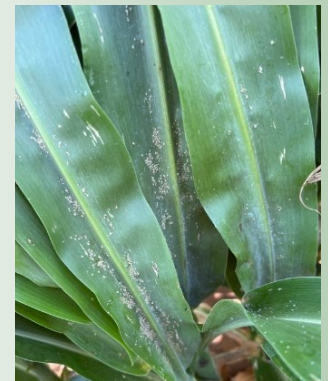
Corn and Sorghum



Small BGM colony and earworm eggs at zero leaf.

Our late corn fields are coming in at tassel to blister stages this week, peak water use. Banks grass mites continue to be the only pest of major note for these fields. They continued to increase slowly up the plant, but still were not at economic levels yet. It should be noted that bollworm/corn earworm egg lay in these fields is very high with likely most of the moths in their areas sinking into these fields.

Our sorghum ranged in stage from VX through black line and passed economic insect damage. Most of our grain sorghum fields came in from bloom to dough stages while our silage sorghum fields represented most of the VX stage fields with a few flags showing finally. We are picking up a few headworms but never more than 0.16 per head if any were found in field with about 70% of these being fall armyworms with bollworms making up the rest. Beneficials and/or past treatments seem to be holding the BGM in our sorghum fields this week with the sorghum aphid being our largest pest of concern in all fields with a few more fields reaching ET. At this point, we have treated over half of our sorghum fields for this aphid with treatments, regardless of labeled product use, has been outstanding as long as coverage was not an issue. I have visited some are fields where cheaper products from off label were used for to try and corral this pest, but results were far less impactful or consistent with several fields considered out right failures at this point. We are still noting a difference in lush fields, dry fields and aphid populations. But as irrigation systems struggle to aid the drier fields, aphid populations keep hanging on and in some cases increase.



Sorghum aphids in central silage sorghum Hale this week.



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

We're ONLINE



find current and past

Newsletters and IPM Reports

as well as out latest

*High Plains Weekly IPM
"Radio" Podcast*

at *Plains Pest
Bugosphere*

[https://
halecountyipm.blogspot.com](https://halecountyipm.blogspot.com)

For quicker pest alerts
register at

Pest Patrol Hotline

www.syngentapestpatrol.com

Listen to us on the Radio

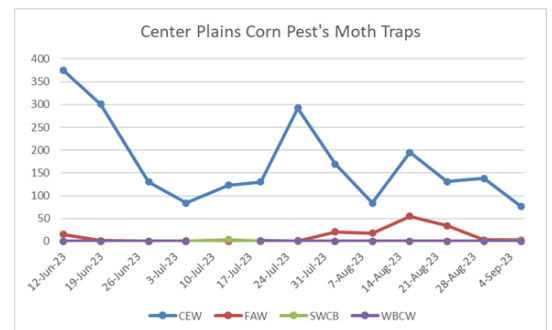
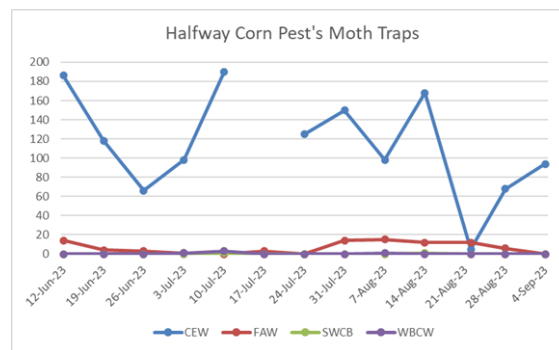
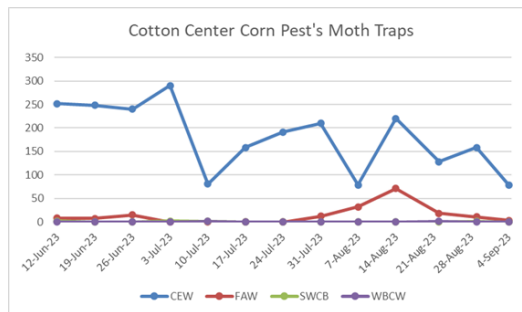
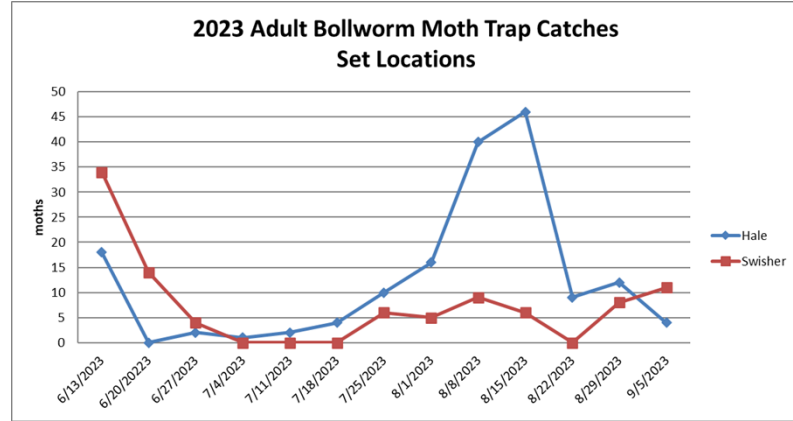


The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is implied nor does it imply its approval to the exclusion of other products that also may be suitable.

. In a bit of good news, all aphids crashed in one of our sorghum aphid efficacy trials today.

Populations went from 149 per leaf to 0.37 per leaf in the untreated check plots. This is fairly typical of aphid populations in mid-September, but at this time, we have no explanation for the

drastic crash. Hopefully, this is a trend we will note in our fields soon.



Blayne Reed

This work is supported in part by the Crop Protection and Pest Management, Extension Implementation Program [award no. 2021-70006-35347/project accession no. 1027036] from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture.