

UPPER COAST CROP IMPROVEMENT NEWSLETTER

Matagorda

Wharton

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TPMA Website

The Upper Coast Crop Improvement newsletter and other Extension IPM Program newsletters from across the state can be viewed at the Texas Pest Management Association website at www.tpma.org.

Upper Coast IPM Program Sponsors

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Cotton Insect Situation

Growth stages of cotton in the Tri-County area of Wharton, Matagorda and Jackson Counties ranged from the first week of bloom to two weeks past cutout.

Aphid numbers were very low and have been on the decrease for the past two weeks.

Boll weevil punctured squares ranged from 0 to 2%. Punctured squares were found in 3% of the fields that were monitored during the past week.

Bollworm/budworm numbers were very low. During the past week, egg counts, larvae counts and damaged square counts ranged from 0 to 4%, 0 to 1% and 0 to 1%,

respectively. Higher numbers of bollworm/budworm pressure were reported in a low number of fields from the southern part of Matagorda County during the past week.

At the present time, approximately 35 to 45% of the larvae in cotton fields appear to be budworm. This information is based on eggs being gathered and tested for positive identification from cotton fields in Matagorda and Nueces Counties.

Once blooms are present, an insecticide may be justified in **non-Bt** cotton when 8 to 12 or more small larvae are present per 100 plant terminals and 5 to 15 percent of the squares or bolls are worm damaged. If worm numbers are high, it may not be appropriate to wait until the damage threshold of 5 to 15 percent square damage is reached. If previous insecticide applications have eliminated natural enemies, fewer bollworms/budworms can be tolerated before economic damage occurs. **If insecticides have been applied after first bloom and natural enemies eliminated, treatment may be justified when infestations reach or exceed four to five small worms plus eggs per 100 terminals and 5 percent of the squares and small bolls have been damaged by worms.**

Other cotton insect pests that were found in very low numbers included saltmarsh caterpillars, loopers and Brown stink bugs.

Beneficial predator and parasite populations decreased during the past week to .14 beneficials per 2 plant terminals. Most prevalent beneficial insect continues to be lady beetles. Other beneficial insects and arthropods found included minute pirate bugs, syrphid fly, damsel bugs, lacewings, and spiders.

Stink Bugs in Soybeans

Stink bug numbers have been on the increase in soybean fields during the past week. The most common this year appears to be the Brown and the Southern Green stink bugs. Three other species that can be found include the Red Shouldered, Green

and a small brown looking stink bug that does not have a common name but goes by its scientific name of *Euschistus quadrator*. Stink bugs damage soybeans after pods start forming. They insert their beaks in the pod and suck out the contents of the bean inside the pod. Feeding while the beans are in the milk stage results in a complete loss of the beans. Stink bug feeding on beans in the dough stage causes a sunken area or a chalky-white spot on the beans. They overwinter as adults and feed on several other crops during spring and early summer. They invade soybean fields when pods start to form, starting on the margins of fields. Early infestations will be highest on field margins. Spot spraying field margins for them will often eliminate the need to spray the entire field for stink bugs later. Research has shown that stink bug damage during the R3 to R5 growth stages can result in delayed maturity, commonly referred to as the green bean effect. Accurate sampling methods such as the sweep net or beat sheet method are required to estimate average field populations. From pod formation to bean maturity, insecticide applications should be applied when there is at least one stink bug per row foot, or 36 in 100 sweeps. Stink bugs should be ¼ inch or larger.

Did You Know

In 1492, when Columbus landed in the New World, he found fabrics that were woven from cotton produced by the native population. The Europeans that followed Columbus found not only cotton culture but also highly skilled spinning and weaving capabilities among the native populations in the West Indies, Mexico and Peru. The people were using cotton bedding, clothes, armor, awnings, carpets and tapestries. Cotton was an important item of trade in the Aztec, Maya and Inca civilizations and great quantities were seen in the market places by explorers from Spain.

Cotton culture and the use of cotton textiles apparently extended north of the Mexican border into New Mexico, Southern Colorado and Utah in prehistoric times. During the Spanish colonial period, however, cotton was found growing only as far north as the modern town of Espanola in the West Indies, the Hopi Indian Country in the Gila River Valley in Arizona, and along the San Pedro and Santa Cruz Rivers in South America. No native cottons were found in the southeastern and mid-south sections of the United States and there is no evidence of the presence of cotton in these areas until after 1600. (Source: Weeds of Cotton, The Cotton Foundation, number two of the reference book series)