

## GAINES COUNTY IPM NEWSLETTER

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### General Situation

Cotton stages range from seed in the ground to squaring, with a majority of the cotton sitting at 2-4 true leaves. It has been a hard year to get a stand established or keep a stand established due to the soil drying out before the pivot can get around the field. Some growers have had to replant their fields due to the wind damage and droughty conditions that resulted in poor emergence. *Figure 1* shows some of the damage that resulted from the May 24 wind storm. Growers need to be sure to differentiate between sand blasted cotton and thrips damage.



*Figure 1.* Sand blasted cotyledons

Peanuts are struggling due to the windy dry conditions as well. However, they seem to be holding up a little better than the cotton. We are starting to see a few blooms in the fields.

### Thrips

Thrips damage has been relatively light this year. We have received a few reports of fields that have reached treatable levels. The effectiveness of a thrips application all depends on the timing of the application. Make sure that the thrips are still present before you apply the thrips insecticide. Otherwise, the insecticide application will be nothing more than an expensive revenge treatment. The current action threshold is one thrips per true leaf through the fifth true leaf stage.



*Figure 2.* Curled leaves due to thrips feeding on the leaves

### Spider mites

A heavy spider mite infestation was observed in a field northwest of Seagraves and a very light population was observed in a field in far western Gaines County. Spider mites infest the undersides of leaves (see *Figure 3*), where they remove the sap from the plant and cause the leaves to discolor (see *Figure 4*). Spider mite infestations most often occur in spots and along the edge of the field. Therefore, you may only have to treat the infested areas of a field if a miticide application is justified. There is no action threshold for spider mites in pre-squaring cotton. Therefore, growers will have to evaluate it on a field by field basis. Be sure to note the extent of the damage and monitor how quickly the population is developing. Low humidity and dry conditions are optimal for spider mite reproduction.



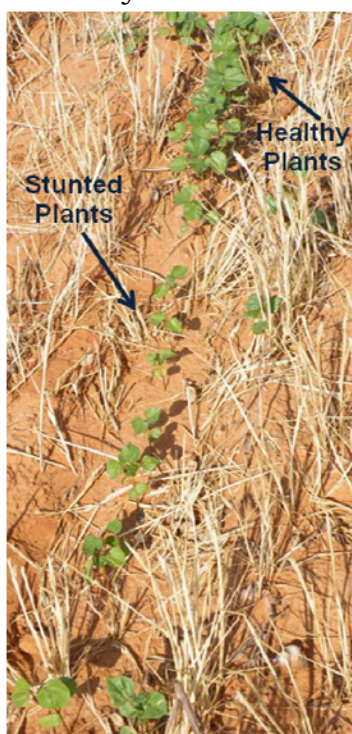
*Figure 3.* Discolored leaf resulting from spider mite feeding on the underside of the leaf



*Figure 4.* Spidermites on the underside of a leaf

## Root-knot Nematodes

Root-knot Nematodes have already started to take their toll on cotton. We have observed stunting association with root-knot nematode infestations. *Figure 5* shows some stunted plants and *Figure 6* is the roots of the stunted plants. If you look closely you can see the nematode galls on the roots. I have had a few people who have commented on the fact that they are seeing nematode damage in fields that were planted to a tolerant variety like PHY 367WRF, ST 5458B2RF, or DP 174RF. Even though these varieties are more tolerant to nematodes, they are not resistant. Therefore, they will still sustain some damage. However, the damage is likely to be less severe than if the field had been planted to a susceptible variety. The thing to do at this point is to give those plants all they need in order to reduce the amount of stress on the plants. I know this is a lot harder to do this year since we are in a major drought. Additionally, several growers have started their Vydate C-LV applications. Remember that the product has to be absorbed through the leaves, therefore any product that is sprayed on the ground is unlikely to have any impact on nematodes. Therefore, growers may consider banding on their applications since the plants are still relatively small.



**Figure 5. Stunted plants due to root-knot nematode infestation**

**Figure 6. Root-knot nematode galls on the stunted plants' roots**



## Weeds

A majority of the damage we have observed has been caused by blowing sand, droughty conditions and weed competition. Weeds are one of our biggest pests at this time. I have seen several fields that have stunted plants and plants that are struggling due to weed competition. The low humidity and drought has made weed control more difficult. Therefore the weeds are competing with the crop for the little bit of moisture that is in the soil. Timely applications of herbicides are the most effective. If possible, make sure that the conditions are more conducive for the weeds to take up the herbicide. Weeds that are drought stricken and not actively growing are less likely to take up the herbicide.

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## **Rhizobium Nodulation in Peanuts**

We have observed a few fields with low nodulation levels. Below is a chart that can be used to rate your nodulation levels at 5 to 6 weeks after planting. If early nodulation is good, you can expect it to continue to increase toward peak nodulation (usually August), but if early nodulation is poor it probably isn't going to improve. Minimal or nonexistent *Rhizobium* nodulation points toward the need for supplemental N to achieve desired yields.

Table 1. Early season Rhizobium nodulation rating for peanuts.

<b>Nodules per Plant</b>	<b>Early Season Nodulation Rating</b>	<b>Management Consideration</b>
More than 20	Excellent	This field will likely have excellent late-season nodulation. Therefore, a response from supplemental (mid-season) nitrogen is doubtful.
16 to 20	Very Good	Late-Season nodulation should also be strong. Therefore, you should reduce your mid-season nitrogen application.
11 to 15	Good	Will produce a good crop but may consider some reduction in your mid-season nitrogen application.
6 to 10	Fair	We would like to see higher nodulation than this. Therefore, a mid-season nitrogen application is a good bet.
Less than 5	Poor	These nodules may be from Rhizobium that are not specific for peanuts. A mid-season nitrogen application is essential. Try to determine why the nodulation was poor in this field.

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