

# PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS

**NEWS ABOUT INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT FOR  
PRODUCERS IN RUNNELS-TOM GREEN COUNTIES**

Richard Minzenmayer  
Extension Agent-IPM  
613 Hutchins Ave, Room 302  
Ballinger, Tx 76821  
Phone (325) 365-5212 Fax (365) 365-5212

November 11, 2003

Vol. XVI No.18

E-mail: [r-minzenmayer@tamu.edu](mailto:r-minzenmayer@tamu.edu)

Website: <http://ipm.tamu.edu>

Mobile (325) 365-1292

## GENERAL SITUATION

Temperatures have definitely cooled down and the Concho Valley has been blessed with some additional moisture. The cool wet weather is just what the doctor ordered for wheat farmers but cotton farmers could have used another couple of weeks of warm dry weather. On the other hand, cotton has really progressed the past several weeks and, generally, early indications show a slightly higher yield than was originally expected. Looking on the bright side, the cotton market is great right now. Hopefully, it will stay up and lint yields will stay above average.

## WHEAT

This is one of the best wheat crops I have seen in a long time. Armyworms and greenbugs have been a problem in many areas and fields have been treated for one or both of these pests in Tom Green, Concho, Runnels and Coke Counties. I have received several calls this week from producers in Coleman County asking about armyworms as well. If the wheat is old enough and has an adequate root system, producers can reduce insect populations by grazing. Do not graze wheat until the secondary root system has developed enough to anchor the plant. Grazing is a proven and a well-recognized practice for reducing greenbug populations.



It's a little different situation for armyworms. They can take out a wheat field in a short period of time. A good hard freeze will eliminate the armyworm problems and cool weather will certainly slow down their feeding. If armyworm larval numbers exceed 4-5 larvae per square foot and seedling stand loss or foliage loss on older plants is evident, control measures are recommended. Lorsban® at 1 pint per acre has been doing an excellent job of controlling both armyworms and greenbugs. If greenbugs are the only problem, then Dimethoate would be a good choice. The economic threshold for greenbugs in wheat three to six inches tall, is 100 to 300 greenbugs per linear foot. But keep in mind, populations of 25 to 50 greenbugs per foot in very young wheat may warrant treatment.

With the excellent soil moisture we have now, weeds are doing quite well. Broadleaf weed control may already be needed on some of the early planted fields. If you are planning on using a hormone herbicide such as 2,4-D to control the broadleaf weeds, be sure and read the label for information on application timing. Most of the 2,4-D labels indicate that the wheat needs to be past the tillering stage before applying the herbicide. You may need to switch to some other class of herbicide if you need to spray now. Others would include Ally®, Amber®, Glean®, Finesse® as well as some others. Remember, each of these products vary on crop rotation requirements so read the label carefully before applying the herbicide.

## COTTON

Cotton harvest has begun on some dryland fields and many of the irrigated cotton fields have been defoliated. Once the weather clears, producers will begin cotton harvesting operations in a big way. Regrowth has been a challenge this year in many fields. It is getting a little easier to remove the juvenile growth the later we get into the season. Gramoxone® Max will not do it by itself. It's best to tank mix 4-5 oz. of Ginstar® or 1 ounce of Aim® per acre with the Gramoxone® Max. This "mix" will do a better job of preparing crop for harvest. Increasing rates of Gramoxone® Max will only freeze more leaves on the plant. A light rate of paraquat 2-3 oz. per acre with the addition of ethephon (Prep®) has done a good job of dropping some leaves and opening up those upper bolls. I would wait until the field is at least 65-70% open before beginning with the harvest aides. Give me a call if you have any questions.

Boll weevil trap catches have increased significantly over the past several weeks on our western edge and the TBWF is currently spraying several thousand acres of cotton. This migration of weevils from the west is not only costing the SRP cotton producers but also the two zones north of St. Lawrence. A good hard freeze would be very beneficial right now to help reduce the cost of this problem.

According to Roger Haldenby, Editor of PCG Email Services, "Weevils from the St. Lawrence area and other parts of Glasscock county not involved in active eradication have moved into the edges of the Permian Basin Boll Weevil Eradication Zone, as well at the Rolling Plains Central Zone and Southern Rolling Plains Zone."

"The cost to growers in the three eradication zones being effected by migrating boll weevils is amounting to millions of dollars. The latest report from Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation shows 309,562 acres were treated in these three zones in the week ending November 2. The same report shows that 1,951,667 cumulative acres have been treated in the Permian Basin alone this season."

"At an estimated average treatment cost per acre between \$3.25 and \$3.50, it can be easily surmised that over a million dollars has been spent in just one week by the three zones combating an expensive insurgence of weevils from St. Lawrence."

"The Southern Rolling Plains Zone was declared functionally eradicated of boll weevil in September 2000. No weevils were caught in 2001 but apparently a few snuck in from St. Lawrence, which is West of the zone, during 2002. SRP Zone recently celebrated becoming debt-free but now faces mounting costs to maintain their eradicated status."



**PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION  
TRAINING**

On December 3, a five-hour CEU course will be held at the Methodist Hall in Menard. This training is being hosted by Texas Cooperative Extension and the Texas Department of Agriculture. The target audience is Ag Producers and Home Owners. For more details and to register for the meeting call Billy Kniffen at 325-396-4787.

On December 10, an SPCB/TDA Conference will be held at the Abilene Civic Center. This training is being hosted by the City of Abilene, Texas Cooperative Extension, and the Texas Department of Agriculture. The target audience is Landscape/Turf. For more details and to register for the meeting call Gary Bomar at 325-672-6048.

On December 11, a five-hour CEU course will be held at the Texas A&M Agricultural Research and Extension Center in San Angelo. This training is being hosted by the Texas Department of Agriculture and Texas Cooperative Extension. The target audience is Right-of-Way certified applicators. For more details and to register for the meeting call Cain Cline at 210-820-0288.

On December 12, a three-hour course will be conducted by Texas Cooperative Extension Offices of Coleman, Concho and Runnels Counties in Coleman County. The target audience is owners of Rangeland. For more details and to register for the meeting call Lance Rasch at 325-625-4519.

On December 17, a five-hour course will be held at the Taylor County Extension Office. This training is being hosted by Texas Cooperative Extension and the Texas Department of Agriculture. The target audience is Ag Producers and Home Owners. For more details and to register for the meeting call Gary Bomar at 325-672-6048.

**COTTON MARKET COMMENTS**

By Dr. Carl G Anderson  
Professor & Extension Economist  
Cotton Marketing

**World Stocks Tight Despite Larger U.S. Crop  
October 13, 2003**

World cotton stocks are fairly tight despite an unexpected surge of a 620,000 bale increase in the USDA estimate of the U.S. crop during the last month. The market responded with December '03 futures reaching a new high of 71.54 cents per pound on October 10, 2003.

Evidently the market is concerned that the crop in China will likely decline below the USDA's estimate of 25.5 million bales, the same as in September. Reports suggest late season wet, cold weather has reduced the crop by a million or two bales in the last month. Therefore, China buyers are expected to purchase a considerable 1.5 to 2.0 million bales from the U.S. during the 2003/04 season. By October, they had purchased a little more than 100,000 bales.

With December futures already above 70 cents, futures prices for March, May and July may reach the high 70-cent level this season. That would be higher than expected before reports surfaced, indicating a much reduced crop in China compared to projected use of 30.4 million bales.

The USDA projections raised the U.S. crop to 620,000 bales mainly because of improved yields in the Delta. A 17.56-million bale U.S. crop compares to 16.94 last season, the largest since 20.30 million in 2001/02. Severe weather had reduced this year's crop – mostly in Texas – by at least 1.5 million bales from potential production.

Domestic mill use slipped another 200,000 bales to 6.4 million, down from 11.4 in 1997 and the lowest since 5.4 million in 1984. With the downsizing of the U.S. textile industry, U.S. cotton growers have the capacity to exceed fiber production needed for U.S. mills and exports by a large margin.

The result of possible too much cotton production compared to offtake indicates volatile prices as worldwide weather conditions and the foreign cotton industry and trade policies change. Tight cotton supplies this season could be replaced with plentiful supplies next fall.

Skillful price risk management strategies become extremely important for both producers and mill buyers. Fortunately, call and put cotton options are readily available for a premium.

Producers need to be considering pricing this season's crop now as well as buying out-of-the money put options on December '04. Reasonable price insurance against a 10-to15-cent per pound price drop a year from now is available. A 60-cent December '04 strike for around 100 points provides a year's worth of protection against a lower price. If price stays stable or goes higher, the market and farm program will provide reasonable returns above option costs.

For the 12-month crop season – August 2003 through July 2004 – the counter cyclical payment (CCP) is expected to be around half of the maximum 13.73 cents per pound. The CCP is the difference between the 52-cent loan value and 72.4-cent target minus the 6.67-cent direct payment ( $52.00¢ \text{ minus } 65.73¢ = 13.73¢$ ).

The producer needs to prepare a marketing plan that includes “hedging” strategies using options to offset potential price changes. Producers, that bought 58-cent to 60-cent December '03 calls for around two cents sometime before September 1, are now benefitting from enhanced income beyond farm program payments.

Web address for Cotton Comments and other publications: <http://agecoext.tamu.edu/publications/contents.htm>

<b>BELTWISE COTTON CONFERENCE</b>
-----------------------------------

The Beltwide Cotton Conference is being held in San Antonio on January 5-9, 2004. You can preregister at <http://beltwide.cotton.org>. This annual conference provides cotton producers with an opportunity to learn about the newest technologies, the latest research developments and their practical applications in cotton production and processing. For more information, give me a call or stop by one of the gins.