



INSECTS AND WEEDS IN FOCUS

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GENERAL CONDITIONS

Why waste words; it is hot and dry and we need a rain. Corn and sorghum are generally finished with some harvest of sorghum underway. Cotton is still vulnerable to attack by various insects. It is at a critical point where insect damage could still occur. RDP

COTTON INSECT CONTROL DECISIONS AT A CRITICAL LEVEL

Cotton is generally in full cutout in the Corpus Christi area with shed of small bolls due to lack of water. The plants are loaded with substantial numbers of bolls which are filling rapidly and creating a heavy water demand. **Cotton aphid** numbers increased rapidly during the week, but by Friday, June 24, evidence of the beneficial fungus that kills aphids was evident. Based on this occurrence, I expect to see very rapid decline in cotton aphid numbers over the next 72 hours. The decline cannot be guaranteed, but based on past experience it should occur. **Bollworm** egg numbers were high early in the week but have declined somewhat in older cotton. Very few larvae have been found hatching from the eggs to date in some fields where I expected to find them by today. We are not sure what is happening to the bollworm eggs, especially in fields containing very few beneficial arthropods. Maintain scouting in these type fields as the situation could rapidly change; there may be fields where survival of bollworm larvae does occur at a substantial level.

We have observed egg masses of what appears to be **beet armyworm** (it might be **fall armyworm**). The egg masses are in cotton scattered throughout the Coastal Bend.

Beet armyworm eggs are laid on both leaf surfaces in masses covered by a whitish, velvety material. Young beet armyworms "web up" and feed together on leaves, but eventually disperse and become more solitary in their feeding habits. Early-season infestations feed on leaves and terminal areas. Occasionally they destroy the plant terminal, causing extensive lateral branch development and delayed maturity. Larvae skeletonize leaves rather than chewing large holes in them. Damaging infestations sometimes develop late in the season when beet armyworms also feed on terminals, squares, blooms and bolls.

When beet armyworms begin to damage fruit, control may be justified. Infestations usually are spotty within a field, and careful scouting is necessary to determine the need for and field area requiring control. Beet armyworms longer than 1/2 inch may be difficult to control.

Early Detection Threshold (hatching egg masses): From initiation of squaring to cutout, if two "active hits" (i.e., recently hatched egg masses with actively feeding larvae) are detected per 100 row feet and conditions are optimal for a beet armyworm outbreak, treatment should be considered. Hits can be detected by observing plant leaves by walking along a row for a measured distance. Remedial Threshold (advanced infestation during mid-season): When small worm counts exceed 20,000 per acre and at least 10 percent of the plants examined are infested, control may be warranted. RDP

SORGHUM INSECT PEST NUMBERS CONTINUE TO DECLINE

Headworm and **stink bug** numbers continue to decline as most of the sorghum is entering hard dough, but the problem continues on the Upper Gulf Coast. Their numbers have been greater and infestations have been more widespread than any year in my memory. The decision to treat headworms was generally easy to make where a "beat bucket" was used to determine if more than one headworm was present per head. Generally, 1.5 to 2.5 headworms per sorghum panicle were observed this season. Best control was obtained with Lannate 2.4 LV (1 pint/acre) or with one of the labeled pyrethroids used at a high rate. The high rate of

