



*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

Another dry week in the LRGV. Most cotton appeared to be "ok" this week. Without rain, that could change rapidly. Wind damage cotton continued to be observed in many fields this week. Cotton stages ranging from cotyledon stage to some field that are in the 8<sup>th</sup> true leaf stage and squaring. Most fields are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> leaf stage. Grain sorghum needs moisture more so than cotton. The dry conditions are causing yield loss potential in some sorghum fields. Insect activity increased this week.

## BOLL WEEVIL

Extension boll weevil traps caught slightly less weevils this week. Trap captures are reported below.

Table 1. No. of Boll Weevils per trap per day.			
Field No.	Location	Week	
		April 4	April 11
1	Northeast Weslaco	3.04	1.17
2	East of Delta Lake	9.75	9.87
3	FM 490 & FM 2099	0.83	0.43
4	Harlingen Airport	7.5	2.97
5	Southeast of Rangerville	7.36	5.17

## OVERWINTERED BOLL WEEVIL SPRAYS

Timing is important in overwintered weevil sprays. Many fields have started to square or will begin squaring shortly. Check those fields now. Look for the oldest and largest plants in the field to ascertain whether squares are in the field. If the whole field is squaring before the first overwintered weevil application is made, the damage may already have been done.

## COTTON FLEAHOPPERS

Cotton fleahoppers were on the increase in some fields. Fleahopper numbers ranged from 0 in most fields to 35 per 100 plants in one field. The highest counts were in fields that had wild host plants which would normally support fleahoppers. These alternate host were drying up and causing the fleahoppers to move to the cotton plants. Below is an excerpt from the Texas Cooperative Extension publication number E-7, "Managing Cotton Insects in the Lower Rio Grande Valley 2005."

Adult fleahoppers are about 1/8-inch long and pale green. Nymphs resemble adults but lack wings and are light green. They move very rapidly when

disturbed. Adults move into cotton from host weeds when cotton begins to square. Both adults and nymphs suck sap from the tender portions of the plant, including small squares. Squares are susceptible to damage from the pinhead size through the 1/3-grown stage.

**Management and decision making.** After cotton begins producing the first small squares (4- to 6-leaf stage), examine the main stem terminal buds (about 3 to 4 inches of plant top) of 25 randomly selected plants at each of four or more locations across the field. **During the first 3 weeks of squaring, 15 to 25 cotton fleahoppers (nymphs and adults) per 100 terminals may cause economic damage.** As plants increase in size and fruit load, larger populations of fleahoppers may be tolerated without economic yield reduction. Care should be taken not to apply insecticides early in the blooming period as this will result in destruction of beneficial insects, possibly inducing an outbreak of bollworm and tobacco budworm.

**WORMS**

Worms at this time of the season are not uncommon, but generally do not cause any significant damage to the crop. But as with any pest, scouting each field on a routine basis will help to detect when, where and how many pests and beneficials may be present.

This week bollworm egg counts ranged from 0 to 1 per 100 plants, worms from 0 to 1 per 100 plants, and no square damage was found.

Beet armyworms were seen in a few fields this week in very low numbers. No “hits” were observed. No significant damage was noted.

Cabbage loopers and garden webworms were observed in very light numbers in scattered fields around the LRGV this week. Again, no significant damage was noted.

**COTTON APHIDS**

Cotton aphid numbers were low but increasing. Aphid infestations will likely increase for a while and growers are urged to keep checking their fields for the pests and beneficials to determine if any insecticide treatments will be required. Aphids tend to be found on the underside of leaves and in the terminals. Below is information regarding management decision for aphids, obtained from the Texas Cooperative Extension publication number E-7, “Managing Cotton Insects in the Lower Rio Grande Valley 2005.”

Fields should be scouted twice per week since rapid increases in aphid numbers can occur in a short time. A total of 60 leaves should be sampled from plants across the field to determine actual infestation levels. Insecticidal control of cotton aphids should be delayed until infestations exceed 50 aphids per leaf.

**THRIPS AND MITES**

Thrip populations are tapering off. Only a few fields have been reported that required insecticide treatments.

A few spider mites were observed in scattered fields. Continue to scout all fields for all pests as their status is changing daily.

Cotton Heat Unit Accumulation Table			
Planting Dates	Accum. H.U.	Planting Dates	Accum. H.U.
2/15	624	3/15	374
3/01	494	4/01	180

A special thanks to John Norman and Webb Wallis for their field reports this week.

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