

TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
SOUTHERN BLACKLANDS  
***PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS***  
WILLIAMSON AND MILAM COUNTIES

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## GENERAL SITUATION

Dry weather has persisted over the Southern Blacklands for more than two weeks. Now that much of the corn is at or approaching the reproductive stage, the need for ample moisture to help begin filling out grain will be a must. High day time temperatures have been well above average over the past week and has put some added stress onto the corn crop. Even some of the earliest grain sorghum is beginning to head. The cotton crop is making good growth with most fields at or past first square. In addition, what little wheat and oats that were left for yield are beginning to be harvested.

## CORN AND GRAIN SORGHUM

Although the lack of rainfall and high temperatures have been putting added stress onto the grain crops, for the most part, fields have been holding in very well. However, some significant rainfall will be needed shortly or yield potential will begin dropping significantly as seed and kernel fill begins to occur. The crops should have a well developed root system and most of the fertilizer should still be in place so that if we get some timely rainfall, exceptional yields are still very possible.

As the corn begins to silk, that is the best time to monitor for adults of the **Mexican corn rootworm (MCR)**, as was discussed in the May 5 newsletter earlier this season.

As the grain sorghum begins to head and then starts to bloom, growers need to begin monitoring for **sorghum midge**. Sorghum midge are gnat-like insects and are orangish-red in color. As a rule of thumb, it takes an average of one midge per head to cause significant damage. Inspect the blooming portion of the sorghum head where the bright yellow anthers extending out of the spikelets are located. Close-range inspection for midge is the most efficient detection technique, but clear containers (i.e., glass jar or plastic bag) can be placed over the head. Then by shaking the panicle, midges can be counted as they fall into the bag or container.

The need for insecticide is based on the number of adult midges during the flowering period. *Use the economic injury levels for susceptible or resistant sorghum hybrids as presented in the following table.* The density of adults per panicle that would justify chemical control can be determined by first estimating the per acre value of the crop, which is based on the condition of the current crop, and historical experience. Second, determine the per acre cost of control, which includes both the cost of the insecticide and cost of application. Read down columns for cost of control. The density of adult midges at that point in the table would cause damage sufficient to warrant the cost of control. If adults are still present 3 to 5 days later, immediately apply a second treatment. Several insecticide applications at 3-day intervals may be justified if the yield potential is high and midges are abundant.

***ECONOMIC INJURY LEVELS FOR SORGHUM MIDGE-SUSCEPTIBLE HYBRIDS***

Control cost (\$) per acre	Market value (\$) per acre						
	100	120	140	160	180	200	220
3.00	1.2*	1.0	.9	.8	.7	.6	.6
4.00	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.0	.9	.8	.7
5.00	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.0	.9
6.00	2.4	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.1
7.00	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.3
8.00	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.5

*\*Number of midges per panicle*

**CORN AND GRAIN SORGHUM**

Cotton ranges from the cotyledon stage to past match-head square with most field between pin-head and match-head square. Early season square set has been very good with fields averaging between 84-96 percent. Last season, initial square set was excellent and beginning to drop through much of June as **cotton fleahopper** pressure increased and cloudy weather persisted.

**Thrips** are generally not a problem currently in most fields of cotton. However, I have seen a couple of fields of late emerging cotton where thrips levels are high enough that significant damage is occurring.

**Aphids** levels have remained low for the past several weeks. However, with more spraying taking place for fleahoppers and by the Eradication Foundation, it would not be surprising to see their levels begin to increase soon.

