

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

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## **GENERAL SITUATION**

Average to below average temperatures and cloudy weather with light, isolated showers have prevailed over the last few days. As of now, rainfall accumulations have been less than 0.25" for most of the Southern Blacklands. These conditions are great for the corn, but not so good for the cotton. Much of the grain sorghum is between milk and soft dough stage. Cotton has grown as much as 6-8 inches in the last 7 days.

## **GRAIN SORGHUM INSECTS**

Grain sorghum ranges from pre-boot to medium dough stage. **Sorghum midge** range from 34-over 150 per 100 head inspected. For more information on sorghum midge biology and thresholds, please refer back to the previous 2 Southern Blacklands Pest Management Newsletters.

This week, greater number of **sorghum headworm** have been found in fields of sorghum that are filling grain. Headworm numbers range from 12 to over 300 per 100 sorghum heads. In last weeks newsletter, I included a table that list economic thresholds for headworm.

**Rice Stink Bugs** are ranging from 8-62 per 100 sorghum heads. Other stink bug species are being found, but at low levels.

## **COTTON**

Cotton ranges from one-third grown square to peak bloom. Nodes above white bloom (NAWB) range from 6-10 with most fields at 8 NAWB. The warm, sunny weather last week along with excellent soil moisture created conditions favorable for excessive vegetative growth. In addition, square and boll shed resulting from the cloudy conditions experienced two weeks ago continued through the early part of this

week. Some fields of cotton that had an excellent set of small bolls ended-up shedding up to half of that fruit as well as some squares. After seeing some of the results of this weather, it is easy to see why yield potential in cotton production in regions such as the high plains and even Arizona is very high if you are able to control when and how much moisture the crop receives. The good news is that we are still in good shape on moisture and should be able to set more fruit if the weather clears. **Cotton aphids** are light in most fields this week. However, they are moderate to heavy in about 8 percent of program fields.

Most cotton was treated either by the grower and/or the Eradication Foundation.

**Cotton fleahoppers** range from 0-16 per 100 plants inspected with most fields averaging 2-6 per 100 plants. This is a considerable decrease in numbers compared to last weeks counts. Most fields of cotton are no longer susceptible to fleahoppers. The only fields that I am now concerned with regarding fleahoppers are those which have not began blooming.

**Cotton bollworm** eggs range from 0-16 per 100 plants checked with most fields averaging 2-4. Bollworm larva range from 0-4 per 100 plants with most fields averaging 0-2. Moth trap catches are showing an increase in cotton bollworm and tobacco budworm which is not unexpected. A peak in bollworm/budworm egg lay is expected within the next 7 days.

**Boll weevil** punctured squares range from 0-2 per 100 squares inspected. One punctured square was found in three separate pest management program fields thus far this week. Two of the fields were south of Taylor and one field was northwest of Taylor. It is easy to forget how destructive the boll weevil can be and sometimes I believe some folks think the weevil is already eradicated. However, these punctured squares and all the spraying that the foundation has done this season, should be reason enough to know that they are still out there and need to be monitored for. As a little reminder about the damage that this insect can cause, I will put in a paragraph from John Norman's Pest Cast Newsletter from the Lower Rio Grande Valley where he discusses their current weevil situation.

Boll weevils in the Lower Rio Grande Valley:

Boll Weevils continued their onslaught this week. While many fields had fewer squares and blooms, weevils were increasingly finding those fruit forms on which to feed and puncture for eggs. Punctured square counts ranged from 0 to 50+ per 100 plants. Some fields will need only a couple of weeks more until weevils will not be a threat. However, most fields, especially irrigated blocks will need several more weeks to mature before weevils will not be of concern.

Southern Green Stink Bugs are being found in few fields of cotton. To determine if an insecticide application is warranted for stink bug control, examine 6 row feet of cotton in several locations in the field. Control is warranted when there is an average of one or more stink bugs per 6 feet of row. One or more stink bugs per feet of row can cause excessive loss of squares and small bolls and may stain lint.

Another very effective method includes examining at least 50 small bolls (the diameter of a quarter). If 20 percent of the small bolls have evidence of internal feeding which can easily be identified by observing callous growth on the internal boll wall and/or stained lint, and stink bugs are present, then a treatment should be considered. Keep in mind, internal damage to bolls by boll weevils is similar to stink bug damage.

This method is very effective in determining the amount of stink bug damage in areas where weevil populations are at are or nearly eradicated.

Second through fifth instar stink bugs and adults all cause damage to bolls. Fourth and fifth instars can

