

Special Edition:
Stalk Destruction and Boll Weevils

Stalks Need to be Destroyed

Stalk destruction, both chemical and manual, still was ongoing this week. That was good to witness. Stalk destruction has been increasing and probably has led, in part, to a general reduction in weevils in traps this week. However, plenty of fields were harvested as of several weeks ago, yet the stalks were left standing even as of this week. No matter how we cut the cotton pest management pie, stalk destruction remains the largest share. All other pest control techniques are of minimal value without stalk destruction to serve as the foundation of successful pest management. So, we continue to encourage everyone to get on board and destroy those stalks as quickly as possible.

Boll Weevils Abound

Boll weevils are the primary reason why we fuss so much about stalk destruction. And, boll weevils have been around in gigantic numbers since harvest commenced. Our trap lines have shown large numbers of weevils moving around the LRGV, looking for additional food and egg deposition sites over the last several weeks. (See trap records included with this *Pest Cast* edition).

Hundreds of weevils were trapped in the last few weeks, including this week. Daily trap numbers in some cases exceeded 50 weevils per trap per day. That means that there are literally millions of weevils moving around and they will reproduce on any fruiting cotton they can find. And boll weevils are better at finding fruiting cotton than anyone I know. Leaving stalks undestroyed will only lead to increased weevils through the fall and into next spring.

Even though our trap lines caught fewer boll weevils this week than over the last several weeks, that does not justify less worry about stalk destruction. The fewer numbers caught this week still more than justify the need for continued vigilance in destroying each and every stalk to stop the weevils from mass producing over the fall and winter months. There still are more than enough boll weevils to lay eggs and continue the next several generations which will find and infest our 2003 cotton fields unless our present stalk destruction activities continue at a very fast and thorough pace.

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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Chemical Stalk Destruction Trial

Speaking of stalk destruction, our preliminary results from our chemical stalk destruction trial indicated that 2,4-D sprayed within 24 hours of stalk destruction is the best treatment. The other treatment of Dicamba (Banvel, Clarity) stopped the fruiting, but the plants are obviously alive. 2,4-D sprayed at 3 days, 7 days and 14 days after shredding showed some control, but the regrowth is much greater than 2,4-D sprayed at less than 24 hours after shredding. However, just like last year, a second application of 2,4-D mixed with other products will be required to control any cotton regrowth, even in the less than 24 hour treatments, volunteer seedlings and other weeds which may sprout in the field following the initial application. We expect to have final readings on all of the treatments, including the "clean-up" application of 2,4-D, plus Round-Up and Herbimax surfactant, by the end of next week.

Workshop Opportunities: Master Marketer & Tomorrow's Top Ag Producer

Enclosed are brochures describing two programs brought to you by your county extension agents and the Extension Agricultural Economics Workgroup. The first workshop is the **Master Marketer** workshop, which will be held in Kingsville during September-Nov. This is the same award winning program that was held in Weslaco last fall. The cost is \$250 per participant. The speakers and hands-on training is the best in the country on the subject of marketing and hedging row crops and livestock. Workshop participants will graduate with a fully developed marketing plan for their own operation. The second workshop opportunity is designed to take participants through the entire process of developing a comprehensive business plan. It's called **Tomorrow's Top Ag Producer**, and is designed for the younger generation of future commercial farmers and ranchers. We are specifically targeting farm/ranch operations where the older generation is within a few years of retiring and ready to transfer operations to the next generation. Like Master Marketer, the TTAP program is not for the faint of heart. The registration is \$1,000 per participant, and the time commitment is substantial (four three-day sessions, at different locations across the State.) However, the workshop participants will receive one-of-a-kind business training and analysis of their specific operations, as well as be established in

mentoring relationships with other volunteer producers and Extension Economics specialists. For further information about either of these two programs, contact Dr. John Robinson at 968-5581.

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