

JUNE 28, 2024

### General Status

Northern parts of Hale and Swisher counties received spotty rainfall this week. Amounts varied greatly between a trace and up to 4-inches with most receiving less than 0.4-inches. I am unaware of any serious weather damage from these storms, but the clouds were charged and strong. Most of our acres only received a light show and outflow winds from the storms, missing the opportunity for a break from the high heat with a needed drink. A lot of area fields seem to be slowing in development as soil moisture runs low unless irrigation systems are already engaged. Even some of the lighter irrigation systems are starting to fall behind. The fields that received the balance of the rainfall this week only received a few days of useful moisture. Field work has remained furious with most fields finally getting weeds treated from various MOC and MOA with fertilizer applications underway or getting started. Most of our weed escapes were quite large at the time of treatment and it remains to be seen if all of these weeds will go down. We are noting a heavy reduction in weed populations this week compared to last week even if some of these weeds survive. I would urge most of our field weary producers not to count a reduction as the victory it seems. Any surviving weeds from chemical treatment will be the root of resistance and more serious issues in the future. We continue to find cotton pests in pockets and a heavy population of grasshoppers are pressing pastures, crops, gardens and horticultural

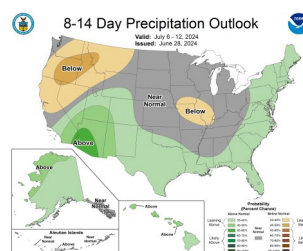
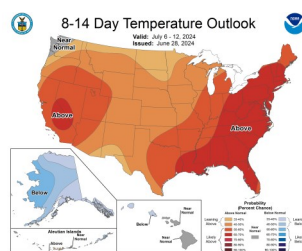


SW Swisher corn missed rainfall and is waiting on irrigation.



NE Swisher cotton following 0.8"

areas in other pockets.



## Cotton

This week our PPM scouting program cotton ranged in stage from 3<sup>rd</sup> true leaf through 2/3 grown square. Most field ranged between matchhead and ¼ grown square. Only the very latest of these fields are still susceptible to thrips with plants in reproductive mode being able to tolerate thrips damage.

Fleahoppers are our main concern with one field already reaching the threshold for treatment and a half dozen being borderline. Our over threshold field shown 39.9% terminals infested with fleahoppers and a few Lygus added in with 9.3% fruit drop, all of which was fresh and clearly caused by the pest's feeding.



A missing 1st position square likely from fh feeding this week.

We had several borderline fields running around 10% infested terminals with fruit loss hovering around a similar 5-10% fruit drop but in these fields beneficials were having an impact on the emerging fleahopper nymph population and not all of the fruit loss was new or caused by the

pest's feeding. Most fields held 5% fleahoppers or less

and fruit loss was rarely over 5%. For most fields between pinhead and matchhead stages, square drop could rarely even be found unless fleahoppers were in the mix. Most of our fleahopper pockets in traditional fleahopper trouble areas or near freshly mowed roadsides. I do expect several more fields will need to be treated over the next few weeks but beneficial populations continue to increase, particularly near the fleahopper populations. All area fields will need to be monitored closely for these highly mobile



Fleahoppers from my drop cloth this week. They are flighty, sometimes quick reactions are needed to stop them for ID.



Nabid from S Swisher this week.

need to be monitored closely for these highly mobile

pests this year. Some of the most impactful beneficial species for fleahoppers include Nabids, big-eyed-bugs, and minute pirate bugs. We have noted a sharp uptick in Nabids in our cotton this week. Hopefully, they can help us avoid treatments as often as possible.

We did pickup on a rare cotton square borer and armyworm here and there in fields, but populations never rose above 800 per acre in the few cases they were found.

## Corn & Sorghum

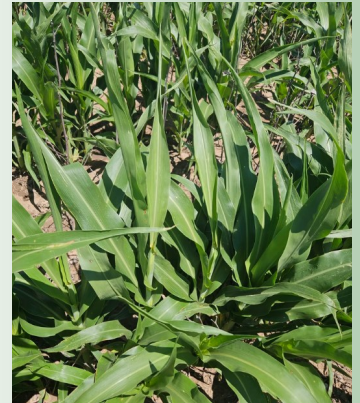


View from below the canopy in a NW Hale Corn field this week.

Our PPM corn ranges in stage from seed in the planter box through V12-VX stages. We are still not noting any major pest issues in our corn. Grasshopper damage is still the most noticeable damage, and for our fields this remains light.

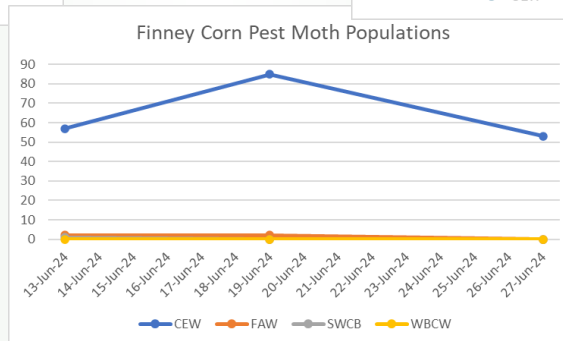
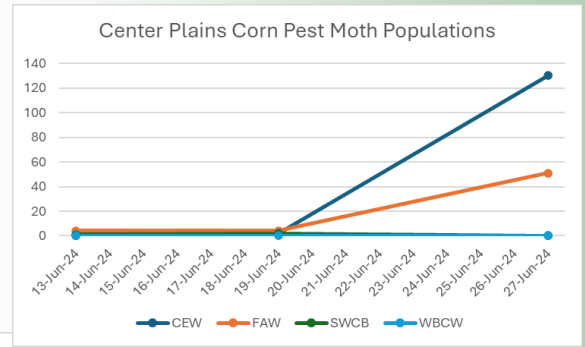
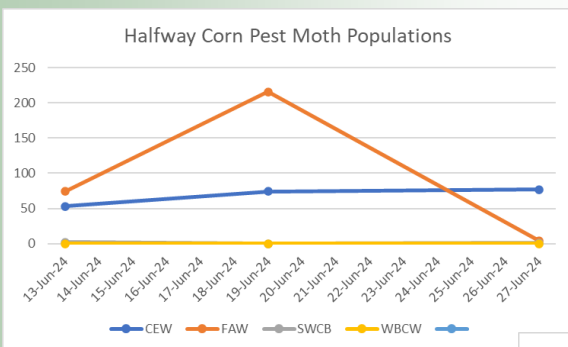
Our sorghum is staging around V11 to early flag leaf stage. All of our fields we can start seeing flag leaves here and again. In the youngest of our fields, the ones still most consistently in whorl, we

picked up some fall armyworm feeding. I rated this damage as light with only around 5% of the plants showing any damage at all. Those with damage had less than 2% of their foliage impacted. With infestations beginning so close to flag and boot stages, there is a concern that the worms will ride or transfer to the grain producing head where they could do real damage. We will be watching this situation closely but I also find it interesting that they avoided the plants and fields already flagging.



Several S Swisher sorghum plants in early flag this week.

In a few sorghum fields, I did note some very, very light sugarcane aphid damage on the very lowest of leaves. Leaves damaged by YSCA turn yellow from the feeding and toxin injection fairly quickly. For now I rate these fields as far less than 1% infested and very far below ET.





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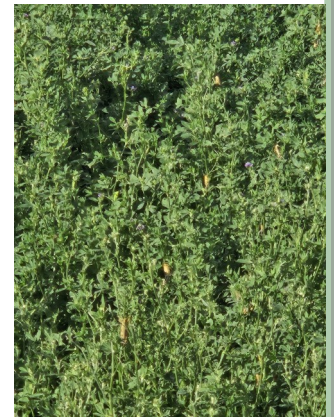
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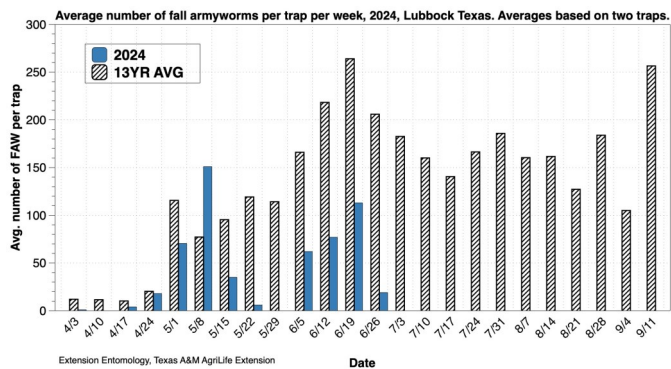


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Grasshoppers continue to make problems of themselves for much of Hale and Swisher Counties. It is not known just how widespread this issue is, but there are large pockets in both counties with seriously heavy populations of multiple species. For most of our cropping acres, they remain a borderline concern that is spreading into several fields. If left for too long, this problem will become very serious in a hurry. Multiple horticulturalists have reported multiple treatments for the issue. Each treatment seemed very successful, until residual control wore off or washed off and a fresh wave of grasshoppers returned immediately. I urge vigilance in monitoring this issue as the area continues to dry-out with our limited soil moisture. These grasshoppers will move very plague-like to whatever green vegetation we have invested in.



Examples of grasshopper edge damage in area cotton and alfalfa, with large, mature grasshoppers now moving farther into the field.



*Blayne Reed*

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