

Issues In Agriculture

The Newsletter About Integrated Pest Management for the El Paso Valley

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Cotton:

GENERAL CONDITION: Most cotton fields are looking very good. In general, pest levels are low or spotty. Beneficial insects continue to be relatively abundant. Plant stand densities of sampled fields fall between 40,000 to 92,000 plants per acre.



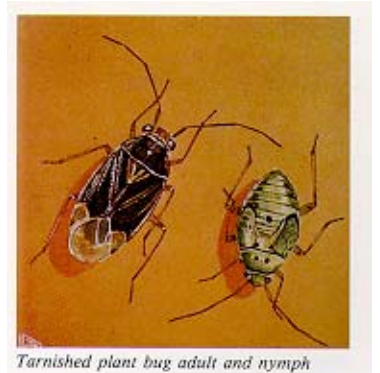
Cotton fleahopper nymph (immature)

FLEAHOPPERS: Some growers have made recent insecticide applications against cotton fleahopper (FH). However, most of the fields should not be vulnerable to FH attacks anymore. Remember that the first three weeks of squaring are critical for FH control. The fourth and fifth weeks could be important if FH occur at very high population levels and square set is low. Although FH populations may increase as the season progresses, control is rarely justified after the fifth week of squaring. This is particularly true in irrigated cotton because it usually has a better first square retention than dryland cotton. As you know, the squares closest to the main stem are the most important ones for yield. FH feeds on squares at pinhead stage. At this point in the season, squares at the first and second positions should be past the period when they are vulnerable.

FH is one of those insects that can have a dual role as a pest and as a beneficial insect. It may be considered a pest during the first three weeks of squaring. Afterwards, it can be seen as beneficial because of its preying habits on insect eggs.

LYGUS: Pay closer attention to cotton fields planted next to alfalfa. When alfalfa is cut, Lygus will move to cotton plants. If you own the alfalfa crop neighboring your cotton field, it is preferable to strip-cut it rather than harvest it completely. Strip-cutting will allow the bulk of Lygus bugs to remain in the alfalfa field because Lygus prefers alfalfa to cotton.

Sampling and thresholds: *“Generally, treatment is required when 25% of the squares are damaged and/or 15–20 total Lygus (nymphs and adults) are present per 100 sweeps and Lygus nymphs are present. It is not uncommon to sample fields with 30 to 50 adults per 100 net sweeps during June and early July but find damage below the 25% level. These fields should not be treated unless later samples prove a 25% damage level with associated presence of nymphs.”* Taken from: Lygus in Cotton: Identification, Biology & Management. Cooperative Extension. The University of Arizona • College of Agriculture.



Tarnished plant bug adult and nymph



Bollworm egg and small larva

BOLLWORM/ TOBACCO BUDWORM COMPLEX: Most insecticides being applied at this moment are directed against these caterpillars. Before deciding on an insecticide application, it is crucial to determine the pest levels occurring in your field and whether or not an application makes good business sense. Keep in mind that the goal in agricultural insect pest management is to use a diverse set of tactics to maintain pest populations at levels where their impact on yield is less than the cost of control. Eliminating or eradicating an insect pest is not feasible, except in very few cases. Therefore, having a bug-free environment is not only extremely difficult to achieve, but also may have a cost/benefit ratio that is far too high for a profitable crop. The potential economic return from control practices is the key.

Current threshold for this pest complex is 8-12 small larva per 100 plants. Tracer, Karate, and Baythroid have been some of the most commonly applied insecticides against the bollworm/tobacco budworm complex in our area. Of these three, Tracer may be less harmful to natural enemies. When applying insecticides, it is crucial to rotate chemistry to avoid insecticide resistance. Lannate and Steward are good alternatives to pyrethroids from the perspective of chemical group rotation.

OTHER PESTS:

Beet armyworm populations are light right now, but be alert of their potential to increase rapidly. When choosing an insecticide against the bollworm/tobacco budworm complex, you may also consider the insecticide's efficacy against beet armyworm, to reduce the probability of having beet armyworm flare ups in the near future.



Green stinkbug adult

Be on the look out for stink bugs. They can present problems at high population levels especially in Bt cotton fields. Treatment is advised when an average of one or more stink bugs per six feet of row is found or when 20 percent of small bolls are damaged by stink bugs.

DEGREE DAY AND WEATHER INFORMATION

	2006 Upper Valley	2006 Lower Valley	2005 Upper Valley	2005 Lower Valley	2004 Upper Valley	2004 Lower Valley
PBW Jan. 1	*	2430.5	2146	2162	2329	2267
Cotton April 15	*	1609.5	1577	1574.5	1581.5	1550.5
Pecans Jan. 1	*	5463.5	5113	5189.5	5144	5143
PNC March 28	*	4305	4133.5	3879	4158.5	4122.5

Temperatures as of July 23rd

** Due to technical difficulties at the Texas Evapotranspiration Network, data from the Deputy Farms (Upper Valley) are not available at this time.*

rain/moisture received as of: July 23, 2006	
Deputy Farms: *	Rio Bravo Farms: .19"

TEXAS BOLL WEEVIL ERADICATION FOUNDATION			
DATA FOR WEEK ENDING ON JULY 17, 2006:			
	Pink bollworm	Boll weevil	Beet Armyworm
Traps inspected	3,559	3,559	10
Total insects collected	60	0	22
Average insects/trap	0.0168	0	2.2
Week of: 07/17/2006	Total acreage for El Paso Trans Pecos Zone = 39,040		

The above information was obtained from the Texas Evapotranspiration Network. Texas ET contains weather information, evapotranspiration, and crop watering recommendations. Individual weather stations have been placed at Rio Bravo Farms near Tornillo and at Deputy Farms in the Upper Valley. The weather stations record daily temperatures (high and low), relative humidity, rain received, wind speed, as well as crop water requirements and DD information.

This information is updated daily and is available on the internet at <http://texaset.tamu.edu>. Locations are Deputy Farms and Art Ivey Farms. If you need any help using this website please call the El Paso Extension Office and ask for Ray Bader or Salvador Vitanza. Please use this website as it is an excellent service.

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