

TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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GENERAL SITUATION

Hot and dry weather continues to persist across not only the Southern Blacklands region, but much of the rest of the state, which is very typical for this time of the year. Grain harvest remains in full swing, yields for grain sorghum have been below to above average and expect most if not all corn to have below average to poor yields.

The weather conditions are great for cotton that is mature and just needs some time to open. However, the late emerging cotton is at the point where it needs a good rain soon or it will begin shedding the majority of its fruit.

COTTON HARVEST AID FIELD DAY

You are invited to come out to the Southern Blacklands Cotton Harvest Aid Field Day on Monday, August 11. The Williamson/Milam Co. Pest Management Program and allied industry are sponsoring the field day. The plots and the field day will be at the cotton field on the north side of CR 132, just east of the CR 134 and CR 132 intersection. From Hwy 79 at Frame Switch between Taylor and Hutto, take FM 3349 South for about 1 mile, then turn right on CR 132. The plots will be about 1.5 miles on the North side of the road, about 300 yards east of the intersection with CR 134.

The program will showcase 23 treatments.

We want to thank Michael Krueger for allowing us to put out these test plots on his cotton.

COTTON

Most cotton ranges from 10% to 40% open bolls and is averaging 3-5 nodes above cracked boll (NACB). Insect pressure is very light in these fields. No worm/worm eggs are being found and stink bugs are very light. The cotton is dropping a lot of the leaves and will not be attractive to

additional aphid populations. This cotton is past susceptibility to insects having large, mature bolls that are rapidly opening.

The late emerging cotton will still need to be monitored for insect pests for another several weeks, depending on weather conditions.

Aphid pressure for the most part is light in these late fields. Boll weevil punctures are almost non-existent as well. An occasional beet armyworm hit can be found in most fields of green cotton, but the levels are lower than earlier in the season.

COTTON HARVEST AID NOTES

Preparing cotton for harvest is not an exact science. Although there is much information on how and when to apply harvest aids, producers recognize that seasonal and crop conditions affect crop responses to harvest aid treatments in ways that are sometimes unpredictable.

Good moisture earlier in the season has led to cotton that ranges from 36" to over 60" in height. However, because of the expenses growers already have invested in the cotton, it is always understandable that everyone is looking for the most economical products available to prepare the cotton for harvest. Some of the products that have worked great for this type of cotton have included one or more of the following : Dropp 50 WP, Ginstar, Finish, and/or Cyclone Max (Gramoxone Max). Most of the cotton is maturing rapidly and is aiding the harvest preparation process by dropping much of its leaves. If the weather remains hot and dry, much of the cotton should respond well to most-often used harvest aid treatments. However, if we receive some significant rain over the next few weeks, then concerns about regrowth will arise.

As a result, growers should make a concerted effort to do everything possible to get their crop harvested before any significant rainfall occurs. Growers who plan on dropping leaves should apply defoliant at 60-70% open boll. Desiccants should be applied at 80% open boll. Do not wait until all the bolls have opened before desiccating the field.

COTTON STALK DESTRUCTION CRITICAL TO AID BOLL WEEVIL ERADICATION PROGRAM

The foundation spent over \$1.5 million spraying cotton that had already been harvested. Yes, we did get some rain during and following cotton harvest, but that is no excuse not to get the stalks destroyed. Removing unwanted cotton stalks is not the easiest aspect of cotton farming, but it is very critical, especially in insect management. Cotton stalks can be destroyed/removed by one or more management tactics, which include plows, stalk pullers and chemical destruction.

Included with this newsletter is the extension publication **SCS-2003-10, Cotton Stalk Destruction with Herbicides**. It summarizes the conclusions gathered over the last few years from work performed from the Lower Rio Grande Valley up through the Southern Blacklands using various products for chemically destroying cotton stalks.

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