

# AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

## Overview:

Worm populations were generally low last week in most areas. Several contacts reported that spider mites were being treated. Mite infestations aren't necessarily tied to boll weevil eradication (BWE) areas. And despite rains that usually prompt mites to crash, some populations are building. The crop continues to look good, especially irrigated acreage. Fruit retention is good to excellent in many fields. Moisture stress, though, is becoming a problem for dryland cotton in some areas. BWE starts in several regions early next month.

## Insect Reports:

**Blake Layton, Mississippi Extension Entomologist:** "We've started seeing a little treatment activity, but it's still relatively quiet. Moths seem to be mainly bollworms. But with non-Bt, plan for it being budworms unless you've run a kit. We're seeing a few fall armyworms, but nothing alarming. A few beet armyworms were reported south of Jackson. Some plant bugs are present in the north Delta, especially near corn and other sources. Spider mites are showing up in larger than normal

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numbers in scattered areas. They seem to be dying out. We've had hot, humid conditions, which should promote them crashing, but they've persisted longer than expected. Whitefly are building, especially in BWE areas."

**Eddie Dunigan, Consultant, Dunigan Brothers, Inc., Black Oak, Ark.:** "Spider mites are going berserk. We've been spraying some on borders for the last six weeks, just trying to hold them back. A tankmix with a .5 lb. each of Lorsban and Curacron has given the best control so far, and we've used Capture where we also had weevils. We put some Kelthane out late this week but won't know how it's working until Monday. We're in a drought situation right now, and dryland cotton is at cutout. We still have weevils in traditional hotspots, and F1 weevils are out there. Bollworm activity is as low as I can remember in 8-10 years. In a lot of fields, we can't find a worm or an egg. A few aphids are hanging on."

**Joe Townsend, Ind. Consultant, Coahoma, Miss.:** "We're spraying a little for bollworms. Populations are just above threshold. We're starting to treat whitefly populations, and we're having to make applications on spider mites in spots. We're using pyrethroids on worms and Orthene on whitefly. We've also applied some Danitol on whitefly but don't know how it looks yet. Capture is going out for mites. Mites are present in most fields. They're not at threshold everywhere, but in spots they are very tough and have caused discoloration. The crop continues to look good, fruiting on 12-15 nodes. We could start harvesting about September 15."

**Tony Anderson, Assistant Manager, UAP-Midsouth, Rayville, La.:** "The insect situation is very light based on what our customers are dealing with and what we're hearing from everyone else. A few bollworms are showing up in Bt cotton, and there's some spraying in isolated areas. The egg lay is increasing a little."

**John Raymond Bassie, Ind. Consultant, Cleveland, Miss.:** "This is as long as I've been without spraying a significant amount of cotton for worms. On one farm, I've sprayed one

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time, and that's it. Even on the (Mississippi) riverside, which is a concentrated area for problems, percentages are very light. I sprayed less than 50 acres Tuesday on the riverside where we had plant bugs and a weevil hot spot. I'm still baiting weevil traps, and I'm not averaging two weevils a week."

**Mike Sartor, Ind. Consultant, Clinton, Miss.:** "Whitefly have picked up a good bit and have reached treatment level in some fields. We started applications yesterday. I'm watching for them congregating under leaves, trying to catch them before reproduction. Heliothis egg deposits are down, but I'm beginning to see moths again. We're spraying a few Bt cotton fields with thresholds of bollworms. There are a few budworm moths out there and we've seen some terminal feeding. We sprayed 6 Yazoo County fields for fall armyworms. Spider mites are still here. I've sprayed some with Pirate or Capture, and some I've let go. The crop is moving along, maybe a little ahead of last year. We're averaging 6-7 NAWF and have 16-18 fruiting nodes on a lot of cotton."

**Terry Erwin, Moorehouse Parish Extension Agent, Bastrop, La.:** "Worms haven't been a problem up to now. No treatments this week. Some non-Bt cotton has been sprayed at least once, and some Bt cotton has been sprayed with worms in the blooms. There's very little budworm activity. Mites are showing up, and a few spots of whitefly activity are out there, but no treatments have been reported. Weevils are picking up, and everybody has been spraying at least some acreage for them. This is F1 and maybe some F2 weevils."

**Ron Seward, Tennessee Extension Entomologist:** "Worms are scattered and light. Trapped moths are a mix of bollworms and budworms, and we haven't seen any trap counts over

10. Spider mites are present in tremendous numbers both inside and outside BWE areas. We don't have any good explanation for why they are building. Rains should have helped take them out. Curacron and Ovasyn are going out, and it takes two treatments. We haven't looked at true miticides yet, but we will apply Kelthane next week and probably will look at Danitol, too. There's a tremendous spider mite egg lay. It's amazing the populations on the underside of the leaf. In 27 years in the field, I haven't seen numbers like this. We're cautioning not to let them get too heavy. If you have light populations that are building, consider treating now rather than waiting until they blow up and require multiple treatments. We started spraying F1 boll weevil populations in some areas. Between pinhead applications and dealing with late overwintering emergence, some fields have six applications."

**Billy Price, Ind. Consultant, Charleston, Miss.:** "Things are still quiet. In some spots, counts are coming up a little. We sprayed this past week. The biggest portion of our conventional cotton was treated for budworms. None of our Bt cotton has been sprayed yet for Heliothis. Over the last 10 days, we ran Agdia kits five different nights, showing 70% to 90% budworms. Thursday, we collected eggs on a farm with a good deal

of corn. Eggs were running 60% in the cotton, and the kit showed 90% bollworm eggs. We're fighting boll weevils hard in Region 1 where it adjoins Region 3. In some cases, this is the third application, not counting pinheads. The problem is in pockets, not the whole region. Mites still are hanging in there. We felt like rains would keep them whipped back, but some isolated fields are being treated, mainly with Capture so we can knock out the other things that have to be treated. The places where mites are heaviest aren't even in BWE areas."

**Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Coordinator:** "Bollworm and budworm numbers are strikingly low, but a continuous low level infestation has been present. Many fields have not built up enough worms or lost enough fruit to justify treatments within the last 10 days. But the predominantly bollworm population that is around has caused some problems in both Bt and non-Bt cotton. Bollworm moths are laying deep in the canopy, making it hard to find eggs and reach worms with insecticides. This is especially true for worms feeding under bloom tags and within small bolls. Problems also have likely been associated with the hot weather and materials evaporating before they hit the plant. Fortunately, worm numbers in these situations have been generally low."

**Mississippi DD-60 Accumulation**

Location to 7-22-99	PD* 4-25	PD 5-12
Greenwood, MS **	1366	1209
Lyon, MS	1484	1317
Onward, MS	1482	1306
Stoneville, MS	1567	1390
Stoneville norms	1477	1335

**Tennessee DD-60 Accumulation**

Location to 7-22-99	PD* 4-20	PD 5-1
Jackson, TN	1324	1239

\*Planting Date  
\*\*Readings for some days are unavailable

Sources: Mississippi Delta Research and Extension Center Weather/GIS Center; Ron Seward, Tenn. Cooperative Extension Service