

Plains Pest Management Newsletter

News About Integrated Pest Management in Hale & Swisher Counties

Greg Cronholm ★ Extension Agent - IPM ★ 122 East 6th Plainview Texas ★ (806) 291-5274

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COTTON

Recent rains have provided relief from irrigation schedules. Rainfall amounts reported ranged from 1.1 to 3.8 inches. Much of our area had at least 2 inches of rainfall. With the heavy rainfall many growers have turned to plant growth regulators, such as mepiquat. In areas of excess rainfall, higher rates of mepiquat may be needed to stop excessive growth. Fields that have reached “cut out”, are not usually in danger of this growth, since moisture and nutrients are being used to complete boll development. Nodes above white bloom have ranged from 1 to 6, this past week with many fields falling below 4 nodes. Boll sets have been excellent this year and the recent rain should help to retain many bolls that would have been shed. So far boll sheds have not been excessive, but will increase as cut out is reached and plants adjust fruit loads.

Cotton bollworm trap collections declined slightly over the previous weeks average. The following table is a summary of recent bollworm trap collections from the Edmonson area:

	Aug 2	Aug 11	Aug 18
Av no Moths/Night	52	86	65

Even though moth counts have declined, activity in cotton is on the increase. The reason is that 95% of corn fields are no longer attractive for egg lay and the moths have moved to other crops (cotton, sorghum, soybean). Bollworm egg lays have ranged from 0 to 45,000

per acre, with many fields averaging 2,000 to 5,000 per acre. Larval counts have ranged from 0 to 11,000 per acre. Most farms inspected have been below the 8,000 to 10,000 larvae per acre normally used as an economic threshold. Several growers have opted to treat bollworms where 4,000 to 5,000 larvae per acre have been reported, when they are already having a plant growth regulator applied. Many of the pyrethroids used in cotton are very cheap, therefore the extra \$3.00 per acre can be easily justified.

When making a decision to treat for bollworms, determine your cotton aphid populations prior to application. In years past we have not created a major aphid outbreak by a pyrethroid application when aphids are generally less than 1 aphid per leaf, but when counts exceed 5 per leaf a problem can develop rapidly once beneficials are eliminated by the pyrethroid. Every cotton field I have inspected has some aphids present and many fields still average less than one per leaf. Some of the heavier fields are up to 65 per leaf. The threshold for treatment generally ranges from 50 to 100 per leaf. Many factors must be considered before treating aphids such as plant growth stage, available moisture and numbers of beneficials such as lady beetles and lacewing larvae feeding in the colonies. When aphid control is needed Intruder, Centric, Trimax and Bidrin will provide effective control.

Fall armyworm larvae have been found feeding in red blooms and on small bolls. We do not have an economic threshold for this pest in Texas; but it is often lumped in with bollworms when counts are taken. In my observation it does not seem to cause as much boll damage as the cotton bollworm, but it does cause enough to be an economic pest.

CORN

Beet armyworms have been very light the past few weeks. Beneficials have helped to keep this pest in check. No pink bollworms have been reported by private consultants or field scouts in Hale or Swisher counties this past week.

Lygus nymph counts increased slightly this week, but in most cases, damage to bolls remains light. The economic threshold will be 2 per 3 row feet or higher if the majority of bolls have reached maturity.

SORGHUM

Corn earworms and fall armyworms have been on a gradual increase in milk to hard dough sorghum. Headworm counts have ranged from 0.1 to 1.5 per head. We have been working on new threshold tables for corn earworm feeding on sorghum heads. The following table is a preliminary estimation.

Economic injury level for corn earworm infestations at 5th instar expressed as number of larvae per acre.

Cost of Treatment	Grain Value		\$/CWT	
	3.00	3.50	4.00	5.00
6	21,000	18,000	16,000	13,000
8	28,000	24,000	21,000	17,000
10	35,000	30,000	26,000	21,000

Continue to scout for sorghum midge in blooming sorghum.

Corn ranges from late whorl (a few fields found in Swisher Co.) To 100% dent with the moisture line 65% down. Once corn reaches a stage where the moisture line is 65% down the Banks grass mites are no longer a concern. Banks grass mite damage has increased in a number of fields and has remained stable in others. This is probably related to mite predators in the field. In some fields mite populations have nearly crashed. Remember the damage is not reversible and that you will still see the damage even when the mites are no longer present. Dr. Pat Porter, Extension Entomologist just completed a mite control trial at Clovis, where he tested Comite, Oberon and Onager. He indicated that the new miticides Oberon and Onager performed very well and had long residual control.

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Greg Cronholm
Extension Agent - IPM
e-mail g-cronholm@tamu.edu
website <http://hale-tx.tamu.edu>
<http://lubbock.tamu.edu>

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