TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

SOUTHERN BLACKLANDS

PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS

WILLIAMSON AND MILAM COUNTIES

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GENERAL SITUATION

Scattered rain fell across areas of the Southern Blacklands on Monday. Rainfall accumulations ranged from 0.10 to over 6.0 inches of rain. Some of the areas that received the heaviest rain was between Round Rock to East of Hutto, Southeast toward Coupland and strip through central Milam County. A large portion of the area missed out on the heavier rain and received less than 0.25 inches. The corn was really helped in the areas that received 0.5 inches of rain or more. Most of the sorghum continues to make significant progress and cotton development is making good progress. Some of the earliest maturing fields of wheat are just beginning to be harvested.

CORN

There is a great amount of variation with the condition of corn throughout the Southern Blacklands. Some isolated areas have received a little more rain than others, varieties, and planting conditions are contributing to these differences. As a result, some of the corn looks good and other fields are in poor condition with reduced stands and moisture stress. Those areas with moisture will find that the corn will set brace roots, which until now has been to dry, and this will help later on in the season.

Much of the corn is still in need of some moisture soon.
Currently, the majority of the corn is at vegetative stage eight to nine (V-8 to V-9). Corn can stand a fair amount of stress in the early vegetative stages (eight or less) and not suffer much reduction in yield. However, at about the V-10 to V-12 stage, the potential size of the ear will be set. Stress during that time will effect yield.
Last season I spoke with Dr. Brent Bean, Extension Corn Specialist, Lubbock, at about the same physiological stage that we are at now and I will attempt to paraphrase what he said. "There is about a 2% reduction in yield for every day of stress encountered by the corn during the late vegetative stages. In addition, yield reduction is most severe when stress occurs about two

weeks prior to and during tasseling." He also indicated that one should expect the corn to be at least somewhat shorter than normal as a result of moisture stress.

Chinch bugs are still causing more damage in isolated areas. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, some fields were treated post-directed to reduce chinch bug numbers, which appeared to be effective, at least in some areas. Some fields where chinch bugs were at economic levels that received a good rain will now be better able to overcome the chinch bugs on there own.

SORGHUM

Insect pressure remains light in grain sorghum. No reports of chinch bug outbreaks have been reported currently. However, most sorghum planted is either treated with Cruiser or Gaucho seed treatments which are very effective on chinch bugs as well as the aphids that often appear in the sorghum.

COTTON

Cotton ranges from just planted to past the pinhead square stage.

Thrips range from light to moderate in most fields of cotton. They continue to cause some damage in some fields of cotton up through the five to six true leaf stage. However, most of the cotton will be past the stage within the next week.

Aphid numbers remained light over the past week. In addition, light levels of spider mites are being found in over 50 percent of the fields. However, their numbers do not appear to be increasing, at least not quickly.

Fleahoppers are ranging from 2 to 42 per 100 plant terminals with most fields averaging from 12-20 per 100 plants. Adult fleahoppers make up the majority of the population, but in some fields nearly equal numbers of adults and nymphs are being found.

Last season, many producers in the Southern Blacklands area benefitted from the applications of ULV Malathion for boll weevils by the Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation. As of now, early reports of boll weevil trap catches indicate very light trap catches. Cotton acreage across the area has approximately doubled from last season and therefore there is about twice as many cotton fields for the remaining boll weevils to choose from as they make their way from overwintering diapause. That fact in combination with the lower level of weevils as a result of last years eradication program should reduce the number of fields being triggered for weevil treatments. Therefore do not expect fields to be sprayed as often as last year, even though the treatment threshold was lowered from 2 weevils per 40 acres to 1 weevil per 40 acres from the 2002 to the 2003 season.

During the first three weeks of squaring, 10 fleahoppers per 100 terminals may cause economic damage. Be sure and carefully monitor fields for adult and nymph fleahoppers.

Some recommended insecticides to manage fleahoppers include Bidrin at 1 gal/40 ac, Centric at 2 oz/ac, Dimethoate 4E at 1 gal, Intruder 0.6 oz./ac, 1/16 Othene (90S) at 4 oz/ac, Trimax 1.0 to 1.5 oz/ac, and Vydate CLV at 8 oz/ac.

COTTON MARKET COMMENTS
by Dr. Carl Anderson
Attached is the latest copy of Dr. Carl Anderson's latest Newsletter, Dated May 12, 2003.