

Plains Pest Management Newsletter

News About Integrated Pest Management in Hale & Swisher Counties

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COTTON

Cotton ranged from 2 leaf stage to plants with half grown squares. A few fields are very close to bloom. Recent high winds have continued to damage foliage. Rainfall ranged from a few tenths to over a half inch. Hail damage was reported in a few areas, but was not major.

Cotton fleahoppers and lygus bugs remain light in most fields inspected. Square sets have ranged from 77 to 95 + percent for area fields. Square sets less than 85 % have been attributed to blowing sand and hail and not plant bugs in most cases. In pre-blooming cotton the easiest way to sample for plant bugs is to use a beat sheet. Beat sheets are made of cloth and measure 42 X 36 inches. Two dowel rods are used to slide through each end so the cloth can be easily stretched between the rows. Eighteen inches of row from each side are sampled by beating the plants into the sheet. The plant bugs are dislodged and can be easily counted. Each beat sheet sample equals 3 row feet. It is best to take at least 10 beat sheet samples per field. Larger fields should have more samples taken. Originally all beat sheets were white, but they are now available in black. Before black sheets were available we would dye our white sheets black or dark blue. Plant bugs are much easier to see on a dark background.

Another sampling method for plant bugs is to use a beat bucket. This method is used when plants are large enough to bend over into the bucket: usually at least 8 to 10 inches in height. In our IPM program we have used 12 qt. buckets. The small size beat buckets are preferred in pre-blooming cotton and the large size buckets used as plant size increases. Over the years we have evaluated many colors such as white, tan, light blue dark blue and black. We have found the tan and light blue color buckets to be the best for spotting 1st instar fleahopper and Lygus nymphs. The black and dark blue buckets were too dark to allow good light penetration to the bottom of the bucket. In general, we have preferred the tan color sampling buckets as a compromise between the bright white 5 gallon bucket and the darker plastic pails.

For a demonstration of plant bug sampling techniques a video is available at the following web address <http://lubbock.tamu.edu/ipm/AgWeb/videos> . Dr. Pat Porter, Extension Entomologist was the videographer .

Beet armyworm traps in the Cotton Center and Edmonson areas have ranged from 8 moths per day to 39 moths per day and averaged 20 per day. Generally, we become concerned when moth counts exceed 15 per day. So far we have not encountered any significant infestations in cotton, but if hot, dry weather persist beet armyworms may become a problem.

Sorghum & Corn

A number of fields have recently entered the tassel and silk stage and many more will soon reach this stage.

Banks grass mite colonies remain small and scattered at this time, but could increase rapidly as silking and ear formation stages are reached. The largest colonies are about the size of a fifty cent piece. Most infestations are still confined to field margins adjacent to wheat or pasture. Predators have been active in some colonies and have had no impact in others. Where predators have been found mite colonies have been greatly reduced.

Southwestern corn borer larvae were found in the 5th instar stage this past week and should enter the pupal stage soon. Overall southwestern corn borer infestations have been very light.

Corn earworm and **fall armyworm** can still be found in corn and sorghum, but populations remain very low.

Corn leaf aphids have been slow to develop in the few field observations we have made.

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