

General Situation

We are in desperate need of rainfall in order to supply the plants with moisture to help finish out the crop. We have already started to see some shedding of cotton squares and small bolls. This natural shedding process helps the plants to adjust their fruit load, which allows the plants to shift all of its effort into maturing the retained fruit and producing harvestable bolls. Several cotton fields are quickly approaching cutout. Those field that are at 4 - 5 Nodes Above White Flower (NAWF) are considered cutout. To determine NAWF, simply find your uppermost 1st position white flower and count the number of nodes above that flower. We do have some fields which have maintained 7 - 9 NAWF, however, these fields have above normal irrigation capacities.

We still have a few more weeks of blooming before the cut off for a white bloom to be able to make it to a mature open boll. It takes approximately 800 to 850 Heat Units for a white flower to develop into an open boll. In 2010, we accumulated 836 H.U. from August 15 to October 15. Therefore, if conditions are similar to 2010 (depending on fall temperatures), then a white flower on August 15 would likely make it to a mature open boll around October 15.

Peanuts are continuing to peg and form pods. We have also seen several fields with formed pods. The peanut crop looks significantly better than it did at this same time last year. The 2012 peanut crop had a much better start, which has resulted in larger canopies that are more conducive for peanut pollination and pegging.

Verticillium wilt and Fusarium wilt incidence has increased in cotton fields. Insect pest pressure remains light. Beneficial insects numbers are still holding steady, despite there being very few pests to feed on. Weeds are still

the main concern. Several hoe crews are helping to clean up weeds and some producers have also run a cultivator through the fields.



Pod Rot

Pod rot is starting to show up in more peanut fields. Most of the pod rot thus far has been caused by Pythium, but we are also picking up some pod rot caused by Rhizoctonia. Pods infected with Pythium usually have greasy dark brown-black lesions and pods may have a wet loose white fungus mat. Whereas, pods infected with Rhizoctonia have a drier dull dark brown lesion.

Dr. Jason Woodward, Extension Plant Pathologist-State Peanut Specialist covered peanut pod rot management in the most recent issue of Peanut Progress. Peanut Progress can be found on the web at the following website <http://agrilife.org/peanut/current-peanut-progress-newsletter/>



Pythium pod rot on the left.

Rhizoctonia pod rot on the right.

Solenopsis mealybug or cotton mealybugs

Over the past two weeks we have been finding cotton mealybugs in a couple of cotton fields in the east central part of Gaines County. There was no noticeable damage to the plants. However, this is a major pest in many parts of the world. They start on the root and then move to the foliage. The adults are about 5mm long. Give me a call or bring some samples by my office if you find some in your fields. At this time we are not recommending that any insecticides be applied, we would just like to closely monitor this pest.



Immature cotton mealybug.
Size ~ 3mm

Nodes Above White Flower (NAWF)

In the July 1991 edition of *Physiology Today Newsletter*, the author describes the relationship between NAWF and the plants energy reserve. "NAWF reflects this reserve horsepower a plant has because excess energy is channeled into additional terminal growth. The amount of terminal growth that has occurred during the time period from first appearance of pinhead square in the terminal until the fruit reaches bloom is simply the number of nodes above the white bloom. If the boll load consumes almost all of the nutrients provided by the roots and leaves, or if stress reduces the nutrient supply, then little excess supply will be available for continued terminal growth. Under these conditions, the NAWF will lessen as the squares in the top of the plant develop into bloom. On the other hand, if the boll load is slight and the plant is amply feed with water and nutrients, then the excess supply of nutrients for production of new nodes in the terminal will be large. Under these conditions, the NAWF will stay large or even increase."

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