

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

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PEST CAST

GENERAL SITUATION: Field conditions this week were mostly hot with a few scattered showers. Most of the rain was light with no serious impact- positive or negative- on grain sorghum or cotton fields. Some slow-down in grain harvesting in a few fields was the most concern for producers this week. Insect activity in cotton increased dramatically in many fields.

Boll Popin' Time



Bolls were opening in fields all across the LRGV this week. Most of the open bolls were in fields planted from February through late March. Even a few later planted fields were showing a few open bolls due to dry field conditions. Defoliation will commence in some fields starting next week and increase rapidly thereafter.

Tough Times Ahead for Late Maturing Fields

Late planted fields, especially those which had started to grow very tall plants and had rapidly increasing insect pests will be hard pressed to keep a balance between net returns in dollars and insecticide costs before this season is completed. Boll weevils, especially, were building fast this week and pose a serious threat to later maturing cotton fields. Late maturing cotton needs to be pushed hard to protect the fruit that are present on the plants since time is running out for boll maturation before the stalk destruction deadline of September 1st. Blooms this week could be mature bolls by the middle of August. So, watch those fields closely; time is short.

Boll Weevil Rush

Boll weevils made major headway in many fields this starting late last week through this week. Rainy, cooler night time temperatures made cotton ground cooler, cotton grew much taller and weevils began moving wholesale from field to field in search of new food and reproductive sites. Red weevils, sometimes as many as three per bloom were found in some fields this week. Many fields in different locations went on 3 day spray intervals trying to control weevils. While many fields had reach full maturity and were not threatened by weevils, most others will need protection from weevils for another two to three weeks. Weevils were puncturing all fruit forms from squares to blooms to small bolls. Punctured square counts ranged from 1 to 50 per 100 plants.

Beneficials Running Short

Beneficials such as spiders, pirate bugs and lady beetles were in short supply this week. Weevil sprayings, primarily, were reducing natural enemies of various pests and allowing secondary pests to become serious threats to yield and or fiber quality this week. Monitoring fields for boll weevils means also looking out for secondary pests like aphids and beet armyworms.

Beet Armyworms, Now

Beet armyworms (BAW) were on the move and required spraying in a number of fields in the central Cameron county area this week. The worst of the need for BAW control appeared to be in fields which have had the highest boll weevil counts and sprayings. Even in fields which had only trims along field margins for the last several weeks had BAW in the field margins where the weevil sprays were the heaviest. BAW hits (egg mass hatches) ranged in number from 0 to 6 per 100 feet of row. BAW worm numbers surviving from the hits ranged from only 1 to over 5 per hit. Damage to leaves and small fruit was obvious in some fields and less so in others where the heavier BAW infestations were observed.

Bollworms Low

Bollworm activity remained very light in all reported field counts this week. Bollworm counts ranged from 0 to 3 per 100 plants. Egg counts ranged from 0 to 5 per 100 plants. So much pyrethroid was in use for weevils that bollworm numbers were expected to remain light, at least for now.



Aphids and Mites Increased

Aphids and spider mites were noted to be increased in fields where weevil treatments were highest, like with BAW. Aphids and mites required insecticidal treatment to gain control this week. Aphid counts ranged from none to heavy with large amounts of honey dew present on lower leaves. Spider mites ranged from none to extremely heavy with large amounts of webbing and some leaf dessication.

Creos Still Pestering Cotton

Creontiades (creos) were easily found the closer to the coast cotton fields were this week. More small to large

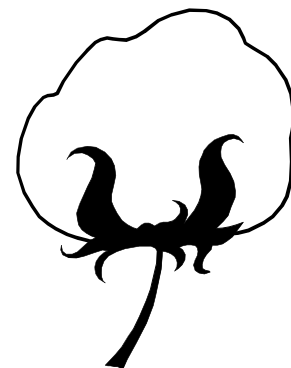
squares and small bolls were under attack, but still, the potential loss from creos was far less than that by actual loss to boll weevils this week.

Sorghum Midge In Large Numbers

Sorghum midge populations were huge in blooming sorghum this week. Where insecticide applications were made for midge, control appeared to be working because fewer midge were observed. In case a field of sorghum has begun to bloom and it has not been checked in the past few days since it started blooming, check it now for midge.

| Planting Dates | Accum. H.U. | Planting Dates | Accum. H.U. |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 2/15----- | 2350 | 3/15----- | 2186 |
| 3/01----- | 2318 | 4/01----- | 2031 |

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Rio Farms, Inc.

Trap Line Data - 2003 - Boll Weevils per trap per day

| Trap Lines | July 1 | July 8 | July 22 | July 29 | |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--|
| Taco Baja | n/a | n/a | n/a | 0.00 | |
| Edinburg Area | | | | | |
| KURV | 4.93 | | | | |
| Hans | 0.33 | | | | |
| Fike Home | 0.64 | | | | |
| Hill | 0.21 | | | | |
| Bobby | 0.79 | | | | |
| Seminary Rd. | 5.42 | | | | |
| Delta Area | | | | | |
| L V-N. Sugar Mill | 0.29 | | | | |
| La Sara | 1.74 | | | | |
| MA North | 2.91 | | | | |
| MA S. West | 2.76 | | | | |
| Hargil | 0.91 | | | | |
| DL South | 1.91 | | | | |
| KSOX - E. DL | 2.95 | | | | |
| Raymondville Area | | | | | |
| Ray West | 1.31 | | | | |
| Ray East | 2.00 | | | | |
| Southmost Area | | | | | |
| Florida | 0.12 | | | | |
| Docberry | 0.26 | | | | |
| Alaska | 0.88 | | | | |
| Arkansas | 2.02 | | | | |
| S. Oklahoma | n/a | | | | |
| Santa Rosa Area | | | | | |
| Peterman | n/a | | | | |
| Santa Rosa | n/a | | | | |
| Dillan | n/a | | | | |
| River | n/a | | | | |

Rio Farms, Inc.

Trap Line Data - 2003 - Boll Weevils per trap per day

| Trap Lines | July 1 | July 8 | July 15 | July 22 | July 29 |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Progreso Area | | | | | |
| Nogales | 0.00 | | | | |
| Las Palomas | 0.86 | | | | |
| Santa Anna | 1.45 | | | | |
| Las Milpas | 0.14 | | | | |
| Progreso Gin | 4.62 | | | | |
| Bridge | 0.91 | | | | |
| Sebastian Area | | | | | |
| Armandice | n/a | | | | |
| Santa Rosa Lake | n/a | | | | |
| Rio Hondo Area | | | | | |
| Airport | 0.41 | | | | |
| Parker Rd. | 0.10 | | | | |
| Paredes Line Rd. | 0.19 | | | | |
| 777 | 0.07 | | | | |
| Mercedes Area | | | | | |
| Valley Acres Lake | 0.53 | | | | |
| SRS - HQ | 0.95 | | | | |
| Ross | n/a | | | | |
| Rangerville Area | | | | | |
| Turner Rd. | n/a | | | | |
| Tanimachi | n/a | | | | |
| Chinaberry Rd. | n/a | | | | |
| McCook Area | | | | | |
| Davis | n/a | | | | |
| Citrico | 4.48 | | | | |
| Wells | 4.29 | | | | |
| Starr County | | | | | |
| Starcco | 0.07 | | | | |
| La Casita | 0.67 | | | | |
| Los Puertos | 1.57 | | | | |