



News about Integrated Pest Management for producers in Castro and Lamb Counties.

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This is the first issue of Happenings in Ag Newsletter for the 2007 crop year. If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically you may e-mail me your request at e-nino@tamu.edu or call the office at 806-647-4115.

GENERAL CROP CONDITIONS

Depending on where your farm is determines what shape your crop is in for most producers. Thunderstorms and high winds have caused damage to crops in many parts of our area while other areas of the county have received very little rain. In some of those storms hail fell and caused some light to severe damage to both corn and cotton fields. Replant decisions are being made at this time by many producers. On the good side of things the moisture has been more than welcomed by producers cotton and corn fields have really benefitted from the rains so has grain sorghum that has been planted or will be planted.

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INSECTS AND DISEASES

Cotton

Thrips are the main insect pest of concern at this time for cotton producers. Thrips are slender, straw colored insects about 1/15 inch long, with piercing sucking mouthparts. Adults are winged and capable of drifting long distances in wind. Thrips attack leaves, leaf buds and cause silvering of the leaf surface. What we are seeing at this time is that at planting insecticides such as Temik, and Cruiser are working very well at this time. Fields that were treated with at planting insecticides have very little thrips pressure. For those fields that were not treated with insecticides at planting, thrips control measures should be heavily considered. All program fields that were not treated with an at planting insecticide have reached economic thresholds for thrips pressures and foliar applications of insecticides have been made. In fields that have had weather damage it is more important to control thrips pressures. Thrips pressures in weather damaged fields only intensify that damage and set the crop back even more. The economic threshold for thrips depends on the number of true leaves present at the time of inspection, the threshold is: the average number of thrips counted per plant is equal to the number of true leaves present. For example if you are at 2 true leaf stage cotton than an average of 2 thrips per plant would be threshold. If an at planting insecticide was used than use the same threshold coupled with 30% of the thrips being immatures. The reason that we use the 30% factor is that if you used an at planting insecticide and only find adult thrips in your field than it means that reproduction is not taking place in your field and the at planting insecticides are still effective. Continue to scout cotton fields for thrips regardless if an insecticide of any type has been used. Be prepared to make follow-up treatments of foliar insecticides to control thrips pressures.

I did receive some calls about salt marsh caterpillars in cotton fields this week. These caterpillars are fuzzy and can be up to 1 inch in length. This is what we consider to be an occasional pest in cotton and appears to be moving out of CRP pastures into cotton fields. Treating the borders of cotton fields with an approved insecticide should cure the problem.

Corn

There is very little insect pest activity in corn fields at this time, but I would begin to check for corn rootworms if a soil insecticide was not use at planting and the field has a history of corn rootworms.

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