

# AgFax: Southeast Cotton

**JULY 7, 2007**

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

Thanks to the field staff of **FMC Corporation** for their continued sponsorship of this report.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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## OVERVIEW: RAIN, WEEDS, MITES

**More rain has fallen** in some of the drier parts of the Southeast. Areas in southeast Alabama and the Florida panhandle have picked up better totals than they've had all season. For some cotton, though, it's too late. A dry pattern lingers over portions of the region. As we closed this issue Saturday morning, rain had pushed into central and north Alabama.

**Spider mite treatments continue** in North Carolina. Some south Mississippi cotton is on its second aphid application.

## ALABAMA DROUGHT CONFERENCE

In conjunction with ALFA, the Crops Team of the Alabama

Cooperative Extension System (ACES) has scheduled a state-wide **videoconference** to address issues related to the ongoing drought. The conference has been scheduled for Thursday, July 12 at 3 p.m. Sites across Alabama will be available for producers to attend, according to Bob Goodman, Auburn Extension Ag Economist. Farmers should contact their County Coordinator, Regional Agent, or County Agent for more details about the event and about local activities and tours that may be available, he said.

## CROP REPORTS

**Rusty Harris, Worth County Extension Agent, Sylvester, Ga.:** "A system came through over the weekend, and we got a minimum of an inch of rain across the county, with up to 3 inches in places, so we're in pretty good shape. Everybody is trying to sidedress nitrogen. Overall, there are some ugly looking fields due to weeds, and people are trying to battle all this vegetation. We think we have our first case of resistant pigweed. Some of the very earliest cotton is beginning to bloom. Pests are kind of quiet, almost to the point that it's unsettling."

**David L. Wright, Florida Extension Agronomist, Quincy, Fla.:** "We've gotten some rain in the last week. It's still spotty. Some areas received 7 to 8 tenths, and I've heard of totals up to 3 inches. It wasn't a general rain, but almost everybody I've talked to said they received at least some over the weekend or Monday. Our dryland cotton continues to have very erratic stands in terms of plant height differences and emergence. It's also the shortest crop, on average, that I can remember for this point in the season. The main focus now is weed control.

(Continued)

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I haven't seen any cotton blooms but would expect to find blooms next week. Some of the irrigated cotton has had plant growth regulator applications."

**Mike Howell, Extension Area Agronomist, Gulfport, Miss.:** "Aphids are moderate to heavy. A lot of fields have been treated, and I'm hearing about aphids coming back pretty quickly behind some of the neonicotinoids. Some of the earliest cotton is just starting to bloom. The regular crop is either right on schedule or maybe a little bit ahead. Part of the cotton planted behind wheat is questionable. Everything will have to go right for it to work."

**Joel Faircloth, Virginia Extension Agronomist:** "A pocket or two has gotten rain in the last several weeks, but a lot of our growing areas are hurting for moisture. I wouldn't say cotton is in dire condition, but corn is. A few folks are putting out layby herbicides, but even those aren't going to work very well unless it's in one of the lucky areas that got rain. I saw just a few blooms on cotton this week. I guess the bright side is that we have an exceptionally strong root system due to drier conditions earlier. If we get more rain and then lapse into another tough period, the cotton will be prepared."

**Carl Hobbs, Carl Hobbs Ag Consulting, Ashburn, Ga.:** "Last weekend, we received between 8 tenths and 3 inches of rain in 2 sets of showers. What a relief! We could be done with some corn irrigation now, and maybe there's enough water left in the aquifer to make a cotton crop. Palmer pigweed is giving us a fit in places, even after about \$40 per acre in chemicals, plus Roundup Ready tech fees. A couple of fields I ride by look like terror from a Stephen King novel. Our crop is anywhere from 6 true leaves to the second week of bloom – a long way to go. We sprayed our first stinkbugs this week. They were on some April cotton that was near March-planted corn, which was drying down. I hope that this is not a sign of pressure to come. Sidedressing and mepiquat applications are going out on schedule. Aphid pressure is about one-fourth what we saw this time one year ago."

**Jack Bachelier, North Carolina Extension Cotton Entomologist:** "Spider mites seem to again be our major pest. More cotton has been treated or is on the brink of treatments. Although most North Carolina fields do not have anything approaching an economic situation, it's easy to find some level of mites in our northern and far-eastern cotton and to some degree elsewhere. It's helpful to mark several spots in a field with plastic tape or wire flags so you can return to the same spots for post-treatment evaluations. This makes it easier to determine possible trends in mite levels. Dead mites are a reliable indicator of mortality due to either the spray or fungus. A hand lens is indispensable in examining the undersides of leaves for mites, eggs or carcasses. Cotton aphid levels have picked up, although no treatments have been brought to our attention. Aphid fungus most often shows up during the third or fourth week of July. Our major bollworm moth flight should be on the early side, probably beginning in southern Robeson County this coming week."

**Jeremy Greene, Clemson University Cotton Entomologist, Blackville, S.C.:** "We've detected a decrease in tobacco budworm and bollworm moth captures this past week in traps at the Edisto REC. Pests remain relatively quiet, overall."

**William Birdsong, Extension Agronomist-Row Crops, Headland, Ala.:** "Cotton appears to be improving in areas that have received rainfall, although rains have been quite sporadic. Some areas in southeast Alabama have received over 6 inches recently, while others have only gotten a half inch. Locations that received 1.5 to 6 inches have obviously responded, especially since these most recent showers are probably following earlier rains over the past 2 weeks. For those without an adequate stand of cotton, however, this most recent rain is too little too late. About 40% of the cotton in this part of the state is in poor condition. Many of the producers who have crop insurance have taken the stand reduction option where they have skippy or poor to nonexistent stands. Some are following in those fields with forage for cattle since it's so limited. Others are planting an MG VIII soybean to try to generate some revenue. Insects are relatively quiet."

**Phillip Roberts, Extension Entomologist, Tifton, Ga.:** "Insects continue to be light in most cotton. Aphids are the most common pest present, but they are still localized and sporadic in many counties. Pheromone trap captures of corn earworm and tobacco budworm have been low, and little activity has been observed or reported in cotton. This, of course, could change in a matter of days. Plant bug numbers have also been low, and fruit retention looks good in most fields. Spider mites are present in some fields and should be monitored closely. There is a tremendous range of cotton development across the state, and even in the same field in some dryland instances. As a whole, this is going to be a late-maturing crop, and we will likely be managing insect pests into late September."

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<b>Weekly moth capture totals</b>					
	CEW	TBW	FAW	BAW	LCSB
Escambia Co, FL* to 7/5	1.0	0.6	0	29.6	
Headland, AL** to 6/29	2.0	3.0	0	0	14.0
Headland, AL** to 7/6	4.0	0.28	0	1.0	3.0

\* Bayer Cropscience, SFTS, Escambia County, Fla. \*\* Auburn University Wiregrass REC, Headland, Ala.