

AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

Overview:

A few blooms have been found in early planted cotton here and there. Rain in the last week helped a number of areas take advantage of warming temperatures. Some areas are still dry, notably on the eastern side of the Mississippi Delta. The crop generally looks good to excellent with strong retention in most cases, our contacts this week say.

Everyone is finding plant bugs to some extent, and treatments are underway in most areas. Worm treatments are reported a bit more, and some aphid applications are being made or scheduled. The Midsouth aphid fungus survey so far shows no positive results.

Insect Reports:

Mark Tackett, Manager, Terral Agri Service, Oak Grove, La.: "Plant bug pressure is extremely heavy. We're getting 2-3 days of control with normal insecticides then have to treat again. We're seeing them in all fields. We've got an extremely spotty egg lay with up to 25% eggs and 10% worms in a field and none of the surrounding fields over 5% with no worms. Aphids are building pretty strongly, too. We're spraying for

aphids and plant bugs today and hope with 2" of rain we just had that fungus will help bring aphids under control. Cotton is squaring heavily. We're losing some to plant bugs, but retention is good. It's the earliest set I can remember in 20 years. I expect a bloom in 3-4 days. I'm advising our growers to disregard irrigation schedules over the last 2-3 years and be prepared to go earlier."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Coordinator: "The plant bug is the insect of the week. We have them nearly everywhere, and treatments are being made on a pretty wide basis. Pinhead square treatments are being made for weevils, and second applications are going on in a lot of fields. Vydate is being used where weevils and plant bugs are present. Some growers will be looking at three pinhead sprays where overwintering habitat is good. Weevil pressure is still high in some areas. Aphids are building, and

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southern Arkansas appears to be a little worse than the northern part of the state. Some fields are being treated. Worms are spotty but trap counts indicate we're dealing with more budworms than bollworms. That's based on multiplying budworm moths by a factor of four, which we use to compensate for weaker pheromone attraction to traps. In a lot of areas, populations appear to mostly be budworms. Some growers in southern Arkansas have treated twice for worms already — unheard of in June. I'm mainly hearing about treatments with 2 ounces of Tracer. Even in northeastern Arkansas, some fields are running 20% eggs. We're encouraging people not to use pyrethroids."

Tucker Miller, Consultant, Drew, Miss.: "We're spraying a good many acres for plant bugs. A lot of cotton is showing 8-10% plant bugs. A few aphids are showing up, and we'll probably be into more aphid sprays next week. Isolated treatments have been made where they got bad. We haven't gotten into Furadan yet. With Bidrin and methyl, we got about 85% control. Where we had plant bugs and weevils, too, we upped the methyl rate
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slightly. Aphids are starting to rebound in that area. If the fungus doesn't come in, we'll be ready to treat. Worms are light. We haven't treated any yet. We ran an Agdia kit Wednesday night and had a mystery egg. It looks like a bollworm but slightly bigger. We suspect it's a granulated cutworm. We're also checking the kit to make sure it's working all right. We're seeing multiples, not singles, which is unusual this time of year."

Ron Seward, Tennessee Extension Cotton Entomologist: "Boll weevils are coming heavily now. We're in the middle of pinhead treatments and moving into match head square applications. We're picking up some pretty good plant bug numbers. They started off the first of the week with adults in the 4-12% range and are now running 30-40%. In the eradication area, everyone's trying to time malathion sprays to catch plant bugs. But with numbers we're seeing, separate plant bug treatments will be needed. Pressure is such that fields can't wait a week. Treatments are giving pretty good control, but we're just getting more movement into fields. We're finding a few eggs but haven't made a firm determination yet which species are present. It's running 5-20% in some older cotton. Some scattered, light aphid development is present."

Bob Griffin, Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark.: "Plant bug pressure is scattered. We're not finding them in all our cotton, and they're mainly in older cotton. We've treated a few scattered fields. We're still making pinhead treatments, and some fields already have had their second application. Most of my growers are going with Vydate at 1:15 on the first and 1:15 on the second if we don't have plant bugs. With plantbugs, we're going 1:12. If we don't have weevils but find plant bugs at treatable levels, we shift to Orthene at .33/lb. Our weevils aren't terribly bad. We'll treat every field

once but some won't need second treatments. One thing that concerns me: cotton is averaging about 10 days late, and a lot of weevils are hungry and bypassing traps. We're finding them in terminals in some cases where trap counts are low. In the Altheimer area, we've had worms for 2 weeks, not enough to treat but probably at that level in the next week or so. In the Helena area, eggs are running 2-5%. I'm seeing scattered aphids and some building colonies, but nothing near treatment levels."

Robert Wells, Technical Services Consultant, Farmland Technical Services, Dermott, Ark.: "Younger cotton is on first pinhead treatment and older cotton is on the second. We're spraying a few fields for worms with Tracer. Plant bugs are starting to build. We're running Vydate on pinhead weevil applications to do something about plant bugs and are adding .33 to .5 lb/ac of Orthene where plant bugs are heavy. Counting the Vydate with pinhead treatments and separate applications, 90% of our acreage will be treated for plant bugs over the next 7-8 days. We've found 4-5 small worms on 14 row feet on some older cotton."

Frank Carter, Manager, Jimmy Sanders, Inc., Canton, Miss.: "Everybody has sprayed

some for plant bugs. There are cases where we had to spray for plant bugs before eradication treatments started with malathion, even on some Temik cotton. We're beginning to pick up a few worm eggs. Aphids are beginning to build, and we're at least beginning to talk about treatments, but nobody has sprayed."

Bill Brooks, Crockett Farmers Co-op, Alamo, Tenn.: "We've got isolated spots with plant bugs, and some pinhead treatments are targeting weevils and plantbugs. So far, we haven't made separate plant bug treatments. Borders are full of them but they haven't moved into the fields yet in any numbers. We're finding a worm egg here and there in older cotton."

Carl Wilbourn, Field Consultant, Farmers Supply Cooperative, Greenwood, Miss.: "We're getting a few worms and some Tracer has gone out. Where we're treating, worms are running 10-12% and eggs 5-20%. Plant bugs are widespread, especially around corn and turnrows, and everytime we spray we're adding Vydate or Provado. Bidrin also is being used in some fields. Beneficials are holding pretty good, and some folks are working hard to maintain them. We started seeing some aphid buildup in the last 2-3 days. They blew in a couple of weeks ago and have built colonies."

Mississippi DD-60 Accumulation

Location to 6-17-99	PD* 4-25	PD 5-12
Greenwood, MS **	702	545
Lyon, MS	789	621
Onward, MS	778	602
Stoneville, MS	835	659
Stoneville norms	726	584

Tennessee DD-60 Accumulation

Location to 6-16-99	PD* 4-20	PD 5-1
Jackson, TN	642	557

*Planting Date

**Readings for some days are unavailable

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