

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

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Dale A. Mott
EA-IPM
3151 S.E. InnerLoop
Suite A
Georgetown, TX 78626
Office Phone: 512/943-3300
FAX: 512/943-3301
Internet Address: <http://williamson-tx.tamu.edu/>
<http://www.tpma.org>
E-mail: d-mott@tamu.edu

GENERAL SITUATION

Typical weather for mid-July, hot and dry conditions, continue to dominate the weather across the Southern Blacklands. Grain harvest is getting underway and will rapidly increase over the next week. Most of the grain being harvested is grain sorghum, but most corn is not far from being dry enough to begin harvest. The cotton is progressing rapidly and some open bolls may be open within 10 days. Many of the fields have about all of the fruit that the plants can handle, thus shedding of small bolls is becoming the norm.

COTTON

Cotton ranges from 0-4 nodes above white flower (NAWF) with most fields at 1-2 NAWF. As previously mentioned, most fields are experiencing some degree of fruit shed. In general, the earlier fields that currently have a greater number of larger bolls are the ones that are shedding more of the small bolls and even the squares that remain at the top of the plant.

Bolls are generally susceptible to worms, weevils, and stink bugs until they are about 3 weeks old. Therefore, all of the fruit that is currently being set needs to be protected for another 3 weeks before it will be mature enough that these insects will not be able to harm them.

Aphids remain light to non-existent in most of the cotton. Some honeydew accumulation is building-up in isolated areas of fields, where aphid colonies are present. Generally the aphid fungus can also be found helping keep the aphid levels low in some fields.

Beneficial insect levels are at none to light, depending on what the field has recently been treated with. Fields where no insecticide has been applied over the past two weeks or more have moderate levels of minute pirate bugs. More recently treated fields have very light to light levels of minute pirate bugs. Other beneficial insects being found in field include green lacewing and a few spiders.

Bollworm/budworm egg counts range from 0-10 per 100 plants inspected, with most fields at 0-4 per 100 plants. Worm counts range from 0-15 per 100 plants inspected, with most fields averaging 0-4 per 100 plants. Most fields are mature enough that bollworm/budworm moths are not likely to lay as many more eggs in it. However, there are a number of fields of late planted cotton that is still lush green, with 4 NAWF that will still be attracted to egg-laying female moths.

Boll weevil punctured squares were at 0 this week in all pest management program fields except for 2 which each had 1% punctured squares.

Spider mites are one insect pest that may continue to cause some problems in some area fields over the next few weeks. For the most part, where present, they are generally isolated in only a part of a field. These fields are ones that have recently been sprayed, often several times, for worms and/or weevils. Spider mites can impact yields due to loss of foliate caused by them feeding on the leaves. The plants need the leaves to feed the developing bolls until they mature. Therefore, if spider mites are present and insecticide treatments are justified, then closely monitor the field to determine if the entire field needs to be treated or if the entire field needs to be treated or if one can get by with spraying only a portion of the field.

Stink bug injured bolls range from 0-9 per 100 bolls inspected. Injury from this pest peaked about 2 weeks ago. This pest should continue to decline as the crop continues to bloom and the bolls become mature.

After just visiting with Marty Jungman, Extension Agent-IPM, Hill and McClennan Co., I can really see the impact of the boll weevil eradication program on the cotton crop here. They are not in the eradication program in his area. Yes, in the Program there are a lot of difficult times that producers have to deal with, but the ultimate goal of eradicating the boll weevil will be rewarding.

Yields across the Southern Blacklands will be highly variable due to the extremely wet season we had in May and June. Some fields suffered a good deal due to the wet conditions and were subsequently permanently stunted, thus leading to very low yield potential. Other fields thrived in these conditions, at times putting on excessive growth. All fields lost a lot of fruit during the

