

Nation's First Bale Picked, Sorghum Harvest Begins

GENERAL SITUATION: Extremely hot with temperatures in the upper 90's and low 100's this week. Some scattered showers fell in the eastern and north central parts of the area. The Rodriguez Brothers' farm picked the nation's first bale of the 2002 season from a relatively new variety, Texas Originator Cotton Seed's *Texas 295* which was planted on February 19. The bale had the following fiber qualities: Micronaire: 4.5, staple: 36, strength: 29.8 and uniformity: 83. Grain sorghum combines were beginning to run in a few fields this week. Summer is finally here based on heat and field activities! Insect activity was diverse, but not severe anywhere.

Cotton Harvest Will Begin mid July



Even though the first bale of cotton was harvested recently, harvesting won't really begin until about the middle of July and then likely will peak faster than normal this year due to the season's hot and dry weather conditions. A large portion of the dryland fields likely will not be harvested and the irrigated cotton fields have been pushing faster to maturity in some situations than would ordinarily be seen. The hot temperatures have caused many irrigated fields to push blooms right to the tops of the plants despite apparent adequate water. It was not uncommon to observe many irrigated fields with only 3 to 5 nodes above white flower this week. This whole cotton crop appears headed to an earlier than normal finish.

Boll Weevils Keep On Puncturing

Boll weevils were being found in more fields and in some situations required decreased intervals for insecticide applications to maintain control. Punctured square counts ranged from 0 to 25 per 100 plants this week. A few fields which have had traditional weevil problems had not shown any weevil activity this week and other, less notorious weevil problem fields had weevil damage requiring routine field spraying. Despite the apparent earliness of the cotton crop, this weevil season is far from over. Fields which had properly timed overwintered weevil treatments have had far fewer problems than nearby fields which had either no overwintered weevil control or improperly timed actions.

Bollworm Moths Flying

Bollworm moths were in high numbers in a few fields in Willacy county this week. Egg counts were very low, however. Female moths will eventually lay eggs and fields need to be monitored closely for increasing eggs and possibly increased

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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small worm counts. The high heat could help keep eggs from hatching, but don't count on it. Check the fields. Other area fields had only small numbers of moths observed and egg counts were low, also. Worm counts ranged from 0 to 6 per 100 plants.

Beet Armyworms In Some Fields

Beet armyworms were reported from a couple of fields in southern Cameron county this week. Insecticide treatments were made in those fields, but no other fields around the LRGV had any reported beet armyworm activity.

Cotton Fleahoppers Counts Remain High

Cotton fleahopper numbers remained very high in some fields this week. Counts in excess of 50 adults and nymphs per 100 plants were common. Fortunately, the current high counts were not present in the early part of the season. There are a few fields which have just begun to square. Yeah, they are extremely late, and will need to be checked frequently for fleahoppers now, if there is any hope of setting fruit this year.

Midge Zapping Yellow Blooms



Sorghum midge still were of concern in a few fields around the LRGV this week. Counts of midge ranged from 0 to 3 per head in scattered fields. Later planted fields (those planted in late March and April) will be or have just started blooming and could be vulnerable to economic levels of midge. We had one report of heavy midge in some late planted sorghum fields in the Rio Bravo area of Mexico this week. **Remember**, if sorghum field(s) are at 20-25% bloom stage (yellow colored blooms) and midge are numbering 1-2 midge per head on an average of 100 heads checked randomly across the field(s), then insecticide will be warranted. Not treating for economic levels of midge will allow the midge to possibly destroy 100% of the grain in the fields. Treating for economic levels of midge will not be cheap, but less money will be lost by spraying for midge than not spraying and losing the majority of the grain.

Headworms on Top

Sorghum headworms (corn earworms and sorghum webworms) were observed, but in extremely low numbers this week. Headworms counts ranged from 0 in most fields to less than 1 per head in any field checked this week. The LRGV's history with headworms is that we usually do not have problems with them. The fact that no two years are alike should be enough warning that fields should be checked anyway. Unless an average of 2 or more worms per head are found, no insecticide treatment likely will be needed.

Cotton Heat Unit Accumulation Table			
Planting Dates	Accum. H.U.	Planting Dates	Accum. H.U.
2/15-----	2177	3/15-----	2020
3/01-----	2097	4/01-----	1783

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