

AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

Overview:

Crop conditions remain variable. Some areas are off to an excellent start, while others continue to struggle. Squaring is reported throughout the region. Drought remains a factor in southern Louisiana. Storms in the last weekend of May damaged stands in northeastern Arkansas and western Mississippi.

Thrips are winding down in many parts of the southern Delta but remain active farther north. Aphid populations are building in Louisiana and are being reported to some degree in other states.

Insect Reports:

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Coordinator: "We're still having some thrips control problems. Charles Allen's report last week (see AgFax, May 30) indicates a high percentage of western flower thrips in much of the state, so we have to be careful about selecting a material that is effective on this insect. We're also hearing about some control problems with materials that normally are effective on western flower thrips. In

some cases, rates might have been a little low, which could have made a difference."

Wade Worley, Ind. Consultant, Sumner, Miss.: "Our cotton was pretty beaten up by a storm last weekend that included high winds and a good deal of sand blasting. The half inch of rain with the storm helped bring some cotton up that had been sitting in the dust. Most of my cotton is in the third and fourth true leaf stage, with some at six leaves. We haven't had much trouble with cutworms or thrips. Most of our fields had Temik, and we sprayed less than 2% for thrips. We probably will get our first boll weevil treatment Monday."

Harold Lambert, Ind. Consultant, Innis, La.: "We're in a record drought and have been missing all the rain. Some cotton looks pretty good and, in general, the crop still looks okay. But we could use some prolonged showers right now to help keep things going. Thrips and plant bug pressure is probably less than would be expected, though we have scattered fields where one end shows a presence of plant bugs. It looks like if we don't get a rain by next week, quite a few fields with

thrips pressure and/or aphids may have to be treated. Corn already has been hurt by lack of rain. One or two late planted cotton fields have been waiting for rain."

Reynold Minsky, Ind. Consultant, Lake Providence, La.: "We're seeing a few spots where plant bugs have flared up, even after Malathion applications. We're not sure why, and we just found this Thursday. It may be an application problem. We're finding a good many aphids in spots. Worm eggs are running 6% to 7% in general. Our traps aren't up, but I've checked some Extension traps and it appears to be budworms with some bollworms in the population. Cotton is averaging six nodes and squaring a little early. Even the Fibermax 832 is squaring at the 8th and 9th nodes, and some has fruited back to the fifth and is putting on a sucker and squaring there, too. We've had nearly perfect weather for this crop. In Chicot County (Ark.) and Madison Parish, the crop has made a start that's as good or better than 1991."

Tony Anderson, Manager, UAP-Midsouth, Tallulah, La.:
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“We’ve made a good start. All we need at the moment is a little more rain, partly because corn is tasseling and has more demand. A little aphid is showing up. Eradication kicked off pretty heavily, and a couple of consultants said Thursday they were finding aphid behind the treatments. A little Provado and Bidrin have been going out for aphids in the last few days.”

Mike Sartor, Ind. Consultant, Sartor’s Ag Consulting, Clinton, Miss.: “Cotton is looking much better now, and we’ve got from four true leaves up to plants with three squares. I haven’t encountered much insect pressure since spraying for cutworms earlier. Our only thrips treatments have been where the farmer decided not to use Temik, and it required two treatments. Where it looked like thrips damage, we never found them to any extent and concluded damage was mainly due to wind. A rain would be a blessing right now. It would really give the cotton a boost.”

John Raymond Bassie, Ind. Consultant, Bassie’s Agri Service, Cleveland, Miss.: “Wind has played heck with our cotton, and we’ve had more of a thrips problem than I’ve seen in the last five to six years. Replanting has been required on about 15% of our acreage. A lot of our cotton has been treated three times for thrips, and the western flower thrips is the one giving us the most problem. We’ve applied a little bit of everything labeled, but mainly a lot of Orthene has gone out. In some cases, it appears that the wind has been blowing thrips back into fields, and we’ve still got to watch them.”

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: “Aphids have really started to explode in the last 10 days, and populations are beginning to get

relatively high across the state. Eradication spraying has started, and quite a few fields are on their second Malathion application. But I don’t think the aphid thing is completely related to eradication treatments. I’ve been finding aphids for the last three weeks, and numbers started building about 10 days ago, which was before the first Malathion treatments. This was going to happen anyway, though eradication spraying is maybe making it a little worse. There does seem to be a relationship between the amount of foliar treatments for thrips and the severity of aphid pressure. Aphids are building now where Temik or Gaucho were used and foliar weren’t applied, but it’s taken a lot longer for these fields to be pressured. Cotton, overall, seems to be growing quite well, but the southern part of our production area desperately needs rain.”

Dale Wells, Ind. Consultant, Cotton Services, Inc., Leachville, Ark.: “We’re finding aphids in spots. Nothing is at a treatable level, but it’s not hard to run across a spot in the field with aphids. Cotton looked pretty good going into last week, but severe storms — including winds, blowing sand, hail and some tornado activity — really beat the crop to pieces. We’re still spraying a few fields for thrips, and we will start looking for pinhead treatments next week. In the last two to three days, cotton looks like it’s beginning to turn around, but this has been a pretty tough start.”

Claude Bonner, Ind. Consultant, Cotton Specialists of Ark, Inc., N. Little Rock, Ark.: “We’re just about to get through thrips. They’ve been horrendous. Some products worked a little better than others, but it looks like they’re in hand now. Depending on the situation, we made from zero to three treatments.

Aphids are common. They aren’t in high numbers, but we’re seeing them on plants scattered across fields. I’ve seen a smattering of beet and yellowstriped armyworms and bollworms.”

Bill Brooks, Crockett Farmers Co-op, Alamo, Tenn.: “Thrips are infesting most fields, from seedling cotton all the way to fourth true leaf and in fields that had Temik and Thimet. It’s such a huge population that it’s overwhelming in-furrow treatments. We’ve sprayed about 75% of our cotton for thrips, with some sprayed twice. It appears to be western flower thrips in a large part of the population. Boll weevil numbers are pretty high, and we’re finding some scattered terminal feeding in older cotton and a few weevils. We started seeing pinheads last week and will start deciding on those treatments next week. We’re picking up a few aphids, more than we normally see in young cotton but nothing at treatable levels.”

Craig Massey, Area IPM Specialist, Brownsville, Tenn.: “We’re still treating thrips wide open and expect two to three applications on some younger cotton. Counts are running 12-13 per plant in some fields. Control with OPs is running 80%, which means that after treatment we’re still above threshold in those cases. Populations vary, with western flower thrips predominant in the south and a mix of species above the Hatchie River. Plant bugs are showing up on cotton on Presidents Island in the 6-8% range and treatments are starting. Scattered worms are evident, mainly bollworms and yellowstriped armyworms. One no-till field was hit with European corn borers. A little spider mite is showing up, and aphids are starting to build. North of the Hatchie in zones II and III, we’ve got a surplus of boll weevils.”