

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Newsletter
for the Row Crops in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

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PEST CAST

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GENERAL SITUATION: Most of the LRGV's crops looked good by the end of this week. Some frost/very cold and dry wind damage to grain sorghum and corn occurred on over the weekend of March 29-30. Overall, the week was one of cool temperatures. Cotton had some minor wind damage due to the strong and dry cold winds, but did not appear to have frost damage as compared to sorghum or corn. Soil moisture still was good in most areas. Irrigation was reported to have been initiated in southeastern Cameron county where only about ½ inch of rain had fallen in the last six weeks or so. Insect activity increased slightly.



Fields of February-planted cotton were squaring. Boll weevil trap counts dropped considerably this week. (See attached trap records and map of trap locations) Weevil trap records from many years in the LRGV show that boll weevil numbers tend to go down by the end of March or early April each season, so the drop does not come as complete surprise. Weevils trapped next week could be lower or possibly slightly higher than this week's. This week's cooler temperatures could be the key if the number of weevils caught next week are up. Lower numbers of weevils in traps next week could be attributed to the increased cotton available across the LRGV. We shall wait and see.

Whatever the weevil numbers look like next week, they have been high enough this last several weeks to leave no one surprised about their potential threat to this season's cotton crop. Growers should be prepared to take action when the time and numbers of weevils indicate the need for treatment. The overwintered weevil treatments should be considered if both field history and this year's trap numbers indicate the need for control. Certainly, not every field in the LRGV will require an overwintered weevil spray, but growers are aware of their own fields' history and should be able to judge if they are needed.

Timing is important in overwintered weevil sprays. Many fields which were planted during the month of February were or will be squaring shortly. Check those fields now. Look for the oldest and largest plants in the field to ascertain whether squares are in the field. If the whole field is squaring before the first overwintered weevil application is made, the damage may already have been done.

Cotton aphid infestations were found, but were light. Aphids could increase and need to be monitored at least weekly to determine how beneficial insects are doing or if any insecticide is necessary to control an infestation. Many fields may not require any aphid control this year as has been the situation the last several years. But, there is no substitute for scouting to determine insect control needs.

Bollworm activity again was very light this week. No worms were reported, but a few plants were observed with worm feeding in the terminals.



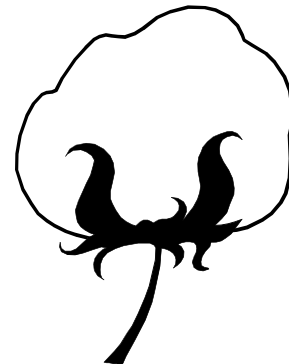
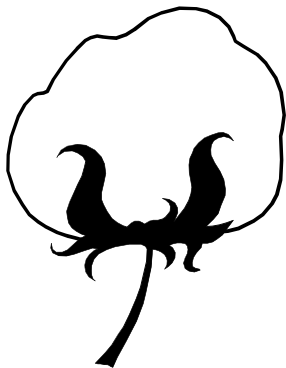
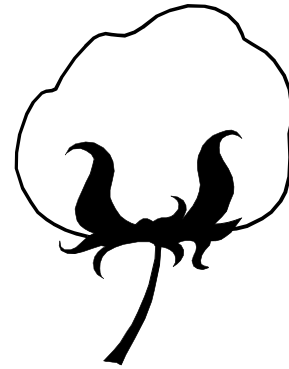
Most of the frost damage to grain sorghum appears to have been confined to the upper 1/4 of the leaf area on affected plants. Most fields with frost damage had only partial spotty damage. However, some fields had field-wide damage. Yield loss has probably already occurred in all

frost damaged fields. The extent of potential yield loss will be variable. Loss of whole leaves when the sorghum plant is about to boot can be significant. The head has already formed inside the plant and will emerge unless the growing point was destroyed. When the head emerges, the severely frost damaged plant will have fewer leaves to feed the developing seed and thus a reduced yield could occur. How much loss may be incurred is not a known number, but likely will be dependent on the amount of leaf loss, age of the sorghum plant when it was damaged and soil moisture to keep the plants healthy and as productive as they can be under the circumstances.

Dr. Steve Livingston, Extension Agronomist from Corpus Christi indicated the following regarding frost damage on sorghum and corn: "Refer to (Extension) fact sheet B-6014 "Assessing Hail and Freeze Damage to Field Corn and Sorghum". The publication is available as a pdf document on the web at the following address: <http://tcebookstore.org/pubs/B6014.pdf>. The last page of text addresses hail damage to sorghum (leaf loss is the same as that killed by frost). It shows that a 33% leaf loss at late boot can provide a 23% yield decrease. Likewise a 50% leaf loss at late boot or bloom would give 35% yield loss. Table 3 and 4 cover different plant ages and % leaf loss. This would help you to quantify your leaf damage. Corn and sorghum does not grow well below 45 o F. Cold damage staggers corn more than it does sorghum." Most of the damage observed this week was to the leaves rather than the growing point. It appeared as most of the fields will survive the damage, though some could have yield loss.

Cotton Heat Unit Accumulation Table			
Planting Dates	Accum. H.U.	Planting Dates	Accum. H.U.
2/15-----	0000	3/15-----	0000
3/01-----	0000	4/01-----	0000

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Rio Farms, Inc.
Trap Line Data - 2003 - Boll Weevils per trap per day

Trap Lines	April 1	April 8	April 15	April 22	April 29
Taco Baja	0.07				
Edinburg Area					
KURV	0.02				
Hans	0.26				
Fike Home	0.24				
Hill	0.00				
Bobby	0.02				
Seminary Rd.	0.26				
Delta Area					
L V-N. Sugar Mill	0.04				
La Sara	0.23				
MA North	0.27				
MA S. West	0.17				
Hargil	0.02				
DL South	0.33				
KSOX - E. DL	0.00				
Raymondville Area					
Ray West	0.83				
Ray East	0.06				
Southmost Area					
Florida	0.64				
Docberry	2.40				
Alaska	0.29				
Arkansas	0.10				
S. Oklahoma	0.00				
Santa Rosa Area					
Peterman	0.00				
Santa Rosa	0.02				
Dillan	0.02				
River	0.02				

Rio Farms, Inc.
Trap Line Data - 2003 - Boll Weevils per trap per day

Trap Lines	March 4	March 11	March 18	March 25	
Progreso Area					
Nogales	0.40				
Las Palomas	0.31				
Santa Anna	0.14				
Las Milpas	0.00				
Progreso Gin	0.69				
Bridge	0.14				
Sebastian Area					
Armandice	0.00				
Santa Rosa Lake	0.00				
Rio Hondo Area					
Airport	0.00				
Parker Rd.	0.00				
Paredes Line Rd.	0.00				
777	0.00				
Mercedes Area					
Valley Acres Lake	2.10				
SRS - HQ	0.00				
Ross	0.26				
Rangerville Area					
Turner Rd.	0.00				
Tanimachi					
Chinaberry Rd.					
McCook Area					
Davis	0.05				
Citrico	0.14				
Wells	0.07				
Starr County					
Starrco	0.00				
La Casita	0.02				
Los Puertos	0.00				