Rainfall through the month of May brought some badly needed moisture, but the recent thunderstorms also brought severe damaging weather to our area. These wet conditions continue to delay planting in some places. Cotton planted between the rains have emerged and appears to have good plant stands. Wheat fields were drying well and individuals were gearing up to begin combining. Unfortunately, the last round of storms caused considerable damage to the wheat fields across the area.

Monsanto Announcement for Minor Changes in Spraying Cotton Refuges. From multiple sources. On Monday, May 9th, the EPA approved changes to refuge requirements for Bollgard and Bollgard II cotton. These changes will allow insecticidal sprays on the 5 percent refuge in both the embedded and external 95/5 cotton refuge options for control of Lepidoptera, but only through the pre-squaring stage of development. These IRM changes are good news for producers and crop advisors who have been seeking options to effectively manage the increased infestations of pests that may threaten the stand in young cotton planted for refuge this year. The new IRM requirements will give cotton producers options for managing these lepidopteran populations in refuges, while continuing to maintain the effectiveness of the 5% refuge. The timing of application of the insecticidal sprays is limited to the pre-squaring stage of development of the cotton because the plant is not considered to be a significant host for the cotton bollworm, tobacco budworm, or pink bollworm at this stage. Therefore, the application of the foliar spray will not impact these insect populations, thus managing the potential for resistance development as originally designed in the stewardship plan. These changes by the EPA are supplemental to the 2005 Bollgard and Bollgard II Insect Resistance Management (IRM) Guide and Technology Use Guide (TUG). All other practices in these 2005 guides must be followed as
indicated, including the guidelines for the 20% Sprayed Refuge option which remains unchanged. Producers should consult their crop advisors for specific recommendations and implementation plans for their individual cotton operations. **Provided by Dr. Chris Sansone.**

**Thrips Management.** As cotton seedlings emerge and until the 6 true leaf stage, plants should be scouted for thrips. Thrips are small and slender, rarely exceeding 1/15 inch in length. These minute insects can be yellowish-brown, black, and tan in color. Thrips damage cotton leaves and terminal buds by piercing and rasping plant cells when feeding. This feeding process can cause stunted plants with deformed leaves (crinkled and cupped). Damaged leaves may take on a silvery appearance, often termed “bronzing.” Thrips damage can be confused with wind and sand damage. Severe infestations can result in reduced plant stands and terminal buds being destroyed, thus causing excessive plant branching and a delay in plant growth. Environmental conditions that slow plant growth, such as cool temperatures, can increase the amount of damage from thrips. Thrips infestations are generally more prevalent in locations with large acreage of winter wheat.

Injury after the 6th leaf stage is rarely severe enough to need treatment. **Control for thrips may be justified when the average number of thrips per plant is equal to the number of true leaves on the plant.** But, once severe damage has occurred, it may be too late for foliar sprays to result in increased yields.

Thrips are present and active on seedling cotton in the cotyledon growth stage. Fields should be watched closely to determine when and if populations reach the economic threshold. When sampling plants, slowly and carefully turn leaves over to examine the underside of the leaf. Adult thrips will fly off the leaf if they are disturbed. Pulling plants out of the ground will disturb the thrips and prevent you from getting an accurate assessment of the thrips infestation.

After our first initial captures of Pecan Nut Casebearer (PNC) Moths around May 6, there has not been many moths captured in Nolan County. There has been slightly more moths (1 to 4 moths every other day) captured in pheromone traps in an orchard in Mitchell County. Moth numbers peaked on May 11. However, no eggs or larval presence were found in either orchard when nut clusters were examined on May 18 and May 19. On May 25 and June 2, the percentage of nut clusters infested with eggs in Mitchell County was 16% and 20%, respectively. This infestation was sufficient to warrant insecticide application. **However, to insure that nuts in you trees are not being damaged you should check for eggs and larvae or larval entry holes.** I want to thank Mr Jim Boston (Nolan Co.) and Mr. and Mrs. Linden Solomon (Nutty Acre Pecan Orchard, Mitchell Co.) for allowing PNC to be monitored in their orchards. Also, I want to thank Mr. Bobby Lemons (Colorado City) and Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Carthel (Snyder) for monitoring individual traps for PNC moth activity.

There have been a few individuals bringing deformed pecan leaves to the office. These leaves have knots or swellings which are called “galls” and are formed by a tiny soft-bodied insect, known as *Phylloxera*. One species attacks the leaves, while another species attacks the nuts. Only under extensive infestations will damage be sufficient to cause some leaf defoliation or destroy the nut crop. Unfortunately for this year, control
efforts for the galls already formed are ineffective. Control efforts will need to be conducted in the coming dormant season or when bud break begins next spring.

The recent rains will provide conditions for mosquitoes to breed and develop. The following are suggestions for reducing mosquito problems around your home. Texas Cooperative Extension publication E-333.

Eliminate breeding sites for larvae
- Reduce standing water that provide breeding sites. Empty or drain containers or items that collect or hold water.
- Empty plastic wading pools weekly
- Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets to prevent standing water.

Reduce adult mosquito populations
- Mow tall grass and weeds to reduce resting sites for adults mosquitoes.
- Eliminate unnecessary brush and other foliage around your home.

Avoid contact with mosquitoes
- Some mosquito species are more active at dusk and dawn and can be avoided by scheduling activities at different times.
- Wear long, loose-fitting clothing to avoid mosquito bites.
- Use repellents to repel mosquito adults. Products that contain DEET have shown to be the most effective repellents.

Mosquitoes are known to transmit many disease-causing organisms to humans and animals. Take precautions to avoid and reduce exposure to mosquito populations. Since mosquitoes transmit heartworm to dogs, protect your pets with medication that eliminate heartworm. Individuals with horses should contact their veterinarian for information on protecting animals from the West Nile Virus.