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## “Rio Blanco” Integrated Pest Management Update

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Vital Crop Production Information for **Crosby** and **Floyd** Counties

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☛ Local wheat seems to be progressing rapidly and few fields have shown problems - primarily those that were sown early and were not grazed seem to have the most insect (aphid) pressure. Barley Yellow Dwarf (BYD) symptoms are still present and will remain as the virus continues to proliferate within the infected plants. Aphids currently feeding on the infected wheat should not cause significant problems at this stage in plant development. The stage is set, however, for the reservoir to continue for next fall's crop, whether it be in the aphid population surviving the summer or other host plants (grassy weeds) that may not show symptoms of the disease.

☛ The **Crosby/Floyd IPM Program** will be ready to serve our wheat producing clientele beginning in the fall of 2005. I have received permission from the IPM Steering Committee, this week, to begin monitoring wheat fields at a rate of \$2.00 per acre, which will begin when wheat is planted next fall. Our service will include monitoring for insects, weeds and disease problems, and irrigation scheduling under center pivot systems. This will be done on a weekly basis until such time as the pest threat is no longer imminent, or the field is terminated, whichever occurs first. More will be said regarding this service at a later date, but I encourage those interested producers to please consider this option as a helpful tool, regardless of graze-out or grain harvest intentions.

☛ Several **regional wheat meetings** are scheduled locally in May.

- **Floyd Co., May 11<sup>th</sup>**, J.D. Ragland, CEA-AG at 806.983.4912

- **Castro Co., May 17<sup>th</sup>**, Kent Lewis, CEA-AG at 806.647.4115

Producers are encouraged to make one of these meetings to view several varieties that are successfully grown in this area. Information will include seeding rates, planting date, forage and grain production for these specific varieties.

☛ **Cotton planting** is right around the corner as you all know. Soils are not yet warm enough to allow seed germination and, historically, will not be for at least two more weeks. Warm dry days are going to steadily increase the soil temperature and most should be ready to plant by May 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>. Waiting to plant until the soil temperature reaches a minimum of **60°F** for 10 days (temperature taken at 8 a.m.) will allow a better start by cutting the time needed for germination and seedling emergence to ensure a healthier, more uniform stand. The latest 10 day average for Lubbock and Crosbyton is **55°F** reported by **Roger Haldenby**, Plains Cotton Growers, from the Soil Temperature web page at:

<http://www.plainscotton.org/weatherdata/index.php>

☛ Regarding cotton planting and other related biological happenings, **Heat Unit (HU) Accumulations** for this upcoming season have begun, although minimal at this time. We have accumulated approximately 25 HU's to date (using **60°F** as the baseline). HU's will be tracked this season in two ways in this newsletter. Total general HU's for the calendar year will be tracked as they affect all animal and plant species common to this areas growing season in some way. Specific cotton heat units (CHU's) related to cotton plant development, specifically, will also be tracked beginning on or about May 1 to better parallel the local cotton crop developmental stages.

☛ **Pink Bollworm (PBW)** trapping will be

initiated in Crosby and Floyd Counties in 2005, with continuation of trapping for bollworm, budworm and beet armyworm. PBW seem to be threatening on our territory more each year. Trapping will be in conjunction with a study that **Andy Cramner**, EA-IPM Gaines County, is conducting this year, sponsored by Texas Department of Agriculture. PBW is responsible for a large portion of boll damage annually and, it has been said, may become the pest that replaces the Boll Weevil on the High Plains. They are already responsible for a large portion of insect control costs with some Gaines County fields requiring in excess of ten insecticide applications for control in 2004. The use of Bollgard® varieties is the most cost-effective and efficacious control measure, but the required 'refuge' acres must still be controlled with conventional pesticide applications. More on this as the season progresses.

☛ **BEE PREPARED** - Honey bees are on the move again. There have been four reports of bee swarms and/or invasive hive establishment in Ralls this week. As the weather becomes more favorable, we must be aware of increased movement. Last year was a record for phone inquiries and reports to this office regarding swarms of feral or wild bees. Due to the frequent incidence of feral swarms and extremely favorable conditions for development in 2004, we can only expect increased activity this year. Should you contact a swarm, proceed with caution and leave the area, especially if sensitivity exists to bee venom. Young children and pets should be monitored closely when outside or around out-buildings to prevent stinging incidents. Swarming bees may establish nesting sites at any time if a suitable shelter is found, including sheds, barbecue pits, motor boats, water meter boxes, vacant houses, old tires, etc. Most bees will not be as aggressive when swarming and foraging, however, should a nesting site be established with brood (young) contained within, even the normally docile European honey bees may become extremely aggressive. The risk is increased drastically with the presence of Africanized bees, either a pure strain, or those European bees that have 'Africanized' traits from cross-breeding with other feral colonies. There are several Pest Control service operators in Lubbock that may be contacted for bee control in a structure and

there are only two individuals in this area that remove bees from an outside area. Contact this office to report nuisance swarms or hives; corresponding contact information for pest control entities will be provided.

☛ The **Crosby/Floyd IPM (CFIPM) Steering Committee** met this week for our first of two annual meetings. The scouting portion of the program will begin in earnest on June 1 with the annual Scout School held at the Ollie Liner Center in Plainview. The IPM Program will be operated, as in the past, with the only change being the increased acre fee for the 2005 season of \$5.50 for all commodities including cotton, pumpkins, grain sorghum, sunflowers, etc. This slight rise in price is the first in five years and is to help alleviate the rise in fuel costs that have been experienced. ☛ We hope to scout at least 3,000 acres this year, and, as before, do not wish to be viewed as competing with private consultants. CFIPM is primarily an educational entity responsible for helping to train farmers and field scouts in the appropriate methods of Integrated Pest Management. The scouting service is utilized as one of the training tools by enhancing Texas Cooperative Extension's knowledge base to allow dissemination of appropriate control methods for pests that are currently problematic. Also, it is our responsibility to conduct field result demonstrations to further clientele knowledge regarding research performed locally in practice of all aspects of Integrated Pest Management. We welcome all interested producers into the program no matter the farm size or location within the two county area.

☛ Please call or e-mail this office with any questions regarding subject matter and/or comments to improve the services provided by Texas Cooperative Extension to further help serve the clientele of this area.

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