TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

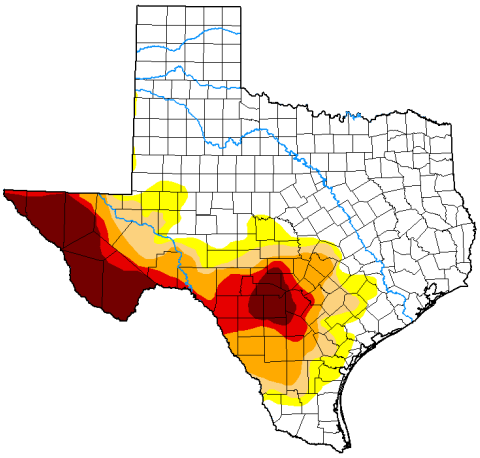
Plains Pest Management News

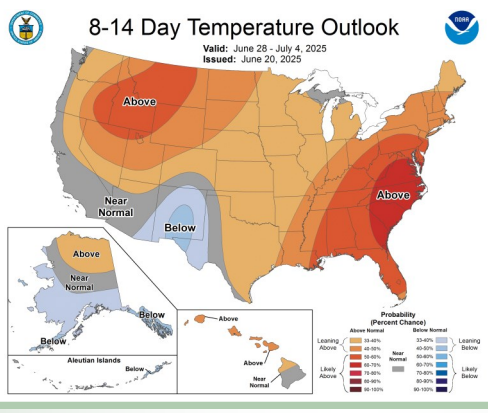
JUNE 20, 2025

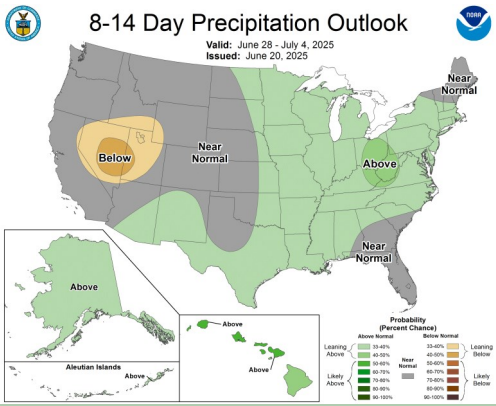
General Status

Most of our area fields have been through quite a lot. Very few fields 'look pretty' having been through varying degrees of weather and thrips damage, but all and all, progress is being made and most fields are in decent to good shape. As always, there are plenty of problem clouds on the horizon. The amount of potential issues in the environment is high and there are plenty of need to remain vigilant. Weed pressure and water and fertilizer management are at the forefront of most producers management decisions but there are scattered failed fields here and there with secondary crop decisions and planting ongoing. For those of us looking for pest problems from field to field are shifting gears and looking for the next stage of issues as our crops progress.

Hale corn and Swisher cotton have been through a lot, but steadily progressing.







Cotton

Our Plains Pest Management cotton this week ranged in stage from 2nd true leaf stage through matchhead square. Most fields settled in around 4th to 6th leaf stage, with something of a ragged look. With a portion of fields already sporting squares, fleahopper and Lygus scouting commenced. While both of these plant bugs are in abundance in the area they so far are remaining on their preferred host plants and none were found in our cotton this week. However, all fields that had reached squaring stages had some level of fruit drop. All of these fields were below 10% drop, hovering between 6% and 8.9% usually, but all drop seemed weather damage and seedling disease stress related and straightening up with sunshine and calmer weather. As fields move into reproductive modes, we will need to be on high alert for these plant bugs. As progress is made in weed control, area mowing, hay swathing, and other causes, which could include a drying of the environment without additional rainfall, many of these plant bug's preferred host plants will become inhospitable and the plant bugs can and usually do jump to cotton readily. On a typical year, we are forced into treating 5-30% of our area cotton fields for plant bugs. We will have to scout and see how this year looks turns out, but the potential is high for tough plant bug month before us.

Central Hale Cotton sporting its first pinhead squares this week.

As a reminder, recent research by Dr. David Kerns indicates that our threshold for Fleahoppers should be reduced to around 6% infested terminals but it is recommended that on the High Plains we continue to consider fruit drop in our treatment decisions.

Pest mortality can be quite high in most High Plains seasons and plant bugs will often simply move through our fields. A measure of proven plant bug damage is justified but should be stopped quickly once proven.

Calculated Cotton Fleahopper Threshold Using Across Sampling Methods (% infestation)

Control Cost ($/ac)	Market value ($/lb)	Economic threshold (80% EIL)	Control Cost ($/ac)	Market value ($/lb)	Economic threshold (80% EIL)	Control Cost ($/ac)	Market value ($/lb)	Economic threshold (80% EIL)
$10.00	0.50	5.90	$12.50	0.50	7.37	$15.00	0.50	8.85
	0.60	4.92		0.60	6.14		0.60	7.37
	0.70	4.21		0.70	5.27		0.70	6.32
	0.80	3.69		0.80	4.61		0.80	5.53
	0.90	3.28		0.90	4.10		0.90	4.92
	1.00	2.95		1.00	3.69		1.00	4.42

A general threshold of 4 to 7 cotton fleahopper per 100 plant terminal could be adopted.

Most of our cotton fields were still at risk from thrips. While this pest was very widespread this year, they were not abnormally heavy. One treatment seems to be holding the pest in check with all of our treated fields remaining well below the threshold of 1 thrips per true leaf. Most fields held between 0.07 and 0.8 thrips per true leaf with only a handful of later fields requiring a thrips recommendation. While many fields have been weathered and feed upon by farther damaging thrips, the new growth recovery looked immediate with healthy new growth.

Weathered Swisher cotton showing healthy new growth once the trhips were removed and with a few calmer days with sunshine.

Corn and Sorghum

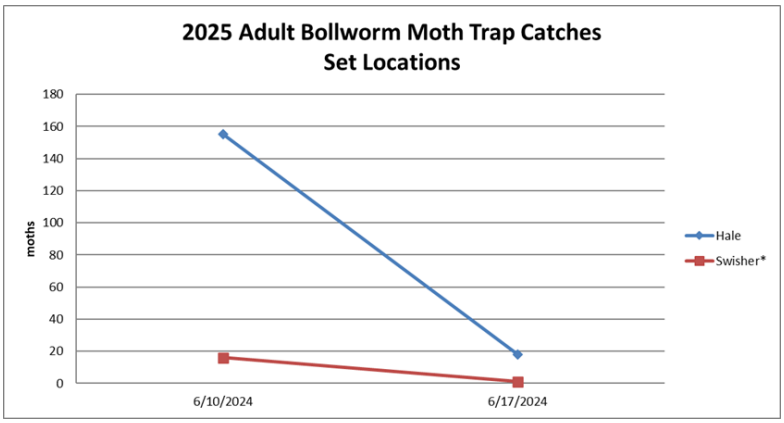
FAW and corn leaf aphid on S. Swisher sorghum this

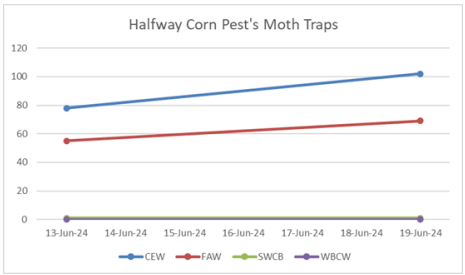
Our PPM corn and sorghum ranges in stage from seed in the barn to V10. Pest are remaining quiet in our PPM corn and sorghum, but overall insect activity is on the rise. We have not found any major grain crop pest to speak of this week. We have noted some fall armyworm damage in our sorghum and any non-Bt corn plants, but not enough to account for all of the fall armyworm moths we have trapped over the past few weeks. We have also started finding some corn leaf aphid in our sorghum whorls. This species of aphid usually only presents themselves as food to build up beneficial populations for the much more damaging aphid pests that are likely to arrive later in the season. Be careful not to miss identify this aphid as something much worse. While not impossible, this aphid rarely becomes an issue for most all but a few ultra susceptible and sensitive sorghum type crops and requires thousands per whorl to impact most lines.

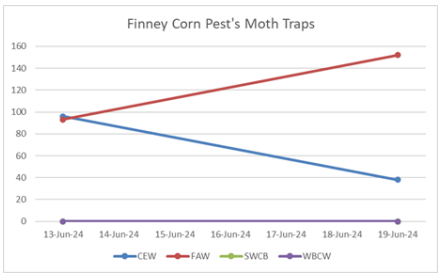
We remain on the lookout for the corn leaf hopper but have not seen any yet. Most of our PPM fields should be at or near V8 or higher and thus not as susceptible to the diseases this insect transmits. I just received an email from Dr. David Kerns who confirmed this pest in Comanche county corn. Late corn fields, some of which has not been planted yet, should be on alert and well scouted. Additionally, our southwestern corn borer moth traps are low, but are not zero. With this pest developing resistance to Bts in southern New Mexico, we need to be on the lookout here with some old school borer scouting in corn.

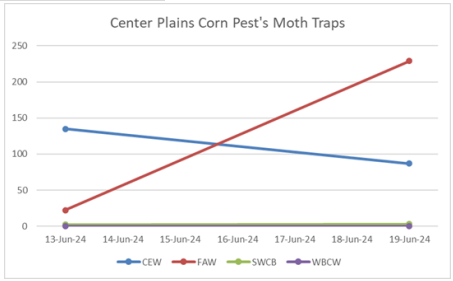
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service / Texas Pest Management Association

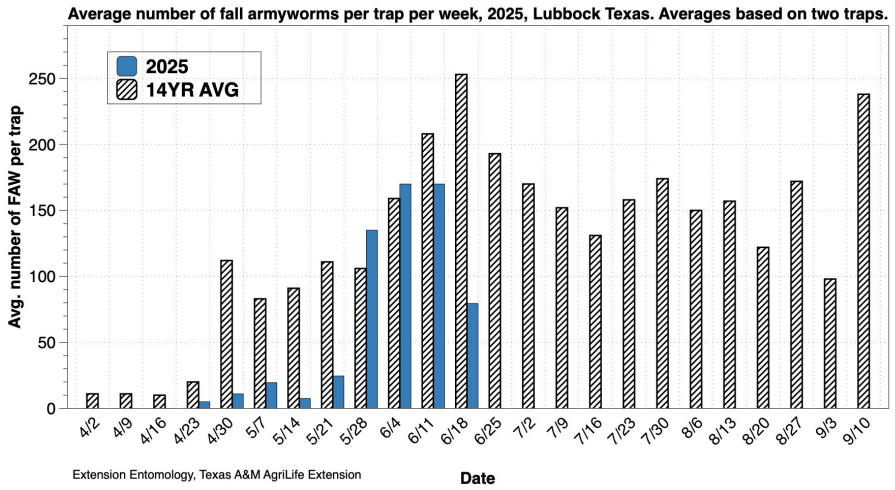
225 Broadway, Suite 6
Plainview, TX 79072
Tel: 806.291.5267
Fax: 806.291.5266
E-mail: Blayne.Reed@ag.tamu.edu











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.