

Plains Pest Management Newsletter

News About Integrated Pest Management in Hale & Swisher Counties

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COTTON

Cotton ranges from cotyledon stage to six true leaves. Volunteer cotton was observed with 4 to 6 squares per plant in the Cotton Center area on Wednesday June 7. Cotton stands range from poor to excellent. Poor stands have been due to several reasons; which include planting depth, moisture conditions, hail damage and poor vigor seed. A number of growers have reported being concerned about seed quality. The high germination reported on the tags is not always an indicator of vigor. The cool-warm vigor test is a good one to have run on each seed lot prior to planting. A vigor index of 160 or greater is considered to be excellent. If ones seed is lower than 140 then one must wait for optimum conditions to plant or increase seeding rates. Based on observations in some fields I would suspect seed may have been planted with a low vigor index. The Texas Department of Agriculture has a seed testing laboratory in Lubbock, which is very convenient for our area. Results can be obtained 8 days after submission. With prices paid for seed, each lot should be tested prior to planting. If the vigor index is low then the lot should be exchanged for another.

Another good test to have run is the free-fatty acid test. Again, have each lot tested. A & L Laboratories in Lubbock can perform this test for you. If the free-fatty acid is greater than 1 to 1.5% the seed quality is suspect and this seed should not be used for planting. Levels less than 1 % are desired, but may not be a guarantee seed is of high quality. If this test and the Cool-Warm Vigor test are used in conjunction, one will have a good picture on potential seed performance.

June 9, 2006

Thrips populations have been highly visible ranging from 0 to 5 thrips per leaf. In general populations and damage have been much lighter than expected. Much of the foliage loss has been due to high winds experienced over the past several weeks. The economic threshold for thrips is when thrips average one thrip per leaf. This threshold may be higher if growing conditions are excellent and cotton has more leaf area to feed upon. It has been a common practice to add an insecticide to Roundup applications made prior to the 4th true leaf stage when thrips populations exceeded an average of 1 per true leaf. Products commonly used have been acephate (Orthene, Address) dicotophos (Bidrin) and dimethoate. Cost per acre is very low when made in conjunction with a Roundup application.

Sorghum & Corn

Both sorghum and corn are off to an excellent start. Corn earworm and fall armyworm feeding damage has been very light to date. Southwestern corn borer foliage feeding in corn has not been observed, but a high percent of the area corn is Bt, which eliminates this pest. Spider mites have been very light so far. Predators are excellent in corn at this time with lady beetles, assassin bugs, big eyed bugs and pirate bugs observed. We have not found six spotted thrips yet, but other predaceous thrips species have been observed.

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