

# Northwest Plains Pest Management News

Volume 4 Issue 17

Bailey and Parmer Counties

September 16, 2005

Corn harvest has ramped up this week, most of the early silage is out but cutters continue to work on later planted corn and combines have started to roll in grain corn. Early yield reports for silage have ranged from 25 to 34 tons per acre. These good silage yields should be a precursor to potentially good grain yields.

**Stalk rot** has hammered some corn fields which had inoculum present and were planted to susceptible varieties. There are several different



*Stalk rot in corn.*

organisms which cause stalk rots and corn hybrids vary widely in their resistance to them; a particular hybrid may be resistant to one but susceptible to another. Spider

mite infestations will in most cases compound stalk rot problems. If a field has stalk rot present it should be harvested as soon as possible, because it is not a question of if it will lodge but when. Stalk rot infested fields that have been harvested up to this point have not shown

<b>Cotton Heat Unit Accumulation<sup>1</sup></b>			
Location	Current	2004	Long Term <sup>2</sup>
Farwell	1723	1530	
Friona	1754	1611	
Muleshoe	1733		1750
Wildlife Refuge	1844	1674	

<sup>1</sup> DD 60 based on May 1

<sup>2</sup> Based on Muleshoe long term weather data 1971-2000

dramatic yield reductions but have slowed harvest.

**Cotton** bollworms can be found in most cotton fields and in some cases in pretty high numbers. There is little chance that these late worms will impact yields. Bolls which bloomed by August 11 have accumulated over 450 heat units indicating they have matured sufficiently to be safe from bollworm attack.

Some producers are wondering if a late irrigation would benefit cotton. Several factors should be considered, soil moisture, temperature, crop maturity, irrigation cost and calendar date. Some fields are wilting in the “heat” of the day but look fine in the morning which indicates that soil moisture is beginning to run short, but that may not be a bad thing. Daily high temperatures have been in the mid to upper 80s and low temperatures have dipped into the low 50s and as low as 45 (Farwell, 9/14/05) which will decrease water demand which is currently around .18 inches per day. As cotton matures it also requires less moisture. Producers have indicated that irrigation costs have exceeded \$10.00 per acre inch and anything less than an inch (sprayed) or .5-.75 (LEPA) applied to a dry soil will likely do no more than freshen up the crop. September

<b>Daily Water Use</b>	
Crop	Inches per day
Corn	0-.14
Cotton	.18
Grain Sorghum	.18
Bermuda grass	.14
Fescue/ Bluegrass	.18

16th is awfully late to be considering irrigation in all but extreme cases and in those cases it may be to late anyway. Considering all factors it would be difficult to currently justify irrigation.

**Grain sorghum** headworms are currently being found in most grain sorghum fields. Mixed populations of both corn earworms and fall armyworms have been observed in most fields. Larger larvae consume more kernels and cause most damage. The last two larval stages cause about 80 percent of the damage. Frass is common in infested grain heads, on tops of upper leaves and on the ground under plants. Natural mortality of small corn earworm and fall armyworm larvae is normally very high. Both corn earworm and fall armyworm moths can lay several hundred eggs on sorghum grain heads before or during flowering, but only a few larvae survive. Natural factors suppressing these insects include predators, parasites, pathogens and cannibalism among larvae. Early planted sorghum and hybrids with open grain heads usually are less infested. At the current price of grain sorghum headworm populations would have to exceed 1 per head and may approach 2 per head as insecticide application costs exceed \$12.00 per acre to justify treatment. The economic threshold for value added grain sorghum (seed production) should be reduced accordingly.

**Podworms**, also a mixed population of corn earworms and fall armyworms, have infested most blackeyed peas. There are no established economic thresholds for podworms in blackeyed peas. It is



*Fall armyworm.*

generally accepted that treatments should be delayed till worms exit blooms and begin to move about the plant. In most cases worms will be 1/2 inch or so long at that time. Thorough coverage is necessary to control worms of this size but is

generally not a problem unless the plants are particularly large in which case total spray volume should be increased to 5 gallons per acre by air and 10-15 by ground.



*Fall armyworm head capsule.*

**Wheat** which has emerged should be inspected for foliage feeding worms. Fall armyworms have been observed and a few fields have been treated. Fall armyworm larvae are usually shades of brown, but may also be greenish to nearly black. There is a white, inverted Y on the front of the head. Mature larvae are 1 1/2 inches long. Early planting of small grains increases the risk of fall armyworm infestation. Small larvae feed on the leaf tissue, creating tiny "window panes" in the leaves. Larger larvae consume entire leaves and are more difficult to control. Control is suggested when there are four or more larvae, 1 inch or longer, per square foot, and their damage is threatening the stand. Delaying planting can reduce damage when there are large infestations in other host crops or when dry conditions limit the attractiveness of other hosts.

*Monti Vandiver*

**Northwest Plains**  
  
 Partners With Nature

Monti Vandiver  
 Extension Agent-Integrated Pest Management  
 Texas Cooperative Extension  
 401 3rd Street  
 Farwell, Texas  
 806-481-3300

<http://txipmnet.tamu.edu>  
<http://parmer-tx.tamu.edu>

*Educational programs conducted by Texas Cooperative Extension serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap or national origin. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas Cooperative Extension is implied.*