

TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

SOUTHERN BLACKLANDS

PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS

WILLIAMSON AND MILAM COUNTIES

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GENERAL SITUATION

Light showers fell across the Southern Blacklands Wednesday afternoon depositing up to 0.25 inches of rain to some areas. An unseasonably cool front rolled into the area Tuesday evening. Before that, seven straight days of record breaking/tying high temperatures occurred. Much of the corn is beginning to tassel. Some early fields of grain sorghum are beginning to head-out and bloom. Cotton ranges from 1-2 true leaves to approaching the α grown square stage. Wheat harvest is moving at full speed with good yields being reported.

CORN AND GRAIN SORGHUM

Corn ranges from V-9 to silking. Most of the corn is relatively short, compared to other years, with most tasseling between 4-5 feet in height. Some stand loss continues to occur in fields that have not had any significant rainfall since planting. Chinch bugs account for most if not all the stand loss in many of these fields. At this point, the only way this stand loss might decrease is from a significant rain in the heavy infested fields. In over a three week period, the untreated plots in a corn study that I have southeast of Taylor, there has been over a 70% stand loss in the untreated plots.

Adult mexican corn rootworm (MCR) beetles began emerging in corn fields late last week. A

peak in emergence is expected within the next 7-10 days. The importance of this is that fields of corn that have high numbers of MCR beetles this year are likely to have substantial levels of the MCR that can cause potential economic loss to corn next year if planted on the same ground if proper management strategies are not implemented, specifically the use of effective insecticides/seed treatments that control MCR or crop rotation. So, if you have any potential of planting corn in 2004 in a field where corn is currently growing, then you should monitor those fields over the next two weeks for MCR beetles.

Early blooming fields of grain sorghum need to be inspected for sorghum midge. I expect midge populations to be delayed this year as a result of the dry weather in April. This is because sorghum midge over winter has a 3rd instar larva. Adequate soil temperatures and moisture are required to break diapause of the midge. Without rainfall, sorghum midge will remain in diapause, even though temperatures may be adequate.

COTTON

Cotton ranges from 1-2 true leaves to approaching the 1/3 grown square stage. Much of the cotton across the Southern Blacklands is suffering damaged terminals. This injury is being found across all varieties/technologies and all types of pest management practices. Initially, it was thought to be the result of thrips injury. However, after monitoring more fields, I think this damage may be a result of environmental conditions. It is difficult to believe that insect injury could be so widespread and uniform. This damage has occurred at varying levels in the Northern Blacklands over the past two years and it has been observed this year to a lesser extent in that region. In addition, I have never seen so much hormonal-type herbicide injury to cotton in one season. I know I am preaching to the choir on this issue, but everyone needs to refrain from using these products after the end of March.

There is cotton that has so much injury that it will require rain to give it a chance to grow out of the damage, and yield potential has already been reduced.

Thrips are light to heavy in fields, ranging from less than one to over five per plant.

Aphid levels remained relatively light this week. I expect to see increasing levels in some fields following the second fleahopper application and following ULV Malathion Applications depending on what insecticides have been applied. Some products for aphid management include Centric at 0.5 to 1.0 oz/ac, Intruder at 0.2 to 0.6 oz/ac, Trimax at 0.25 to 1.50 oz/ac and Furadan.

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, Othene (90S) at 4 oz/ac, Trimax 1.0 to 1.5 oz/ac, and Vydate CLV at 8 oz/ac.

Fleahoppers are ranging from 6 to 36 per 100 terminal. Some fields have already been treated

