

# AgFax: Southeast Cotton

**JUNE 16, 2007**

Here is this week's **AgFax: Southeast Cotton**.

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## OVERVIEW

**More rain has fallen over the last week** in some drought-plagued areas, but no general system has developed. Certain areas in the lower Southeast have still caught no appreciable amounts since the season started.

**Thrips pressure is winding down** on a wider basis. No other large pest outbreaks were reported. Aphids are turning up in places, and a few treatments may start next week.

**With moisture, the main focus** in many areas is on weed control as new flushes develop. Some cotton, planted into dry soil just ahead of crop insurance deadlines, received no pre-emergence applications. Another challenge will be planning herbicide applications where delayed emergence has mixed seedling cotton with plants that are now the better part of a foot tall.

## CROP REPORTS

**Joel Faircloth, Virginia Extension Agronomist:** "We should be at pinhead square by early next week, and there may be some at that now. Our crop is about on it's typical track, maybe a day or two ahead. We received several rains just in the nick of time. We were in a mini drought, and it lasted just long enough to encourage deeper root development. Last year, our crop was absolutely pampered with rain in the spring, and roots didn't have to grow, but then we got into a low rainfall pattern later in the summer. Drought stress and nutrient deficiencies became evident, and that hurt yields a little."

**Mike Howell, Extension Area Agronomist, Collins, Miss.:** "Cotton in south Mississippi still looks pretty good. A lot of layby applications are being made. We're still picking up a few plant bugs here and there. Aphids are building a bit, but they're not at a treatable level. We've been getting rain around Lucedale and Hattiesburg, and a little Pix is going out with the layby sprays."

**Mark Mitchell, Mitchell Ag Consulting, Inc., Bainbridge, Ga.:** "A week ago Tuesday we had some pretty decent rains in the area. One general location received at least 2 inches, but (Continued)"

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amounts tapered off as you moved away from it. One farmer less than 5 miles from the heaviest rain still hasn't had any, and it's not hard to find fields that have gone without measurable rain pretty much all season. We still have cotton seed lying in dry dirt. Where we got rain, it certainly was good, and it was more widespread than anything lately, but you sure can't say that everybody got it. It did allow us to plant some dryland peanuts and cotton where we had not had rain before, and a few spots even got rain after we planted.

"Our oldest cotton should be blooming next week. It's at 13 nodes going on 14. Insects are relatively quiet. Aphids have been building in places over the last 7 to 10 days, to the point that we may have to make some applications next week. Plant bugs are relatively light. We're picking up a few spider mites. At least for the moment, they're light and not widespread. A layby rig probably started running today (Thursday) on some of our oldest cotton."

**David Butcher, NC Ag Service, Inc., Pantego, N.C.:** "It's a little dry. So far, it's not too bad on the cotton, but the lack of rain is getting somewhat tough on corn in spots. We sprayed quite a lot of cotton for thrips, but that seems to be winding down now, and plants can fend for themselves. We haven't seen any aphids or mites yet. Weed control has been adequate. We've had spotty rains, just enough to keep the dust down when we spray herbicides. With the powdery soils we have, that can be a big deal. Too much dust flying up behind the tires can tie up the material."

**Steve M. Brown, Extension Cotton Agronomist, Tifton, Ga.:** "We have gotten more rain in places. A colleague just returned from east Georgia and said that they're maybe a little too wet in places. It's time to get weeds under control. That's probably the biggest challenge. It was too dry in a lot of instances to apply a preemergence herbicide, so we're trying to catch up. The crop ranges from almost blooming to some that's just emerging, and things will have to click right for that late cotton to work. There remain counties in western Georgia that are still suffering, but more areas have been receiving at least some rain in the last 2 weeks, and we're not in the same crisis mode that we were when June started. The rain on June 2 from Barry was probably the most positive rain I've ever seen, and other people have made that comment, too."

**Jack Bacheler, North Carolina Extension Cotton Entomologist:** "The crop varies widely from area to area, depending on planting date, amount of thrips damage and whether cotton received timely rainfall. Some cotton has been beyond the thrips stage, while other cotton is still struggling and has been sprayed for the third time. In most samples sent to the clinic last week from problem fields, the sheer number of tobacco thrips adults and immature thrips has been the main problem. However, the hard-to-control western flower thrips is still part of the problem in some fields in dry areas, although counts have been generally down the past few days. Hopefully, by this time next week, thrips damage will be over for all but a few acres and we can get a little breathing room before

the post-bloom bug pests arrive."

**Jeremy Greene, Clemson University Cotton Entomologist, Blackville, S.C.:** "We should be winding down now on problems with thrips. Numbers of immature thrips are still pretty high in some cotton, but the numbers are declining. Cotton looks pretty good that was planted late or dusted in. It's just now in the seedling stage after late emergence, and it might escape significant thrips injury. The dry weather changing over to moist conditions really allowed non-uniformity with our stands. Hopefully, that will not impact insect control significantly later in the season. Warm temperatures and adequate moisture should promote vigorous growth, especially in the younger plants, so we should not have a big differential. We are a little higher on bollworm moth captures than last year at this time. I would expect numbers of moths to peak in the bollworm flight within the next couple of weeks. With all of the extra corn this year, it makes sense that we could be in for heavy pressure from corn earworms/bollworms in cotton this season."

**David L. Wright, Florida Extension Agronomist, Quincy, Fla.:** "Rainfall continues to be spotty. We got a little rain here at the station this week, but 5 miles north at my home the last rain we received was the 18-hundredth that came from Barry early in the month. Irrigated cotton looks fine, but dryland cotton is very uneven. That includes our plots here at the station. We drove to a corn field day in Tifton, Ga., yesterday (Thursday), and I saw the shortest cotton I've ever seen for this time of the year. Some had just barely come up. There also were a lot of fields with plants at 8 to 10 inches tall with other plants beside them that ranged from just emerged to a couple of inches tall. Timing Roundup applications is going to be a problem in those fields.

"A reminder, on June 26-27 the station is hosting the Southern Conservation Agricultural Systems Conference."

**Edward Kane, Ind. Crop Consultant, Robertsdale, Ala.:** "We're steadily putting Roundup on cotton. We finally got enough moisture to outgrow the last of the thrips, and we're starting to put on a little Pix – nothing over 6 oz/acre at this point. It's being applied on the DPL 555 where we have moisture. Aphids are turning up, but they're real spotty. We've got adequate moisture. A good, general rain fell last Saturday, and we've had scattered showers all week. We finally got our flush of weeds, and controlling them is probably the main effort right now."

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