

Plains Pest Management Newsletter

News About Integrated Pest Management in Hale & Swisher Counties

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COTTON

High winds (60 mph +) this past Saturday caused additional damage to some of our remaining cotton fields. In some cases plants were “burnt” black by the blowing sand. Much of our cotton has been replanted to sorghum, corn, soybean and sunflower. Some of these fields may be subject to damage from residual herbicides used in cotton, but lets hope for the best.

Almost all remaining cotton is now squaring. Fields that were protected from high wind and blowing sand now have large squares at about the “½ grown” stage. First blooms are generally observed from July 4 to July 12 in Hale Co. And July 9 to July 17 in Swisher Co. This year we expect this to be delayed by seven to ten days due to the detrimental weather we have experienced over the past month.

Beet armyworm trap collections remain below 100 per week with 93 per seven day period being our highest trap collection.

Cotton bollworm trap collections are averaging around 100 moths per week, with the higher moth collections adjacent to corn.

Cotton fleahoppers have been observed in a number of area fields and will likely increase as we move into the 2nd and 3rd week of squaring. Percent square set has been low in a number of our area fields, but in many cases this can be attributed to the recent blowing sand.

Cotton aphids continue to be found in area fields, but in general remain very light.

Cotton boll weevil traps collections also remain very low at this time. Wes Jones, Manager of our zone indicated to me on Monday, June 30 the Foundation had collected 10 weevils in traps up to this date. This is outstanding and could mean that we are on the way to functional eradication earlier than expected.

BLACK BEETLES

A small black beetle has been very abundant in some of our area fields such as cotton, sunflower and cucumbers. Young sunflower and cucumbers have been reported to have stand reduction due to this small (1/4 inch) black beetle. In most cases cotton has been mature enough to stand moderate populations of this beetle. The beetle is thought to be a Tenebrionid, also known as the darkling beetle family, based on its tarsal formula. I believe this could be the adult stage of the false wireworm which damaged some cotton stands earlier in the season. Generally this beetle has been found in high numbers where a significant amount of crop residue existed, such as sorghum, wheat or corn. Sample specimens have been mailed to Ed Riley at TAMU for taxonomic identification.

SORGHUM

Many acres have now been planted to early maturity sorghum. So far these fields are in the early whorl stage and have not experience pest infestations. On earlier plated sorghum corn leaf aphids can be found feeding in the whorl. Also corn earworms have been found in the whorl, but infestations remain low at this time.

CORN

Collections of southwestern corn borers in area traps remain very low this past week. In field populations range from 2nd to 5th instar larvae, with a few starting to pupate. Most infestations are confined to field margins in non-BT corn, but decline to almost non-detectable as one moves to the field interior.

Corn earworm infestations are light to moderate in whorl stage corn and heavy in silking corn. Our earliest corn is now in the brown silk stage with earworms up to ½ inch in length. Spider mite and European corn borer infestations are very light at this time. The spider mite situation can change rapidly once corn reaches the reproductive stage and hot dry conditions are experienced. Collections of European corn borers in area traps remain low with 6 per seven day period being the most caught.

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