

AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

Overview:

Here is your first 1999 issue of *AgFax: Midsouth Cotton*. *AgFax* is once again sponsored by the Midsouth Cotton Team of Novartis Crop Protection.

Planting is nearly finished everywhere. More replanting than normal has been reported in some areas.

Thrip are being treated in many parts of the Midsouth. Lack of Orthene seed treatment on some varieties has been cited as a factor. Cutworm treatments are being generally reported. Boll weevil counts also are running above normal in some areas.

Insect Report:

David Skinner, Independent Consultant, Starkville, Miss.: "In our Delta fields, cotton looks pretty rough after the storms and wind we've had. We're up to four true leaves in our most advanced fields. Our hill cotton is getting a pretty good start, and we're up to two true leaves. Most of our growers used Temik or Disyston. We're

having to treat for thrip now in some of the Disyston fields."

Joe Townsend, Independent Consultant, Coahoma, Miss.: "Overall, we're off to a good start. It's not early, but it's also not late. A huge portion of our cotton was planted in the last 10 days and came up in four to five days and is growing off well. We took some hits with the wind, more so than in the past. Thrip numbers are higher than in quite a few years. We're probably on the tail end of it right now. Taking the Orthene-treated seed off the market has cost farmers some money. We're treating thrips now with Orthene at .2 lb/acre and also spraying some cutworms with Ammo."

Ralph Bagwell, Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "Thrips are the heaviest I've seen in some time. In extreme cases, I've seen fields where maturity will be set back 20 to 30 days. The fields didn't have treatments at planting, and in a lot of cases they weren't sprayed even after reaching threshold. These fields won't set fruit for some time. I looked at

a field Wednesday that had five true leaves and was only 6" when it should have been 10". Nodes were stacked and the terminal was about to blow out. I think we will see the full scope of this later when fields should be squaring but they aren't. We've got some cutworms but not at problem levels. In reduced tillage fields, most people put out a pyrethroid behind the planter. For a world of people, Orthene on the seed has been their only thrip control measure. Temik helps, but it takes time for Temik to get into the plant, so the Orthene held back pressure early. Lack of Orthene isn't the only reason for thrips this year. Conditions were favorable. But lack of the seed treatment has aggravated things."

Tony Anderson, Assistant Manager, UPA-Midsouth, Rayville, La.: "Some thrip treatments are being made in Tensas Parish. Their crop is a little ahead of ours. We're just about finished planting in Richland Parish, and some replanting is taking place due to the weather."

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Mike Sartor, Sartor's Ag Consulting Services, Clinton, Miss.: "We haven't sprayed for many thrip. Most of my cotton had Temik, and it's been activated by rains. The lack of Orthene seed treatments pushed my growers to go with Temik. We have sprayed some fields planted with Gaucho-treated seed. All my Temik fields look good except for disease on leaves. I'm not sure about the pathogen. We've had so much rain and wind, and it's spattered dirt on leaves. We've got a lot of shot holes. We've sprayed some cutworms two weeks ago. Most of our cotton had Ammo behind the planter. Our stand counts are running 42,000 to 47,000 plants, which is just about the way I like it. I've got everything from no-till cotton just emerging to some cotton with five true leaves."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Coordinator: "Cutworms are somewhat bad in the northeastern part of the state. While less than 5% of the acreage had to be treated, a lot more sustained damage but not at treatable levels. There are a lot of thrips out there and treatments were being made. I heard about some Temik-treated cotton that had to be sprayed in the southern part of the state where it was dry and the material didn't get activated. Where infurrow or seed treatments were used, control is holding up pretty well in most cases. The biggest thing for us has been the amount of replanting. Right at 5% probably has been replanted. A good deal of the crop was planted before a 3" packing rain two

weeks ago in some areas."

Bill Brooks, Crockett Farmers Co-op, Alamo, Tenn.: "We're nearly 90% finished planting in this area as of today (Thursday), and the crop is 50% to 60% emerged. On our April cotton, thrips are really starting to take a toll. Bidrin and Dimethoate have gone out. Some farmers have gotten into trouble by cutting infurrow insecticides, and that will set back the crop."

Jack McDaniel, Technical Services Director (S. Ark. and La.), Terra, Oak Ridge, La.: "We're about 90% planted in north Louisiana and south Arkansas. From .5" to 5" of rain fell Monday night. Some places are still too dry and some are still too wet. Where rain was the heaviest, it could be next Monday before people are back into the fields. Replanting probably will be necessary where we had the excessive rains, and some fields are so dry we won't see any emergence until we do have another rain. We're seeing seedling diseases and thrip pressure. We probably had more people than usual who decided to leave off soil insecticides. Boll weevil traps are full and have been for several weeks. This year could start off as a tough battle."

Ron Seward, Extension Cotton Entomologist, Jackson, Tenn.: "We hope to be mostly through with planting today (Friday). In a few cases scattered around, plants are dying where fungicides weren't put down. Decisions have to be made quickly about whether to replant. A small amount of cutworm activity is be-

ing reported but nothing to be concerned about right now. Some thrip populations are building. Boll weevil numbers are slightly below 1998, but that was the highest year on record in Tennessee. We could see significant numbers to deal with in the next few weeks, and we will need to be careful about correctly timing pinhead treatments. Traps are showing 20 to 100 weevils per week, compared to 1998 when we saw some at 500 to 600 a week. This time last year, we had peak emergence. If this is our peak emergence now, it's lower than last year but still significantly above average."

Gordon Andrews, Mississippi Area Extension Entomologist, Stoneville, Miss.: "We're seeing thrips in the field where Temik wasn't used. Where we had lower rates or it didn't get activated, there's been movement into the field. We're almost to the third true leaf stage, and with this warm weather we might grow through some of the thrip activity. I think that a lot of folks didn't realize that seed weren't triple treated this year. If we get into a period of cool nights, thrips could hurt us. We're hearing spotty reports of cutworms, mainly where cotton was planted too close to burndown. Overall, we've had more damage from sandblasting, wind and rain. There's been a lot of replanting in parts of fields, which will make management more complicated all the way through harvest."