



Texas Cooperative Extension



SOUTHERN BLACKLANDS Pest Management News

Williamson and Milam Counties

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General Situation

Some scattered showers fell across the Southern Blacklands Region this week. Much more of the corn is tasselling this week. Some of the earliest grain sorghum just began to head-out and bloom during the early part of this week. Cotton ranges from cotyledon to pinhead square with most fields at the 5-6 true leaf stage.

Corn and Grain Sorghum

Greenbugs are very light in grain sorghum and **corn leaf aphids** can be found in some fields of corn and sorghum, but are generally very light. We have not seen any **sorghum midge** on the earliest blooming grain sorghum thus far.

Cotton

Thrips continue to migrate in relatively high numbers into area fields. Levels of thrips are similar to what we saw during mid-May last year, even though we have much more soil moisture and more wild host that are still supporting heavy populations of thrips. Although most fields are past the stage where thrips can cause any economic damage, some fields are still at that susceptible stage and may require one application to reduce thrips levels in order to allow the

cotton to begin setting squares without any additional delays.

In general, treatments for thrips should be made when thrips are readily observed on plants and slight terminal leaf curling is evident. A partial list of insecticides for thrips include: Address 75S @ 2 to 4 oz./ac., Address 90S @ 1.67 to 3.2 oz./ac., Orthene 90S @ 1.67 to 3.2 oz./ac., Orthene 97 @ 1.5 to 3 oz./ac., Bidrin 8E at 1 gal./60 acs., dimethoate 4E at 1 gal to 32 to 64 acres, dimethoate 5E at 1 gal to 40 to 80 acres.

Aphid levels remain very light this week with most fields having very few aphids.

Spider mites continue to show up in some fields at light to moderate levels in some spots. Fortunately the higher counts are not being found across entire fields. In addition, we are finding higher numbers of thrips associated with the higher levels of spider mites and it appears that the thrips may be preying on the spider mites.

Cotton fleahoppers continue to be found in light numbers as has been occurring over the past two weeks. Numbers are ranging from 0-8 per 100

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plants checked. As more of the cotton begins to produce more squares, fleahopper numbers are expected to increase in numbers rather rapidly.

When deciding on whether or not to make a fleahopper insecticide application consider number of fleahoppers present and percent square retention or percent blasted squares. Do not spray just because the cotton is beginning to square. Also, make sure that there are enough developing fruiting sites present to justify an application. It is not justifiable to treat cotton if plants are averaging only one fruiting site per plant. I think we sometimes “pull the trigger” to early on fleahopper applications.

As you know, weather and even varieties play a factor in how a well the cotton fruits up early in the season. Some years, no matter how much one sprays, it is difficult to maintain a square set above 80% during the first 2-3 weeks of squaring. Generally, under cool and cloudy conditions, square set generally declines, and increases under hot and sunny conditions.

If the cotton is just starting to square with less than one fruiting node per plant, more damage may be tolerated to allow a greater percentage of plants in fields to begin squaring. However, once the cotton is averaging one or more fruiting nodes per plant and fleahoppers are present and percent square set is below 80%, consider making an insecticide application in a timely manner. Percent square set can decrease from 90% to less than 50% in less than a week’s time under heavy levels of fleahoppers; therefore, it may be advantageous to treat for fleahoppers when counts are approaching economic thresholds and square set is falling and if the field will not be scouted for another week. Also consider making consecutive applications at 4-7 day intervals if fleahopper migration continues to be high.

During the first three weeks of squaring, 10 fleahoppers per 100 terminals may cause economic damage. Be sure and carefully monitor fields for adult and nymph fleahoppers.

Some recommended insecticides and/or active ingredients to manage fleahoppers include Bidrin at 1gal/40 ac, Centric at 2 oz/ac, Dimethoate 4E at 1 gal, Intruder 0.6 oz./ac, 1/16 Othene (90S) at 4 oz/ac, Imidacloprid 1.0 to 1.8 oz/ac, and Vydate CLV at 8 oz/ac.

We had been finding a miscellaneous worm in many fields during the previous two weeks, but those numbers decreased this week with only a few worms being found throughout this past week.

The most prevalent beneficial insect being found currently are **spiders**. Spiders are considered good predators of fleahoppers.

The following information is provided by the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation and is weekly trap catch averages.

<u>Average number of weevils/trap/week</u>			
<u>Week Ending</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>
April 29	.0044	.0072	.0273
May 6	.1882	.0071	.0229
May 13	.0752	.0442	.0148
May 20	.3245	.0302	.0443