



*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: Traces amounts of rain were reported throughout the LRGV during the early part of this week. The moisture seen was only enough to delay field operations for a few hours. The cotton plants are working hard to reach the subsoil moisture. Plants in which the tap root has reached the subsoil moisture have shown a dramatic increase in growth. However, this growth could be short lived unless the water source is replenished with a good rain. The valley could use a significant (two to three inches) rain. A majority of the cotton is in the 2nd to 9th true leaf stage. The very earliest planted fields are beginning to bloom. Sorghum is beginning to head out and some sorghum fields have begun to bloom as well.

Boll weevil numbers showed a decrease in many traps this week. On the other hand, boll weevil field activity increased this week. "Black leaf" or terminal leaves that have been chewed off by boll weevil were observed in several fields.

Table 1. No. of Boll Weevils per trap per day.

| Field No. | Location | Week | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | April 4 | April 11 | April 18 | April 25 |
| 1 | Northeast Weslaco | 3.04 | 1.17 | 2 | 0.38 |
| 2 | East of Delta Lake | 9.75 | 9.87 | 5.81 | 2.10 |
| 3 | FM 490 & FM 2099 | 0.83 | 0.43 | 0.2 | 0.10 |
| 4 | Harlingen Airport | 7.5 | 2.97 | 2.55 | 0.78 |
| 5 | SE of Rangerville | 7.36 | 5.17 | 4.93 | 0.62 |

Several cotton fields have been treated for fleahoppers. Fleahopper counts ranged from 0 to 33 per 100 plants. Blasted squares were obvious in several fields (possibly due to the drought stressed plants) even though fleahopper populations were relatively low. The economic threshold for cotton during the first three weeks of squaring is 15 to 25 fleahoppers per 100 plants. As the fields continue to mature it is important to determine the percentage of square set. As plants increase in size and fruit load, larger populations of fleahoppers may be tolerated without economic loss.

Aphid populations have decline during the last week in some fields. This could be due to the relatively high populations of beneficials (lady beetles and parasites) seen in the past few weeks.

On the other hand, worm activity has increased. Cabbage loopers and damaged leaves continue to be found throughout the valley. Loopers appear to be hanging on longer than usual and appear to be higher than what is normally seen this time of year. At this point there has been no economically damaging levels reported. Loopers should be monitored to make certain that they do not start causing terminal losses or major leaf damage that could inhibit normal plant maturation. No fields have been reportedly treated for loopers.

Beet armyworms are being reported in more fields. A few “hits” were observed in a couple of fields. One field that had a large number of “hits” had several characteristics (skippy, open canopies; drought stressed plants) of a high risk field. Beet armyworms are not classified as a major problem right now. Careful scouting of the fields will determine if fields should be treated with insecticides. Unnecessary use of insecticides during the early season could contribute to secondary pest problems.

Bollworms were more numerous in some fields this week. Some worms were observed in fields this week. Counts of worms ranged from 0 to 12 per 100 plants. Cotton square bore larvae were seen in very low numbers in a few fields this week..

| Cotton <u>H</u> eat <u>U</u> nit Accumulation Table | | | |
|---|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Planting Dates | Accum. H.U. | Planting Dates | Accum. H.U. |
| 2/15 | 817 | 3/15 | 567 |
| 3/01 | 686 | 4/01 | 373 |

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