

General Situation

Last years drought left several farmers skeptical of the weather and likelihood of making a bountiful crop in 2012. Thankfully the weather seems to have take a turn for the better and we have already surpassed last years rainfall totals. We are still a long ways from replenishing the full soil moisture profile. However, the rainfall that we received during the week of May 7, and on May 26 and June 4 have given us hope and a better outlook for the 2012 crop.

Peanuts are looking good and some of the earlier planted fields are starting to bloom.

Cotton stages range from seed in the ground to squaring, with a majority of the cotton in the 2-4 true leaf stage. Most fields are benefiting from the rainfall. However, wind, hail, and blowing sand have damaged some young cotton plants. Wind damaged cotton is often confused with thrips damage. Both can cause the leaves to cup upwards. Additionally, wind dam-

aged leaves tend to have burnt edges. Whereas, thrips damaged leaves will not have the burned edges. Instead thrips feeding causes deformation of the leaves. Make sure thrips are present before you make an insecticide application.

We are seeing grasshoppers in pastures, CRP, and in corners of fields. However, we have not seen or heard of any damage from them.

Weeds are the major concern at this time. With regards to resistant weeds, we have not confirmed any resistant weeds in Gaines County. However, there are a couple of fields that we are investigating in Gaines County. Please see the section title "Weed Management."



Figure 1. Sand blasted leaves

Thrips

Thrips pressure remains relatively light in a majority of the fields. However, we have picked up some heavy populations in scattered fields. These fields were already showing signs of thrips damage, therefore they had already surpassed the action threshold. Thrips are slender, straw colored insects about 1/15 inch long, with piercing and sucking mouthparts. Adults are winged and capable of drifting long distances in the wind. Thrips attack leaves and leaf buds and cause silvering of the lower leaf surface and deformed leaves. Thrips can migrate in heavy numbers from adjacent weeds or crops, especially small grains, and cause significant damage within a few days. The decision to apply

insecticide should be based on the number of thrips present and the stage of plant development. The number of thrips per plant to use as a treatment level increases as plants add more leaves. The action threshold is one thrips per true leaf. For example, if you have 3 true leaves, then your action threshold would be 3 thrips. Treatment is rarely justified once the plants reach 5 true leaves.



Figure 2. Deformed leaves caused by thrips feeding on the young tender leaves

Weed Management

At this time, Texas AgriLife Extension Service has not confirmed weed resistance in Gaines County. However, there are a couple of fields in Gaines County that we are investigating (See Picture 3). If producers have weeds that do not die within a reasonable amount of time, then they need to take immediate action: use of hard cold steel, a nice sharp hoe, additionally applications of glyphosate, or other herbicides.



Figure 3. This is a field that we are investigating, because the producer has already applied two applications of glyphosate and this strip of weeds did not die.

We collected soil from this area and sent it to Dr. Peter Dotray, Extension Weed Specialist. Dr. Dotray will apply glyphosate at varying rates to the seedlings that emerge from the soil that we collected. STAY Tuned...we will send out the results.

Being proactive in areas with suspected weed resistance will lead to less headaches and ulcers in the coming years. Below are some pictures of fields where yellow herbicides were applied prior to planting or at planting. The effectiveness of yellow herbicides is obvious. The yellow



Figure 4. The applicator ran out of yellow herbicides and did not refill the tank to complete this field. You can see to the row where the yellow herbicides were applied and where they were not applied.

Things to look for when trying to determine if you have resistant weeds: Did some plants of the same species die while other plants of the same species are still alive? Were the live plants emerged when you applied the herbicide? Were the weeds already past the susceptibility stage when the herbicide was applied? Where the weeds actively growing at the time of application, so as they were able to take in the herbicide?

Time is our limiting factor right now and producers are having a hard time keeping up with the new flushes of weeds.

low herbicides were very effective in preventing weed emergence. We recommend the use of yellow herbicides and hopefully everyone will see that it is well worth the time, money, and effort to apply yellow herbicides next year.



Figure 5. The farmer applied yellow herbicides in a band at planting. In comparison, there are relatively few weeds where he applied the band of yellow herbicide, as compared to the furrows, which did not receive an application of yellow herbicides.

Beet Armyworms

John Klepper, local crop consultant, has picked up Beet Armyworms in some of the non-Bt fields that he is scouting. Worm sizes range from just hatched to 1/4 inch.

Beet armyworm eggs are laid on both sides of the leaf in masses covered by a whitish, velvety material. Young beet armyworms “web up” and feed together on leaves, but eventually disperse and become more solitary in their feeding habits. Early-season infestations feed on leaves and terminal areas. Occasionally they destroy the terminal, causing extensive lateral branch development and delayed maturity. Larvae skeletonize leaves rather than chewing large holes in them.

Figure 6. Newly hatched beet armyworms feeding together on a leaf.

Figure 6. Beet armyworm egg mass



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Manda Anderson
 101 S. Main Rm 111
 Seminole, TX 79360
 Phone: 432-788-0800
mganderson@ag.tamu.edu

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