

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Newsletter
for the Row Crops in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

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PEST CAST



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GENERAL SITUATION: Finally, a whole week without rain. Of course, some folks have gone over two weeks without any significant rain and now irrigation of crops is well underway in those areas. But, for most area farms, this week of dry weather was welcomed. Boll weevil activity increased in many fields.

A REMINDER: DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE FIELD DAYS THAT WERE ANNOUNCED IN LAST WEEK'S PEST CAST. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!



Cotton fields all across the LRGV showed very good progress this week. Many fields had a number of small bolls and large flower and square loads. Maturation conditions were excellent this week. However, mepiquat chloride (MC) applications were increasing this week as cotton in many fields on both dryland and irrigated farms grew at increasing speed. Plant stem internode lengths ranged from 1 to 5.5 inches and growers were attempting to slow the growth in case more rain should come on to the scene. Most fields which had internode lengths of greater than 2 inches were being considered for treatment with MC this week. Some applications were made as early as 3 weeks ago, but most dryland growers seemed unwilling to commit to earlier applications of MC in fear that they would stop plant growth and that the plant would not recover. However, with all of the rain, many fields were growing too fast. Height measurements this week showed plants ranging from 5 inches with 7 true leaves to nearly 36 inches and blooming. Some cotton looked like typical June cotton this week instead of May cotton when height was considered.

Cotton fleahoppers were high enough in some fields to require spraying. Small, fleahopper blasted squares were obvious in some fields along with fleahopper counts which ranged from 0 to 40 per 100 plants. Most fields did not need any fleahopper control.

Boll weevils continued to make inroads in cotton fields this week. Increased numbers of fallen squares which had weevil grubs inside were found. Most fields only had spots along field margins where fallen squares with weevil grubs were found, but a small number of fields were going to need whole field treatments for weevils this week to keep damage under control.

Some fields where weevil punctured squares were found were in locations that have not seen weevils this early and at this level in several years. That scenario is likely to be repeated on many farms this year and thus I encourage growers to be vigilant and keep up with weevil activity when and wherever it can be found. More spraying for weevils is likely this year. The last few years of low numbers of weevils could leave producers unprepared for the need for earlier and heavier applications for weevils this year.

Bollworms remained very low to non-existent in most fields this week. A few scattered bollworm eggs were reported in fields, but most fields had neither eggs or worms. Continued monitoring is suggested.



Grain and corn fields across the area looked healthy and were maturing rapidly this week. Many heads of sorghum plants were turning from blooming-yellow color to gold to light brown this week. Grain is moving fast towards the point of harvest in the not-so-distant future. No insect problems were reported. Grain fields which may be just reaching blooming stage should be checked often for sorghum midge since their presence has likely reached levels at which damage to blooming sorghum could become economic. Check blooming sorghum fields very carefully from now on.

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