Fall Armyworms Found In Cotton

Yesterday, Fall Armyworms were found at treatable levels in a non-bt cotton variety field near Hamlin, TX. There was a mix of both cotton bollworms and fall armyworms, but the fall armyworms were the predominate caterpillars in the field. Therefore, when scouting fields, take time to identify the caterpillars and do not assume the worms are cotton bollworms. Cotton fields should be scouted carefully every 3 to 5 days.

Treatment thresholds are the same as thresholds for bollworm infestations. **Treatment may be justified when counts average 5000 or more small worms per acre. Or 10 to 12 worms per 100 plants.** Control is best when larvae are less than ½ in. The pyrethroid insecticides do not provide effective control. Chemicals, such as Steward (10 oz./ac), Intrepid (4 to 10 oz/ac), Tracer (2.14 to 2.9 oz/ac) and Diamond (8.0 to 9.0 oz/ac), should provide adequate to good control in cotton. Field tests have shown Intrepid at 6 oz./ac provides effective control. However, Intrepid is not effective against cotton bollworms. The Diamond product label suggests using rates of 12.0 to 14.0 oz/ac for cotton bollworms. The recommended rate for Tracer is the same for fall armyworm and cotton bollworm. Also, Steward should provide adequate control of small size cotton bollworm larvae. As with any product, good coverage is critical for good control. Read and follow label directions when using any insecticide.

Head color is tan to dark with a conspicuous white-colored inverted “Y”. Black dots on the top of the abdomen near the rear form a square.

Photos: Head - Texas Cooperative Extension
Body - E.D. Bynum, Jr., Texas Cooperative Extension

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