

Blacklands IPM Newsletter

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General Situation

Soil moisture conditions range from adequate to wet. Corn is tasselling and grain sorghum will range from pre-boot to starting to head. The exception would be grain sorghum that came up late with a rain. Both corn and grain sorghum have made good progress over the past week.

Wheat harvest continues to be in full swing with yields being better than expected. The higher yields are generally in areas where we had more soil moisture during the growing season.

Cotton growth stage will range from cotyledon to matchhead square. The majority of the cotton will range from 6 true leaves to pinhead square. There are a number of fields where we are still getting cotton up from last week's rain.

Grain Sorghum

Greenbugs numbers continue to be very light.

Yellow sugarcane aphids are not being seen.

Cotton

Thrips numbers have increased since the first part of the week. Producers with younger cotton or cotton slow to grow off should monitor their crops closely for this pest.

Spider mites are being seen in very low numbers in the area. Last week's rain with wind had a positive effect of lowering spider mite numbers in the area.

Cotton aphids will range from light to moderate. Most area fields are light. However, we are seeing an increase in cotton aphids as early season insecticides go out.

Cotton fleahoppers continue to be very light. Fleahoppers counts will range to 0-6 percent.

All the fleahoppers we are seeing at this time are adults.

In some area wheat fields we were/are seeing whiteheads. A high percentage of these damaged heads have 1-3 inches of damage at the top of the head. Some heads were completely white. We're still unsure if this was frost/freeze damage or drought conditions causing damage. The following article may give us some insight on what type of damage we were seeing.

This is an article from Southwest Farm Press, the May 16, 2011 addition

White heads in wheat cause by heat, drought stress

Reports of white heads in wheat fields have been coming in from throughout central Kansas this week, said Jim Shroyer, K-State Research and Extension crop production specialist.

Several factors can cause white heads in wheat, but the most common factor at work now is widespread premature death of the heads from the period of record-breaking heat on May 8 to May 10, Shroyer said.

“In many fields of central and western Kansas, the root systems of wheat have been stunted all spring due to dry soils and possibly soil compaction. The result is that the plants were under stress when the extreme heat and high winds occurred for two or three days about a week ago,” he explained.

The combination of drought stress and heat stress has caused many heads to die and turn white, Shroyer said. The change in color from green to white can be quite sudden.

“It will often seem that the heads turned white overnight,” Shroyer said. “When the heads die, the chlorophyll is destroyed and the color does disappear quite rapidly. The heads can turn white almost in a flash, or at least it can seem that way.”

The other common effect of the period of extreme wheat being observed now in many fields is floret sterility, Shroyer added. This happens when the heat occurs while the wheat is in the flowering stage, and the results can be severe, he said.

“The record-breaking heat we had has already caused up to 50 percent or more of the florets to become sterile in some fields where the wheat was flowering. This will result in fewer kernels per head,” he said.

If the remaining kernels fill well, that can help reduce potential yield loss from having fewer kernels per head, he added. Where floret sterility occurs, the heads will retain their normal color.

“Floret sterility and white heads from premature death are two entirely different problems, although both can be occurring in the same fields this spring due to the extreme heat,” Shroyer said. “White heads can be occurring wherever the wheat has headed out, while floret sterility will only be occurring in fields where the plants were flowering at the time of the heat stress.”

--Article from Southwest Farm Press
(May 16, 2011)

Boll Weevil Eradication

Cotton fields that do not have boll weevil traps set out should contact Northern Blacklands Boll Weevils Eradication Foundation at 903/641-0020.

Producers with cotton fields with downed boll weevil traps due to weather conditions or other reasons should contact Northern Blacklands Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation.

It is critical for the continued success of boll weevil eradication that all fields are trapped and monitored for boll weevils.