

AUGUST 22, 2025

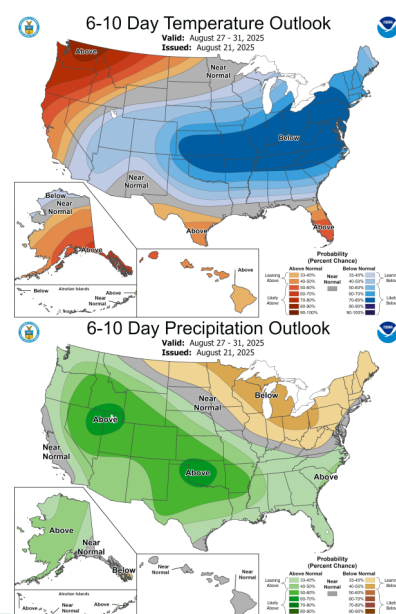
General Status

Our fields, generally just over the peak water use curve, received some widespread but variable rainfall earlier this week. This was mostly timely, aiding in grain fill, development, and fruit set, even if it was just after peak use levels. In a few of the lush cotton fields, the rainfall was a bit much, keeping fields a bit more vegetative than we would like to see during the third week of August. This week is also traditionally our Texas High Plains peak pest week for our summer crops. This dates back primarily to our pre-Bt days and the bollworm in cotton. This has not proven true in recent decades.



Bollworm, photo by Suhas Vyavhare

The use of Bt, corn planting timing, better IPM management of this and other pests are all factors. This year looked like this could be a return to those late August, widespread bollworm issue days, but with additional pests threatening and upping the stakes. So far, while some cotton and sorghum fields are / were / and likely will be economic for bollworms and or headworms this last week was not a widespread worm problem. The worms remained field by field and only a handful were economic. They were not the only pest pressuring this week though. All summer crops had something threatening. A few fields here and there were economic for these alternate pests too. While none of these were widespread, the threat of the worms and these other pests will remain high for at least the next week, and probably longer for the later or lush fields of all crops. These potential pest issues could prove “interesting” with the weather looking to turn much cooler and wetter next week with crops still developing on the backside of water and heat unit needs.



Cotton

For most of our 2025 cotton in the Plains Pest Management scouting program, the rainfall was very helpful. Even if a few days to a week behind peak water use, additional fruit has been held and developed in dryland and weaker irrigation fields alike. Most of our fields are at absolute cut-out of 3.5 NAWF (nodes above white flower) or less and are setting the last of their top crop soon if not by the end of the week. Any



Lush field at 5 NAWF still this week. Has a good load, but wants to set more fruit than it has time for.

additional moisture after this weekend over the next several weeks should only go to boll development, while too

much moisture would lead to regrowth. While our lush fields are not technically late, the 2025 cotton that is lush today did not need the rain earlier this week. With just days

left for blooms to make harvestable bolls on an average year, some of the lush fields have not reached absolute cut-out yet

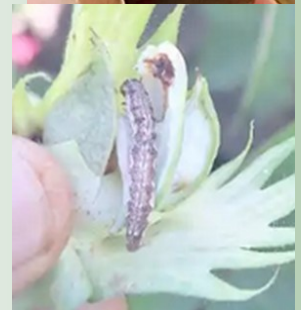
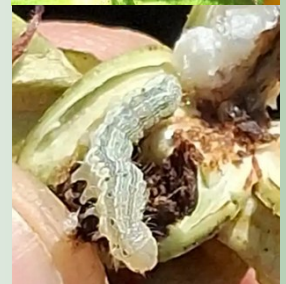
with several hanging on at 5 NAWF and continuing some vegetative growth. Even without cooler, wetter weather next week,

some of these fields might need a break from supplemental irrigation to stress them back into our High Plains summer deadline timeframe. If the weather becomes too cool, boll development of the smallest fruit could be impacted.

Bollworms were our primary focus of our cotton scouting this week. Not nearly as many of our fields reached threshold levels for these worms as we thought, even in non-Bt. Beneficials were doing tremendously in our fields, holding worm populations in check with a very high mortality rate from eggs found last week. Only about 50% of the fields had any worm populations that we could detect and only about 80% of the fields had eggs. Of the fields with worms, most were below 1,000 worms per acre and hard to find worm damage. In the fields where we are finding eggs, they range from 4,000 to 16,000 per acre. We only had one field in our program reach economic levels for bollworms exhibiting just over 9,000 worms per acre and 5.8% harvestable fruit damage. Both of these metrics were hovering



Cut-out plant setting the last of its fruit this week with a good load maturing.



Assorted bollworms and egg from our data sets this week.

were hovering around threshold levels, but we also had a Lygus population aiding the damage and potential damage of harvestable bolls. This did amend our product control choice to cover both species. It should be noted that all of our fields treated earlier in the season for other serious pest issues were treated with products that are beneficial friendly. If other fields were treated with harsher products, that might have been cheaper, beneficial populations might not be aiding in control as much today. I have reports of higher bollworm pressure alongside higher cotton aphid numbers in the area.



Small to medium bollworm this week. Bollworms love to hide under bloom tags.



Lygus nymph this week.

Lygus certainly tried to steal the issue spotlight again this week. We had a few more fields that were technically over threshold levels with Lygus but were undergoing the natural fruit shed of absolute cut-out. In these cases the Lygus were mostly feeding on fruit that the plant



Lygus adult, sampled near evidence of its feeding this week.

could never hold. We also had a few lush fields with worrisome Lygus, but we noted that the feeding was focused on younger squares, that probably do not have time to develop into harvestable fruit. We will need to continue to watch both situations closely to defend all harvestable fruit.

Other cotton pest species continue to be found in the area. Cotton aphids in our fields are not a surprise this week, but were greatly suppressed so far. Stink bugs were a little less common in our cotton with most being solitary nymphs unable to fly. With more adults turning up in our sorghum, this could indicate that they are starting to cluster on dough stage sorghum in place of in cotton at this time. Cabbage loopers and other foliage feeding worms could be

Table 7. Lygus action threshold

Cotton stage	Sampling method	
	Drop cloth	Sweep net
1st two weeks of squaring*	1-2 per 6 ft-row with unacceptable square set	8 per 100 sweeps with unacceptable square set
3rd week of squaring to 1st bloom	2-3 per 6 ft-row with unacceptable square set	15 per 100 sweeps with unacceptable square set
After peak bloom	4-6 per 6 ft-row with unacceptable fruit set the first 4-5 weeks	15-20 per 100 sweeps with unacceptable fruit set the first 4-5 weeks

Sweep net: Standard 15-inch net, sample 1 row at a time, taking 15-25 sweeps. Recommended before peak bloom.

Drop cloth: Black recommended, 3-foot sampling area, sample 2 rows. Recommended after peak bloom. Stop sampling and treating when NAWF = 5 + 350 DD60's.

*In West Texas, insecticide applications for lygus are rarely needed in prebloom cotton as lygus generally stay in roadside weeds and vegetation until cotton begins flowering.

found but always below 1,500 worms per acre with very light damage.

We also found a few two spotted mites and a few whiteflies on the rare leaf.

Our verticillium wilt ratings have been low this year, but this is the perfect time of year to evaluate the pressure in each field.

Corn



Denting corn in NW Hale this week.

Our PPM corn ranges from VX through harvested for silage. All of our earlier planted corn not yet harvested has dented, and most are forming the starch line with silage harvest not too far away. Our latest corn is not far from tasseling. We had no change in our spider mite pressure and almost all worms have left the ear. The corn leaf hoppers were a bit easier to spot on our older corn this week, but number per plant remains



An adult and nymph CLH this week in SW Swisher. These are the first of the year that stayed still enough for a field photo.

low. Vacuums are required to find them in the whorl stage still. Disease were our main issue of the week. The expression of the LSD (late season decline and has no relation to the corn leafhopper spread diseases) on our oldest fields was rapid last week but we have no others crashing to that extent. Those were also the only older fields we identified the symptoms of the bacterial disease during the whorl stages. We are noting pre-tassel symptoms in some of our late corn and will be watching them closely for changes. For now, they are developing ears and making progress. We also noted an uptick in southern rust this week, but not to a level where we would be forced to apply fungicides this close to harvest.

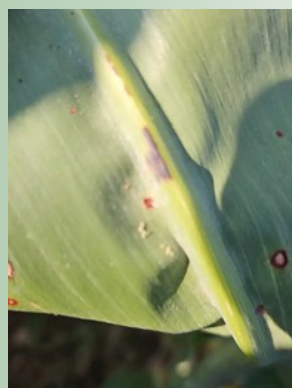
Sorghum

Sorghum progressed well this week also. Our youngest field is in soft dough and our oldest is in hard dough. We might only be 2-3 weeks away from our oldest field being passed economic insect damage and drying for harvest. For the first week in some-time, we had none of our sorghum reach threshold levels for any pest. Our scouting focus was on headworms. Almost all fields had some pressure from headworms, but it was rare to have any above 0.5 small worms per head or 0.3 medium or large worms per head. We had no field over 0.6 worms per head for all sizes combined and it was rare that a field went above 0.15 per head. Of the worms found, around 80% were corn earworms while the remaining 20% or so were fall armyworms with the armyworms being more prevalent in certain pockets within a field rather than mixed evenly with the bollworms.



Oldest PPM sorghum this week.

Lygus and stinkbugs are steadily moving into our sorghum fields and reproducing. We had no field found without Lygus pressure but our highest field was only at 1.2 Lygus per head in a hard dough field with our best estimated threshold at 12 per head for a soft dough field and somewhat higher for hard dough. We had no field over 1 stink bug per head this week with threshold being around 6 per head. Both of these are on



Establishing population of SCA in W Swisher this week.

the increase compared to last week.

Sorghum aphids continue to be a nuisance in untreated fields again this week, but they are hard to

find treated fields. The population of these aphids increased in those untreated fields but a contest with beneficials is ongoing. Our years of studying this insect in trials and field man-

agement show a hard truth to the action threshold of 30% of plants infested with substantial colonies from bloom through hard dough. Once the heads and grain get solid color to them, it

should be ok to manage the aphids economically by keeping them off the top half of the plant. We can still find Banks grass mites a low levels in most sorghum fields this week.

Grasshoppers, of various species but mostly differential grasshoppers, continue to be a problem in untreated areas. We have not had any issues our PPM fields yet but that might be about to change in some of our sorghum. We noted a few fields with high numbers around the edges and one field with a fairly even population across the whole field. Foliage feeding from grasshoppers is generally not any worse than other foliage feeders and can be rated the same way. If their feeding is directly on the developing grain, it can become economic very quickly. Due to the grasshoppers

nature of quickly jumping away when disturbed, getting an accurate count per head or plant can be difficult. However, their chewing damage on the grain can be quite noticeable. I do not suggest allowing this to become common where grasshoppers can be found in sorghum fields. If it looks to be increasing, treatment should be justified to whatever extent the grasshoppers are infesting.



A mixed beatbucket this week with 1 small headworm (top-right), 1 stink bug nymph (middle-left), and several Lygus nymphs (lower left) from the same head.



Light grasshopper feeding to sorghum heads this week in W Swisher.



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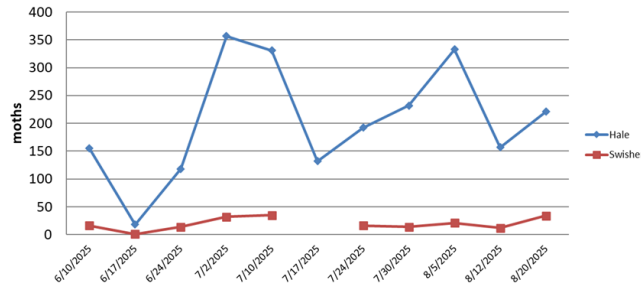
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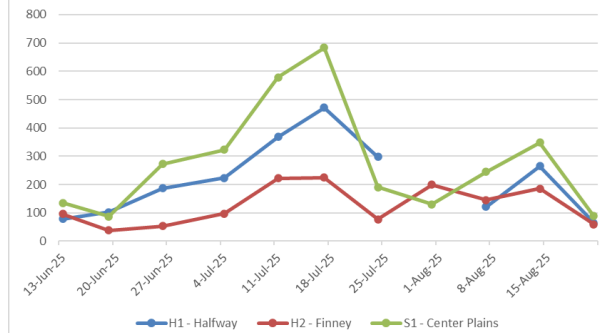
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2025 Adult Bollworm Moth Trap Catches
Set Locations

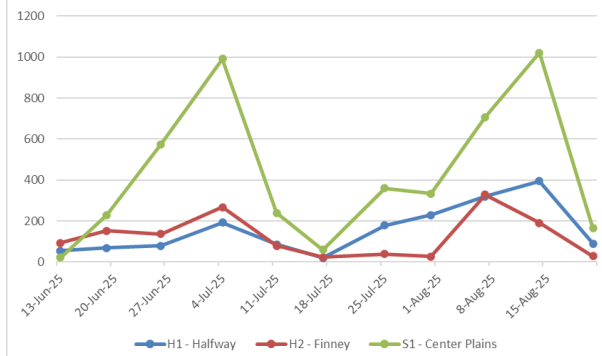


Our TCP corn pest traps have still not caught any western bean cutworms in 2025 while our southwestern corn borer traps have not caught any additional moths in 2 weeks.

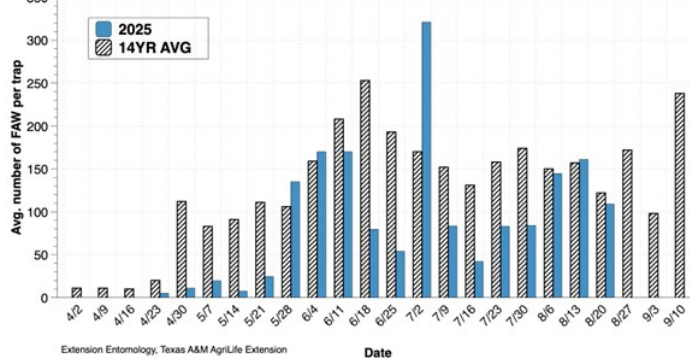
Corn Earworm 2025 Hale & Swisher Moth Traps



Fall Armyworms 2025 Hale & Swisher Moth Traps



Average number of fall armyworms per trap per week, 2025, Lubbock Texas. Averages based on two traps.



Blayne Reed

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