

Northwest Plains Pest Management News

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Bailey and Parmer Counties

July 9, 2009

Recent precipitation and warm weather has shifted crops into high gear. Precipitation amounts ranging from .1 to 3 inches have been reported with around 2 inches being reported most often. Local weather stations have recorded the following rainfall July 2 - July 8:

Farwell	1.29
Friona	1.41
Muleshoe	1.42
Muleshoe Wildlife Refuge	.73

The overall pest situation remains relatively quiet for the most part but hints of increased activity have been observed.

Trap captures of Southwestern corn borer, Fall armyworm, and western bean cutworm have been low to this point.

Spider mites continue to build in area corn; the number of infested leaves as well as colony size have increased. Most fields have not reached treatment levels but warrant regular monitoring to verify population changes.

Western corn rootworm (WCRW) beetles have been observed in high numbers in a few area fields. Female western rootworm beetles

Daily Water Use	
Crop	Inches per day
Corn	.31-.40
Cotton	.18-.30
Sorghum	.13-.24
Bermuda Grass	.23
Fescue/ Bluegrass	.30

Cotton Heat Unit Accumulation ¹			
Location	Current	2008	Long Term ²
Farwell	729	778	
Friona	720	738	
Muleshoe	786	808	721
Muleshoe WR	821	871	

¹ DD 60 based on May 1

² Based on Muleshoe long term weather data 1971-2000

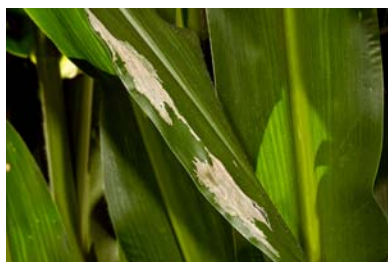
are yellow with black stripes; male beetles vary from striped to nearly black. Adult rootworm beetles feed on leaves, pollen and tassels, but they prefer silks. When adults are numerous (8 to 10 per plant) during the green silk stage and the silks are chewed



WCRW adults

back to within 1/2 inch of the shuck, poorly filled ears may result from poor pollination. When this amount of feeding occurs, or if excessive leaf damage occurs, it is profitable to control the beetles. However, insecticides can cause an outbreak of spider mites by destroying predators. Spider mites can be very damaging to corn and are difficult to control. Insecticide treatments for adult beetle control should only be used when absolutely necessary.

Western corn rootworm beetles lay eggs in the



WCRW leaf feeding

soil during the summer and fall, shortly after the corn silks. Eggs are usually laid within the corn field in the soil, where they remain until they hatch the following year. The time of hatching depends to some extent on soil temperature; however, eggs usually begin to hatch about mid-May in the High Plains and continue to hatch for several weeks. If corn roots are not available for the newly hatched corn rootworms to feed on, they will die. There is only one generation per year; therefore, the best method of controlling this pest is to rotate corn with any other crop. Fields planted to corn year after year in western corn rootworm problem areas generally require a soil insecticide at

planting time or use of a transgenic hybrid which is effective in suppressing rootworms. In continuous corn production fields, an average of one or more beetles per plant indicates a need for a soil applied insecticide the



WCRW silk feeding

following spring or a need to consider crop rotation. Damage from corn rootworms usually occurs during June in the High Plains. Extensive damage to the brace roots and fibrous roots may cause plants to lodge. A “goose necking” appearance occurs when lodged plants continue to grow.

Cotton has responded very well to recent precipitation and warm, strike that, hot temperatures. Square sets have ranged from 84-99% and averaged 93% this week. This is very good fruit retention going into the third week of squaring.

Several fields of various crops have been injured by “drift” of different herbicides. Remain aware that herbicide applications have the potential to damage adjacent crops if they move off target. Environmental conditions can move herbicides off target which may result in unpredictable degrees of crop injury. Different crops have varying degrees of tolerance to different herbicides. Good stewardship and careful applications will eliminate most drift incidences but there are times when drift is hard to explain. Some products are more apt to volatilize (a conversion from the liquid state to a gaseous state) and move off target while others are limited to physical drift of spray particles.

Do not let the need to get a herbicide application out cloud your judgment on environmental conditions (wind, humidity, temperature, etc.). The best drift retardant agents and nozzles can not make up for poor judgment. There is no normal drift scenario, weird things can happen that are difficult and in some cases never explained.



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