



HAPPENINGS IN AG

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

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GENERAL CROP CONDITIONS

Scattered rain showers in both Castro and Lamb Counties have helped settle some dust. Things were beginning to really dry out and we do still have areas in both counties that didn't receive a drop. We are getting very near the point of irrigation requirements increasing rapidly in cotton. Cotton stages in program fields range from 2 true leaf cotton to pinhead sized square with 2 to 3 fruiting nodes. Square sets for these cotton fields are really good at this time running between 98% to 100%. With the hot temperatures and dry weather that has set in for most of the area we really need to watch our irrigation requirements for cotton that is entering the squaring stage. Also for producers that use plant growth regulators I would consider early applications at a low rate so if you are using those PGR products you may need to begin making your management decisions now. Cotton continues to develop at a rapid pace and I really don't know how many of us really understand where we are at as far as cotton stage. When I tell some of my growers that they have pinhead squares, they are shocked. Trust me folks this crop is moving.

Corn fields are looking good and range from seedling corn to 7 to 8 leaf stage corn. Corn fields are developing very well also. Corn just doesn't handle the extreme hot temperatures as well as cotton.

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INSECTS AND DISEASES

Cotton

Thrips are pretty much in the rear view mirror for most program fields. Most program fields are beyond the 5 true leaf stage and out of danger from thrips. For those that have not reached 5 true leaves be very careful about making insecticide applications to clean up thrips. Cotton is developing so well that thrips are not causing heavy damage in most of these fields. Another thing is that the hot temperatures do not favor thrips development. So we are now switching gears and changing our focus to cotton fleahoppers and lygus bugs. We have been finding low numbers of cotton fleahoppers in program fields. These numbers are ranging from 0 to 3 fleahoppers per 40 plants so we are still not anywhere near economic threshold. However, monitor fields very closely for fleahoppers, we are getting reports of fleahoppers in cotton from all over the high plains. I would guess that with the winter moisture and spring rains we had, there was plenty of food sources available for fleahoppers in the form of weeds. I would recommend inspecting at least 40 terminals across a 60 acre pivot but up to 100 terminals if you are finding fleahopper infestations. Economic thresholds for fleahoppers are based on square set and population density.

Cotton fleahopper action threshold is 25-30 cotton fleahoppers/100 terminals with:

Week of squaring	Square set
1st week	< 90 percent
2nd week	< 85 percent
3rd week to 1st bloom	< 75 percent
After 1st bloom	Treatment is rarely justified

Corn

Spider mites continue to infest corn fields throughout both counties. I have not yet seen a field where a miticide application was warranted. Beneficial insects, primarily thrips, have kept mite infestations in check. As I mentioned last week most of these infestations are on the borders of corn fields so if you do make a miticide application I would still consider a border application if it is possible.

Sorghum

Most grain sorghum is still in the bag waiting to be planted or is in the seedling stage. Soil insects would be the insect pests I would be most concerned with at this time. It is really too late to make management decisions for this season, as far as soil insect pests however, if you do see problems then you need to make a note of that for next season and plan to treat sorghum seed with insecticides. For those that do have more mature grain sorghum I would monitor for aphids and lepidopteran pests (worms) feeding in the whorl. Keep in mind that treating whorl stage corn or grain sorghum for larvae is not recommended. It is very difficult to get insecticides down to the larvae that are feeding deep in the whorl. Therefore, control is very limited.

**Happenings in Ag is a publication of Texas AgriLife Extension Service
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