

TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

SOUTHERN BLACKLANDS

# *PEST MANAGEMENT NEWS*

WILLIAMSON AND MILAM COUNTIES

VOL XXIII NO. 10

June 26, 2003

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## **GENERAL SITUATION**

Hot, dry weather has persisted across the Southern Blacklands over the past week. A few, isolated showers have deposited up to 0.3 inches of rain on some fortunate areas, but that will not do much good with the mid-90 degree weather. The corn ranges from milk to medium dough stage. Grain sorghum ranges from boot to medium dough. A good number of grain sorghum fields still have yet to reach 50 percent bloom. The cotton crop has set more squares than it will probably be able to hold.

## **GRAIN SORGHUM**

**Sorghum midge** levels are increasing in fields that are still in bloom. Number of midge per head vary greatly, depending on percentage of blooming sorghum in each particular field. Midge numbers are higher in fields where only a small percentage of heads are in bloom, and less numerous where there is more blooming sorghum. Also, small to medium sized **sorghum headworm** have been found up to 2-3 per head in parts of a few fields earlier this week in the southern Williamson County. Growers need to continue to inspect sorghum for this pest and stink bug levels through the medium dough stage.

## **COTTON**

Cotton ranges from 3-4 true leaves to peak bloom. Much of the cotton has set more fruit than it will be able to hold unless it gets plentiful, timely rainfall over the next 4 weeks or so. A small percentage of fields are way behind do to early season stand problems and such as a result of dry weather at planting.

**Thrip** levels are relatively light in the replanted cotton with numbers averaging less than one per plant.

**Aphid** levels are lighter this week than the previous week in most fields. There are still isolated areas where the aphid population could possibly explode in a short period of time giving the right set of conditions (for example, removal of beneficial insects by insecticides, etc.).

**Fleahopper** levels are the lightest they have been since before squaring. They are ranging from 0-10 fleahoppers per 100 plant terminals, with most fields averaging from 2-4 per 100 terminals.

**Bollworm/Budworm** levels are relatively low. Egg counts are ranging from 0-16 per 100 plants checked, with most fields averaging from 0-4 eggs per 100 plants. Worm counts are ranging from 0-10 per 100 plants with most fields averaging 2 or fewer worms per 100 plants. The higher levels are in fields or areas of fields that are not planted to Bt. cotton. Moth trap catches have decreased over the past week, but could increase rapidly as the next generation of earworms complete their development in corn. It will not be surprising to see the worm egg-lay be an extended one, considering the various stages of worms that have been seen in fields of corn over the past two-three weeks.

Fewer **boll weevil** punctured squares have been found this week than last. Egg lay punctures are ranging from 0-4 per 100 squares, with most fields at zero percent punctures. Growers/consultants who find punctured squares in fields are advised to let the eradication foundation know of where, to what extent and when punctures were found so they can maintain a close watch on those fields and traps in order to determine if the traps are providing data to indicate that weevils are present in a certain field. No adult weevils have been found in fields in the pest management program fields during scouting, although as previously mentioned, low levels of punctured squares have been found in a few fields.

**Beneficial insect** levels are at their lowest level of the season. It is difficult to know for certain all the reasons for the recent decrease in numbers. However, it is probably in part due to lack of hosts and use of insecticides by growers to control fleahoppers and malathion applications to some fields by the boll weevil eradication foundation.

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