Lower Rolling Plains

Pest Management News

June 26, 2008

Jones  Mitchell  Nolan  Scurry

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Current Situation

Thunderstorms last week were good, in that they brought some much needed moisture to the area. I have heard reports of 2 to 6 + inches. Unfortunately, a substantial number of cotton acres appear to have been destroyed by hail, by being sand blasted, and fields being washed out. The areas with the heaviest damage are in Mitchell and Scurry counties and with reports of damage in northern Jones county. Many producers will be faced with decisions to or not to replant.

Cotton in the IPM scouting program ranges from just emerging to having 6 true leaves. Other earlier planted fields are beginning to set squares. All of the cotton is stunted from the previous hot, dry, and windy weather. It should begin to grow better with the moisture and if temperatures remain in the low to mid 90’s. Some of this cotton will begin setting squares soon, but it does not look like it is ready because of how stunted it is.

Insect Pests

Thrips in cotton are generally low (< 1 per plant), but young cotton (up to 5-6 true leaves) which has been damaged by sand and hail need to be watched closely. Additional thrips damage will further set back the maturity. The threshold is reached when the average number of thrips per plant is equal to or exceeds the average number of true leaves. Generally, thrips are not a concern this late into June and are rarely a problem when cotton reaches the 5th true leaf stage.

Cotton that is squaring needs to be monitored for cotton fleahoppers. Both fleahopper adults and nymphs feed on small squares causing these damaged squares to abort. This delays maturity and depending on growing conditions in the fall can reduce yield. Fleahoppers can be monitored by visually checking the terminal areas of 40 plants throughout the field and recording the number of adults and nymphs. Another sampling method is to use a beat bucket to knock off fleahoppers from the terminal part of the cotton plant into the bucket. After vigorously beating the terminal on the sides of the bucket for 3 to 5 seconds, look for any fleahoppers and natural insect predators. Check 75 plants from across the field to determine population levels. Besides sampling for fleahoppers, a minimum of 10 plants should be monitored for number of fruit nodes and number of squares on the plants. Then calculate the percentage of square set for the plants. The action threshold for treatment is when fleahopper numbers are 25 to 30 (or more) per 100 plants and the percent square set is below 90% in the 1st week of squaring, or below 85% in the 2nd week of squaring, or below 75% from the 3rd week of squaring to 1st bloom.

There are reports by Warren Multer and Scott Russell, IPM agents
in the St. Lawrence and Brownfield areas, respectively, of scouts finding beet armyworm egg masses, small larvae, and signs of worm damage. Damage has not been significant and larval survival is very low. One of our scouts has reported finding just one large larva, but no other signs of damage.

Considering the conditions, scouts are reporting good numbers of beneficial predators (mostly lady beetles and spiders).

Grain sorghum is progressing well and some early planted fields are beginning to head or will be heading soon. Check these fields for head worms and stinkbugs.

Replant Decisions

Some of you are faced with making decisions to either replant cotton or planting an alternative crop. Cotton agronomists, Dr. Randy Boman and Dr. Robert Lemon, and Sorghum agronomist, Dr. Calvin Trostle, have some very helpful information for making these decisions. Dr. Boman and Dr. Lemon have an article on “Making Replant Decisions in Cotton”. This article is posted on the Web at http://lubbock.tamu.edu/cotton/pdf/makingreplantdecisions07.pdf. In summary, making replant decisions should be based on:

- The plant stand density remaining after damage
  - Acceptable yield can be obtained with stands as low as 13,000 to 26,000 plants per acre
- Stand uniformity (presence of skips)
  - More skips and longer skips equal greater yield reduction.
- Condition of the surviving plants (crop recovery will depend on level of damage to stems and leaves)
  - Plants cut-off below the cotyledonary nodes will not survive
  - Plants with deep stem bruises may eventually die or only partially recover
  - Plants that have terminals destroyed may survive if viable buds remain on the plant
  - Plants that are essentially defoliated can survive if stem damage is minimal
  - Any remaining viable leaf tissue (whole leaves, portions of damaged leaves) increases the chance of survival
  - Good growing conditions after the injury will improve recover
- The calendar date
  - What is the potential yield of cotton that is replanted
  - Later plantings often result in reduced fiber quality, delayed harvest and increased labor costs
- Cost associated with replanting
  - Costs of seed, labor and machinery use
  - Crop insurance coverage
  - Farm program options
  - Yield-price outlook for alternative crops

Dr. Calvin Trostle, Extension Agronomist, has an updated document entitled, 2008 Alternative Crop Options after Failed Cotton & Late-Season Crop Planting for the Texas South Plains. This document can be found on the Web at http://lubbock.tamu.edu/cotton/pdf/cropreplantoptions08.pdf

Considerations of planting alternative crops are:

- Compliance with government programs
  - Programs may dictate which alternative crops can be planted without losing base of benefits
- Contact your Farm Service Agency serving your county
- Herbicide considerations
  - Cotton herbicide residuals may dictate which alternative crop to plant
  - Consult product labels for rotational crop restrictions for the herbicide you used on cotton.
  - Crops typically grown with yellow herbicides are sunflower and guar (Sesame is an alternative after failed cotton)
  - Herbicide residue from Caparol, Cotoran, Karmex, Diuron, and Staple are more likely to injure sorghum than the yellow herbicides (Staple has a higher potential to injure sorghum than the other listed herbicides)
  - If Dual herbicide was applied, Concep safened sorghum seed can be planted directly into the treated soil with little risk of injury to sorghum
  - Alternative crop herbicides and carry-over effects to cotton next year
- Be Realistic about Re-plant cropping expectations
  - Can the alternative crop be grown under growing conditions for your area
  - What additional inputs are needed for the alternative crop
  - Be willing to manage the alternative crop to maximize yield potential (If the crop is not taken care of, yield potential will not be realized)
  - Consider planting and harvesting equipment needs for alternative crops
  - Will time period for harvesting alternative crops interfere with cotton harvest (Several crops like sorghum and sunflower man be managed so harvesting does not coincide with cotton harvest)
  - What are the last planting dates and time for crop maturity in order to reach yield potential
  - Insect pests and control management options
  - Alternative crop contract options and delivery locations

For our area, grain sorghum, forage sorghums, sunflower (oil and confectionary), sesame, and guar may be a good alternative crop for your farm.

### Grower Meetings

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<tr>
<th>Monday –June 30</th>
<th>Tuesday—July 1</th>
<th>Wednesday—July 2</th>
<th>Thursday—July 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scurry County</td>
<td>Mitchell County</td>
<td>Nolan County</td>
<td>Jones County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmers Coop Gin – E Hwy 180</td>
<td>Producers Coop Gin office</td>
<td>No meeting due to Agent training</td>
<td>Farmers Coop Gin—Stamford</td>
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The Texas A&M System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.