



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:** Drought stressed cotton plants are seen throughout the LRGV. With the exception of a majority of the irrigated fields and the few dryland fields (that received more than an inch of rain last week), some fields have reach cutout or were heading towards cutout. The LRGV needs rain quickly to supply the cotton plants with adequate water for continued growth. Insect activity has increased this week.

The Cotton & Grain Producers Association developed a **quick reference guide** to assist with the communication of basic information regarding the **LRGV Boll Weevil Eradication Program**. Brochures can be found at most of the gins and coops, and some of the water districts and implement dealers.

Extension **boll weevil** trap counts (on last page) remain low. Boll weevil activity in fields increased this week. Reports of more fields having punctured squares were received. Along field edges punctured squares ranged from 0 to 16 per 100 plants and live adults range from 0 to 12 per 100 plants. A majority of the squares, along one field edge in SE Cameron county, were punctured by boll weevils.

**Beet armyworm** activity is holding steady in Willacy county and seems to be decreasing in Cameron County. Larvae have been found feeding on leaves and fruit. Survival of larvae per "Hit" continues to be low. A report of three larvae per 2 "hits" was received this week. BAW egg masses were seen in more fields in eastern Hidalgo county this week. With the exception of a few fields in Willacy county that are continuing to have high levels of damage from the BAW, the BAW continue to remain below economic injury levels.

**Cotton aphid** numbers remain low in most fields, but have increased (see picture to the right) in some fields with only a few warranting insecticide control. If cotton is in the blooming stage of growth, the threshold for treatment is much lower than in pre-blooming cotton. Carefully examine all fields with aphids to determine the growth stage of the plant and the number of aphids present. If the cotton is blooming and there are greater than 50 aphids per leaf and very few beneficials are present, then a treatment may be necessary to control the aphids. A few aphids on the cotton will not hurt the yield, even if some of the terminal leaves appear to be wilting.



If beneficials are present and in moderate to high numbers, the aphids likely will be doomed. Fields that are receiving weekly boll weevil sprays may have none to very light numbers of beneficials. These fields will have a greater potential for a blow up in aphid populations.

Beneficial activity was observed as light to heavy (see picture to the left) this week. Many of the beneficials observed were aphid

“mummies” (indicating large numbers of parasites attacking the aphids), syrphid fly larvae, ladybird beetles, lacewing larvae, and minute pirate bug adults and nymphs. Also, the aphid killing fungus (probably *Neozygites fresenii*) was reported as light this week in a couple of fields. Aphids can be reduced within a few days from very large to very small numbers by beneficial insects if given the chance.

**Cotton fleahoppers** continue to be found. Numbers range from 0 to 24 per 100 plants. Late planted fields and fields which have only now began to bloom and have high numbers of fleahoppers need scouted and fruit load needs to be determine, before determining if insecticide applications are needed.

**Bollworm/budworm** were light this week. Eggs range from 0 to 4 per 100 plants, larvae 0 to 2 per 100 plants, and bollworm moths 0 to 2 per 100 plants.

**Thrips** continue to be found in fields in light numbers.

Reports of **spidermites** were received this week. A couple of fields were treated. Dry weather conditions probably were enhancing the mite problems. Spider mites, which feed on the underside of leaves, often leave a characteristic light colored speckling on the upper surface of the infested leaves of cotton. The speckling is usually located along the main veins of leaves. When populations become very large, the mites will spread from the underside of leaves to other plant parts including the upper part of the leaves, square bracts and terminals. Mites often form webbing on the underside of the leaves when their populations become large.

Treatment for mites may be justified when noticeable leaf damage occurs. Spot spraying for mites is often adequate to control the population unless the problem is field wide. Thorough coverage of the plant canopy with the miticide is critical to achieve good mite control. Simply spraying over the top of the canopy will not do a good job of mite control. The mites live under the leaf and unless the miticide makes contact directly with the mites (the chemical hits the mites or the mites crawl through it), control will be minimal at best.

**Cotton square bores** continue to be found in very light numbers this week.

**Cabbage looper** larvae numbers ranged from 0 to 1 per 100 plants. An increased number of looper moths were seen in fields in northern Willacy county this week.

**Grain sorghum midge** was seen in scattered fields this week. The late maturing varieties or later planted fields will be susceptible during the blooming period. See Tables

14 and 15 below on thresholds for grain sorghum midge from extension publication B-1220 “Managing Insect and Mite Pests of Texas Sorghum.”

One report of **headworms in sorghum** was also received this week. No reports of any fields being sprayed were received. See Table 17 below on thresholds for headworms from extension publication B-1220 “Managing Insect and Mite Pests of Texas Sorghum.”

Cotton <u>H</u> eat <u>U</u> nit Accumulation Table			
Planting Dates	Accum. H.U.	Planting Dates	Accum. H.U.
2/15	1368	3/15	1118
3/01	1237	4/01	924

Table 14. Economic injury levels based on number of adult sorghum midges per flowering grain head of susceptible sorghum hybrid.

Control cost (\$) per acre	Crop market value (\$) per acre								
	100	125	150	175	200	225	250	275	300
	Number of sorghum midges								
6	2.4	2.0	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8
8	3.0	2.5	2.2	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1
10	3.5	3.0	2.6	2.2	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3
12	3.9	3.5	3.1	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.4

Table 15. Economic injury levels based on number of adult sorghum midges per flowering grain head of resistant sorghum hybrid.

Control cost (\$) per acre	Crop market value (\$) per acre								
	100	125	150	175	200	225	250	275	300
	Number of sorghum midges								
6	12	10	8	7	6	6	5	4	4
8	15	13	11	9	8	7	6	5	5
10	17	15	13	11	10	9	8	7	6
12	19	17	15	13	11	10	9	8	7

Table 17. Economic injury levels based on number of corn earworm and fall armyworm larvae per sorghum grain head.

Control cost (\$) per acre	Crop market value (\$) per acre								
	100	125	150	175	200	225	250	275	300
	Number of headworms								
6	1.5	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5
8	2.0	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7
10	2.5	2.0	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9
12	3.0	2.4	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1

**Extension Boll Weevil Traps - No. of Boll Weevils per trap per day.**

Fld No.	Location	Week							
		4/4	4/11	4/18	4/25	5/2	5/9	5/16	5/23
1	Northeast Weslaco	3.04	1.17	2	0.38	0.45	0.03	0.14	0.02
2	East of Delta Lake	9.75	9.87	5.81	2.10	1.32	0.17	0.6	0.17
3	FM 490 & FM 2099	0.83	0.43	0.2	0.10	0	0	0.17	0.03
4	Harlingen Airport	7.5	2.97	2.55	0.78	0.67	0.07	0.14	0.16
5	SE of Rangerville	7.36	5.17	4.93	0.62	1.26	0.07	0.28	0.07

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