

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

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GENERAL SITUATION

Wet!

It has rained about every day for over the past week. Rainfall totals from this past week range from 3-7 inches. The only suffering the crop has done lately is from excessive moisture, which is welcome change to what normally occurs this time of the year.

The grain crops are maturing rapidly. The earliest fields of grain sorghum should be ready for harvest within the next 10 days. The cotton crop is growing excessively and plant growth regulator applications are the main products currently being applied to cotton.

GRAIN SORGHUM INSECTS

Sorghum midge levels remain well above threshold levels in most fields of late blooming grain sorghum with numbers well above one per head in these fields. High levels of sorghum head worm are being found in some fields of grain sorghum.

In addition to these pests, stink bug levels have increased in some fields of grain sorghum. Growers need to continue careful monitoring fields of late blooming sorghum for midge. Also, fields need to be monitored for head worm and sting bugs at least through the medium dough stage.

COTTON

Cotton ranges from the fourth week of bloom to one-third grown square stage. Even with the excessive moisture and mostly cloudy weather, the cotton crop has done a relatively good job of holding onto most of its fruit. However, it will not be until next week before the full effect of this latest week of rainy weather will have on the current cotton crop. Of course, some fields are shedding more fruit than others, but for the most part, the shed has been mainly of small bolls.

Aphid levels remain light this week. Colonies of aphids are beginning to build up in a few fields of cotton.

Cotton fleahoppers range from 0-8 per 100 plants inspected.

Bollworm/budworm egg lay picked up this week with counts ranging from 8-130 per 100 plants inspected. Thus far, worm pressure has been very light with numbers ranging from 0-6 per 100 plants. In addition, damaged squares range from 0-8 per 100 inspected.

Bollworm egg hatch should increase over the next several days; therefore it will be important to continue to monitor the cotton for small worms.

The entire plant should be searched for tobacco budworm and bollworm larvae and injury. A proper sample includes squares, white blooms, pink blooms, bloom tags and bolls. Scouting intervals should be reduced to 3 to 4 days during periods of increasing bollworm egg laying, especially during peak bloom. Treatment should not be triggered by the presence of eggs alone. Treatment with foliar insecticides for tobacco budworm or bollworm should be considered when 8 to 12 larvae larger than 1/4 inch per 100 plants are present and 5 to 15 percent of the squares or bolls are worm damaged.

Keep in mind that generally speaking budworms are often more resistant to pyrethroid insecticides than bollworms. However, evidence over the past couple of years has demonstrated that some populations of bollworms are able to tolerate some pyrethroid applications to a certain degree. Therefore, if one chooses to use one of these products to control worms, it would be advised to use the high end of the labeled rate. Generally, when there is bollworm control problems associated with pyrethroids, it is when lower than full rates are used. Also, keep in mind that coverage is critical and that with the relatively large cotton that is in most fields, growers need to use as high of volume as indicated on the label to ensure the best coverage and therefore hopefully obtain optimal control

BOLL WEEVIL ERADICATION PROGRAM

I have already discussed this point in an earlier newsletter, but it is important enough that it warrants repeating.

Boll weevil traps is the main monitoring tool that the Boll Weevil Foundation personnel utilize to base what fields need to be treated. Therefore, anything that the growers can do to ensure that traps remain intact and functional will help assist the program to run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. This

