

## WEST PLAINS IPM UPDATE

News about  
Integrated Pest  
Management in  
Hockley and  
Cochran Counties  
from Kerry Siders.



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Partners with Nature

### Crop and Pest Situation

**Cotton** ranges from just planted to squaring 8 leaf cotton plants. Rain on Wednesday the 10th brought a unexpected blessing for many acres of dryland. Many acres of cotton was planted dry or had been planted a few weeks ago, had germinated, and was very near running out of moisture. Hopefully the moisture met in the middle so that this crop can root on down into fair moisture below. Many producers were trying to straighten out the situation created from last weeks storms. Suffice to say this time of year is always a bit ugly. Many producers are preoccupied with replanting and sand-fighting. However, very quickly they will be getting back to managing weed, nematode, fertility issues.

The scouts and I are finding very few insect pest this week. Thrips are not as severe as a week or two ago. Most cotton which we are checking is 3-5 leaf cotton and is beginning to out pace thrips damage. In my inspection of fields with a history of southern root-knot nematode I am beginning to find root cyst damage from this soil borne pest. This would indicate either no use of at-plant nematicide or that those products used at-plant are playing out. Vydate C-LV at 17 oz per acre has provided excellent protection against yield loss especially following the use of Temik. Timing is critical though. An application should be made on the heels of when Temik's effectiveness is lessening. If you have questions about the use of Vydate give me a call.



**Peanuts** are doing well. Some thrips damage but nothing which one should be concerned. I am starting to see blooms in many fields.

**Grain sorghum** is also doing well. Weeds are a top priority right now. I have seen a few yellow sugar cane aphids, but no significant numbers. Very few whorl feeding worms have been noted.

#### **Don't Be in a Rush to Plant Grain Sorghum**

By Dr. Calvin Trostle, Extension Agronomist

You might be surprised to hear me say this after all the late sorghum planting in 2008, especially when many farmers couldn't find shorter maturity hybrids for late planting (e.g., a medium maturity hybrid planted in Hockley Co. the first week of July; a medium-long planted in Gaines Co. during the same time). **Continued on Page 2.**

#### **Avoid Mistakes with 2,4-D and Dicamba Injury to Grain Sorghum**

By Dr. Calvin Trostle, Extension Agronomist

Key to many herbicide options in grain sorghum after emergence is the stage of growth of sorghum when you wish to use the herbicide. Many herbicide labels note that applications can be made up to a certain height or leaf number (e.g. apply the dicamba herbicide Clarity prior to 15" tall, but use drop nozzles if sorghum is taller than 8"). **Continued on Page 2.**

(Continued) **Don't Be in a Rush to Plant Grain Sorghum**



This compounded the lack of maturity when coupled with cool days in both August and September and the October 23 freeze. Calculations of heat unit accumulation on grain sorghum growth and development, however, showed that for the 2008 sorghum crop that planting date (if late) had a much greater impact on lack of maturity (low test weights, low yields) than the weather. If a farmer planted that same hybrid noted above even 5 days earlier it made a great difference in maturing the crop.

For 2009 some growers might be shy about delaying planting grain sorghum if you can get it done soon. But remember 2008 was highly abnormal, yet for the most part producers that hit recommended last planting dates for their particular county and for a particular hybrid avoided the serious damage even in those exceptionally dire conditions.

Extension publishes suggested last recommended planting dates for grain sorghum hybrids of particular maturity for each South Plains county. See the current summary in our annual Hailout/Replant/Late Plant guide updated last week (see note below) at <http://lubbock.tamu.edu/cotton/pdf/cropreplantoptions09.pdf>, which is also available from your local county Extension office). Unless you are planting a full-season hybrid, which few producers do in the South Plains, there are some potential advantages to holding off on sorghum for a couple of weeks, especially for limited irrigation and dryland with medium and shorter maturity hybrids:

- 1) Especially for dryland grain sorghum, we like to 'schedule' flowering outside the window of about July 1 to mid-August, the hottest time of the season.
- 2) Late June and some early July plantings (more so south of Lubbock) increase the opportunity to store more soil moisture, especially for dryland crops. A delay from say June 15 to June 25 could mean an extra September rain to put toward grain yield.
- 3) This also places the period of maximum water use in grain sorghum (boot stage to just after flowering) further from the hottest time of year and toward September, which is historically is the wettest month of the year for many South Plains counties along the state line.
- 4) If you are sharing limited irrigation resources with cotton on a split pivot, planting a medium or medium-early sorghum hybrid in late June or even early July can minimize the overlap of peak water requirements of both crops. For example, a medium maturity sorghum hybrid planted in Lubbock Co. in late June would flower near Sept. 1, after cutout on cotton, so both cotton and grain sorghum could benefit from a little more potential irrigation.
- 5) Finally, if you are planting grain sorghum after wheat, a rain or a pre-plant irrigation would give you time and opportunity to reduce potential volunteer wheat problems in the sorghum (see below).
- 6) Caveat: Later sorghum planting dates can increase sorghum midge potential though that has been a problem in West Texas only one year (2007) in at least the past 10 years or more. The generally recognized date is that sorghum in the Texas High Plains should be unlikely to have sorghum midge if flowering by August 1.

If you are interested in better understanding the potential benefits of delaying grain sorghum plantings visit with your local Extension agent or Calvin Trostle. If you are planting hundreds of acres of grain sorghum then it is often advantageous to spread your planting dates out.

(Continued) **Avoid Mistakes with 2,4-D and Dicamba Injury to Grain Sorghum**

Other herbicides will discuss application restrictions in terms of leaf number. Either restriction, height or leaf number, corresponds in part to the development of the growing point which switches over from producing leaves to initiating development of the spikelets and potential number of seed you may have for each head. The effort to guide herbicide applications such as dicamba and 2,4-D is to minimize any of these growth regulator type herbicides from getting in the whorl which could lead to 'blanking' or 'blasting' of the head hence no seed development. Common problems over the past several years with these types of sorghum herbicide applications have been twofold: 1) spraying and getting too much herbicide on the sorghum plant and ultimately in the whorl; and 2) using hoods or directed spray (drop nozzles) that are not working the way they should and hence again putting too much herbicide on the plants. Consult your herbicide labels for additional details on your application.

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