

Plains Pest Management Newsletter

News About Integrated Pest Management in Hale & Swisher Counties

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GENERAL

Thunderstorms moved across southern Swisher and most of Hale County on July 6. Rainfall amounts reported ranged from a few tenths to 2 inches. Some hail damage was reported with the storms, but I have not heard the extent of damage on area crops.

COTTON

Cotton began blooming in early planted cotton on July 3 based on observations in IPM program fields. Fields were reported in the area with two blooms per plants on July 6. We should see many more fields entering the bloom stage by this time next week. Our late planted and replanted cotton is now entering the 1st square stage.

Fleahoppers and Lygus bugs continue to be found in most area cotton, but square sets remain above 80%. The majority of fields have had 92 to 97% square set, which is excellent. Most of our square losses have been located at the lower fruit nodes and have generally been attributed to high winds and blowing sand. Now that many of our cotton fields are 12 to 15 inches tall, they will be safe from blowing sand.

Cotton bollworms have also been found in cotton this past week. Counts have been far below treatment thresholds. Cotton bollworm traps collections have been up this past week with one trap collecting over 280 moths for a

one day period on July 6. Most of the egg laying by the bollworm (corn earworm) has been associated with corn as it enters the silk stage and with sorghum in the whorl stage. Even with this said, cotton will be more attractive to bollworm this year with optimum growth and healthy non-stressed plants.

Some applications of plant growth regulators have been made to cotton this past week to control growth. Dr. Randy Boman, Cotton Agronomist, has provided an excellent review of these products in the Focus issued July 2. It can be found on the TAMU Lubbock website at <http://lubbock.edu/cotton>.

Mepiquat chloride under the trade names Pix®, Mepex® and Mepichlor® have been available in this area. Pix Plus® has Bacillus cereus added which may increase plant uptake. Pentia® is a closely related product containing mepiquat pentaborate. Mepex Gin Out® is a product with Kinetin a cytokinin plant hormone added to the mepiquat.

These products have been promoted for earliness, fruit retention, increased yield and reduction in plant height. In general yield increases and yield decreases have been +10% to -10% and generally have little impact on yield when averaged over several test. These products have been very useful for regulating plant height. Dr. Boman has indicated that plant height can be reduced from 5 to 15% with these products. This can be very useful after periods of high rainfall or heavy irrigations. Once cotton enters the squaring stage mepiquat can be considered for regulation of internode lengths

on the main stem. Measure the uppermost 5 nodes down from the terminal and if the average internode length is 1.5 to 1.8 inches, the 4 to 8 oz/acre is suggested. For average internode length greater than 1.8 inches, then 8 to 16 oz. are suggested. Cotton variety and growth potential can greatly influence decisions for use of mepiquat. The optimum plant size for a roll header stripper is 28 to 32 inches tall. If a plant height exceeds 36 inches harvest efficiency and productivity may drop significantly.

Chaperone ® is another new product being promoted. It is a protein transport enhancer. Significant yield increases have been reported in the Costal Bend area of Texas. Dr. Boman and others will be evaluating this product on the High Plains this year. The significant yield increases reported were with 10 to 20 oz/acre rates. We are not sure how this product will perform in this region of Texas until evaluations have been completed.

CORN

Most fields are now in the silking stage, with early planted corn in the blister stage. Southwestern corn borers began to be collected in traps again on July 5. This means we are on the front end of emergence for 1st generation moths which will lay 2nd generation eggs. No egg lays have been observed in corn this past week.

Banks grass mite populations have collapsed and are very difficult to find at this time. If hot dry weather conditions return they could reinfest rapidly.

Corn earworm eggs and small larvae have been commonly found on green silks this past week.

SORGHUM

Corn leaf aphids infesting sorghum in the whorl stage have been moderate to heavy. These aphids are considered a good food source for beneficials and commercial sorghum rarely requires treatment. Some seed production female lines are sensitive to this pest and may be damaged. Seed company representatives can provide insight for potential damage to various lines based on performance history.

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