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# Gaines County Cotton/Peanut News

June 16, 2004  
Vol. 1 No. 2

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## Survey Program

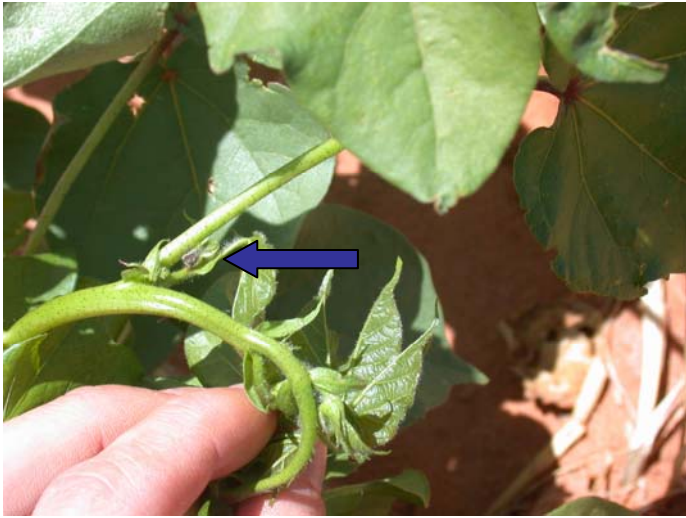
The scouting program is designed so that the IPM agent can become familiar with what is taking place around the county by actually being out in the fields. We are looking at 2820 acres that are spread out over the entire county (cotton: 1860, peanut: 960). Fields were chosen in specific areas so that there would be equal representation from each area in the county.

The funding for the program was given in the form of donations from many of the local businesses. A list of those businesses is located at the end of this newsletter. Without the support and donations from these establishments the success of this program would be limited.

## General Situation

Conditions in our area continue to be hot and dry with little rain forecast for the future. Cotton is growing at a steady pace due to the number of heat units it is receiving. Cotton across the county varies in growth stage from 1-2 true-leaves (TL) to the match head size squares. Sand storms last month caused major damage to young cotton with quite a few acres on the edges of some fields being replanted; this is where we are seeing the younger 1-2 TL cotton. The older cotton seems to be recovering fine with the new growth and squares looking good. Growers need to remember the stress that the cotton has gone through due to the heat and wind when examining fruiting positions. Fruiting positions can be lost due to factors other than insects, and it is very important to investigate what is actually causing the square loss so you do not spend money where you do not need to. Cottons' main goal in life is to live, not to make you lots of money. Cotton is a selfish plant; many plants put their energy into reproductive parts such as the development of the seed (fruit) to ensure that new plants survive to grow at another time. Not cotton, it

sheds its fruit so that it will continue to survive.



Blasted Cotton Square

Beneficial numbers in cotton are high with many lady beetle adults and larvae being found along with big eyed bugs. A handout on identification of beneficial insects can be obtained through out office.

Peanut are continuing to grow and make progress despite the extremely high temperatures. Fields we are looking at are in the bloom stage with pegging beginning in a few fields this week. Daily water use for peanut depends on climatic conditions and the plants' developmental stage. Under normal conditions daily water use varies from **0.10** to **0.25** inch per day and during periods of unusually hot, dry, windy weather it may use up to **0.35** inch per day. Total amount of water per season required for maximum yields in Texas ranges from **20** to **28** inches.

## What's Happening in the Cotton

### Thrips:

Fields that were replanted and those fields that have not reached 5-6 TL still need to be monitored for thrips. Fields that were treated with at-planting systemic insecticides are showing signs that the residual effectiveness is declining. These fields need to be monitored closely as heavy infestations may destroy terminal buds resulting in stunted growth and yield reductions. Treatment is advised when the number of thrips averages 1 or more per true-leaf present. **\*Be careful when**

**scouting as thrips damage and wind damage are often confused with each other.**

### Fleahopper:



The weeds that were so prevalent early season have dried up and are not quite such an attractive host to our plant bugs. This does not mean that they are not here. Cotton is in the squaring stage across the entire county and everyone needs to be monitoring for fleahoppers and *Lygus*. We are finding fleahoppers in local fields but numbers have all been below economic threshold levels. Adult fleahoppers are about 1/8 inch long and pale green. Nymphs resemble adults but lack wings and are light green, and they both move very rapidly when disturbed. Fleahopper adults and nymphs suck sap from the tender portion of the plant, including small squares and terminals. Pinhead size and smaller squares are most susceptible to damage. **During the first week of squaring, the economic threshold is 25 to 30 cotton fleahoppers per 100 terminals combined with less than 90 percent square set. In the second week of squaring, the economic threshold is 25 to 30 cotton fleahoppers per 100 terminals combined with less than 85 percent square set. Starting with the third week of squaring up to first bloom, the economic threshold is 25 to 30 cotton fleahoppers per 100 terminals combined with less than 75 percent square set.** We are currently seeing some fields that have blasted squares which may not be insect related but environmentally induced (wind and sand damage). So please, scout your fields carefully for this pest and base treatments on actual populations and not just square damage.

### *Lygus*:

*Lygus* numbers will also need to be monitored closely as this pest can damage squares of all stages and young bolls. Adult *lygus* are 1/4 inch long, have a conspicuous triangle in the center of the back, are winged and vary in color from pale green

to yellowish brown with reddish brown to black markings. Immature *lygus* bugs are called nymphs and are uniformly pale green with red-tipped antennae; late instars have four conspicuous black spots on the thorax and one large black spot near the base of the abdomen. The nymph's wings are not developed, but nymphs can move rapidly and are difficult to detect in cotton foliage. **During the first week of squaring, the economic threshold is 1 *lygus* bug adult or nymph per three feet of row combined with less than 90 percent square set. In the second week of squaring, the economic threshold is 1 *lygus* bug adult or nymph per three feet of row combined with less than 85 percent square set.** In early April we conducted a survey of the common roadside weeds in Gaines County. Another survey was conducted last week on the now common roadside weeds. The surveys were conducted using a standard sweepnet. The table below provides the numbers of *Lygus* and stink bugs caught last week. This does not necessarily mean numbers are still this high or that they will be a threat to the cotton crop.

County Location	# Sweeps	Weed Host	<i>Lygus</i>	Stink Bug
North	200	Alfalfa	20	5
North	100	Sunflower	0	2
NE	200	R.Thistle	3	11
NE	100	Alfalfa	5	10
NW	200	Sunflower	16	1
NW	100	Alfalfa	7	3
South	200	Sunflower	0	1
SW	100	Sunflower	0	0
SW	100	R. Thistle	0	0

**Pink Bollworm:**

Another pest we have been monitoring is the Pink bollworm. Moth traps are set up at 8 different locations across the county. Locations were chosen on last year's late season trap data obtained from the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation. Areas that experienced the greatest numbers were targeted and we have been monitoring them for early emergence. Fields that are currently squaring are susceptible to early infestation establishment. One measure to consider in breaking this cycle is to spray a pyrethroid twice early season, at 1<sup>st</sup> square and then again 7 days later. This should be based on trap

catches and in-field inspections. If the problem is not taken care of early a long battle could ensue. This and more information on the Pink bollworm can be found by accessing Dr. Lesers current issues of Focus on Entomology at: <http://lubbock.tamu.edu/focus/> under **2004 issues** and **Pink bollworm tips I and II**. Managing for Pink bollworm should be done by placing pheromone traps in fields at seedling emergence and monitored at least weekly until the 4- to 5-leaf stage, then daily until the 1/3- grown square stage. **If more than 5 moths are caught per trap per night at the pinhead square stage, insecticides or pheromone mating disruption products or a combination should be applied.** The following table depicts numbers of pink bollworm captured per day. Traps were set on April 15 and there were no moths captured on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April. Locations of the traps are as follows in each section of Gaines County.

A: NW            B: N            C: NE  
D: SW            E: S            F: SE

Trap	4/22	4/29	5/7	5/14	5/20	5/27	6/3	6/8	6/15
A1	0	0	2	3	10	135	89	3	4
A2	0	3	1	36	20	93	138	8	55
B1	0	0	0	12	18	30	11	5	13
B2	0	0	0	16	8	71	43	0	3
C	0	1	2	3	4	688	21	5	27
D	0	1	18	106	26	125	135	6	13
E	0	2	1	12	12	103	95	4	12
F	0	0	1	10	21	*	52	1	23
Total	0	7	25	198	117	629	504	31	150

Copies of Texas Cooperative Extension cotton guides *Managing Insects in Cotton* as well as *Suggested Cotton Insecticides* are available in the office or can be e-mailed. If interested call the office or e-mail your request to [amcranmer@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:amcranmer@ag.tamu.edu)

**What We are Seeing in Peanut**

**Thrips:**

Populations are currently at low levels in most fields locally. In peanuts, thrips feed in the terminal leaf clusters between the folds of the young leaflets. The damage they cause is dwarfing and

malformation of the leaves. This type of injury normally occurs during the first month after plant emergence. It has been documented that in other peanut growing regions of Texas that thrips feeding damage does not significantly affect yields or grades. Young peanut plants (35 days or less) have repeatedly been shown to tolerate over 75% defoliation without yield reduction or delay in maturity.

Below ground we are seeing mostly healthy root systems with some fields beginning to peg. We are still seeing some root pruning which we have linked to pre emergent herbicide injury, but nothing too severe. We are also seeing wire worms in fields that were rotated out of cotton. These worms are not causing any damage. A few grubs have also been found but with the hot dry conditions they are not surviving long enough to do any damage. It is important to scout behind the pivot as well as in front to get a feel for the entire field as many of the soil inhabiting insects prefer moist conditions.

## Acknowledgements

Since growers are no longer asked to pay for this service, funding for the program was raised from donations from agribusinesses supporting the producer. It takes around \$15,000 dollars to run the program with money going towards postage, travel, and salary for interns who help with the scouting. We are still in need of funding so if you do not see someone on the list you think would be interested in donating please contact them or call our office so we might be able to.

The IPM staff would like to **thank** these businesses that donated to the program and encourage producers to support their business as they have supported the producers.

**VIP**  
**Baucum Insurance**  
**Nolen Ag**  
**Agriliance**  
**Ag Texas**  
**Five Points Gin**  
**Stateline Gin**  
**UAP Southwest**  
**Western Peanut Growers Association**

**AG Aero**  
**Farm Bureau**  
**State Farm**  
**South Plains Implement**  
**West Texas National Bank**  
**Whittenburg Insurance**  
**Moore-Haralson Agency**  
**Pioneer Gin**  
**Wilco Peanuts**  
**Eddins Walcher**

## Special Thanks to our \$1000 Contributors

**Ocho Gin**  
**Oasis Gin**  
**Tricounty Producers Co-op**

\*If for some reason a name was left off of this list or if your company would like to donate to the program please contact our office.

## Newsletter by E-Mail

To assist in reducing costs, if you have internet access please provide your e-mail address and we will e-mail the newsletter to you in the future. You can call the office or e-mail your request to me at: [amcranmer@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:amcranmer@ag.tamu.edu) Benefits of having your newsletter sent through e-mail are: pictures and graphs will be in color, easy to store on your computer, no papers to mess with, click-able links to other internet sites, and sooner access. If you are not sure how to use e-mail but have access to a computer give us a call and we will help you.

**Andy Cranmer EA-IPM**  
**101 S. Main Rm B-8**  
**Gaines County Courthouse**  
**Seminole, TX. 79360**  
**Phone: 432-758-8193**  
**Fax: 432-758-4031**  
[amcranmer@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:amcranmer@ag.tamu.edu)

**Connie Lambert Secretary**  
[clambert@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:clambert@ag.tamu.edu)

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