

AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

Crop Conditions:

Some areas in the eastern side of the Midsouth received much needed rains late in the week. Parts of northeastern Louisiana are becoming critically dry.

The crop still looks ragged due to wind and sand blasting. Wind continues to delay some herbicide treatments and also is slowing progress as eradication spraying programs start up again.

Thrips remain a concern on a wide basis, and western flower thrips are being singled out as a predominate species in numerous places.

Just as we were preparing this issue to go out Saturday morning, we received an e-mail report concerning thrips populations in Arkansas. The report -- from Charles Allen, Area Extension Entomologist -- specified that:

In the Southeast (to Pine Bluff and Dewitt) collections averaged 24% tobacco thrips and 76% western flower thrips. More locations were sampled in the southeast part of the state than in other parts of the state, he noted.

In central Arkansas (Pine Bluff and Dewitt to Lonoke and West Memphis), field averages showed 53% tobacco thrips and 47% western flower thrips.

Collections in northeast Arkansas showed 71% tobacco thrips and 29% western flower thrips.

Insect Reports:

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Coordinator: "Thrips are still bad. We're also still getting a few cutworm calls, so it's not behind us yet. There are some weird things going on, too. A few areas south of Pine Bluff had to be treated for bollworms where they were eating the terminals on seedling cotton. Aphids are building in a lot of areas. Seeing any amount of them this early can be an indicator that it will be a bad aphid year. With some of the over-the-top treatments that are being made, that could flare aphids. The indication is that we have western flower thrips. Monitor seems to be giving good control. There also is a tremendous boll weevil population coming out of diapause. I'm getting reports of them feeding on terminals in both

the north and south parts of the state, and I'm seeing a little of that, myself. Overall, this is the worst start I can remember in 15 years."

Chuck Farr, Mid-South Ag Consultants, Crawfordsville, Ark.: "Between 20% and 30% of our cotton was planted from April 20 to May 2, and it's struggled ever since it came out of the ground with wind, sand, seedling disease and thrips. Just about all of it has been treated for thrips with Orthene at 1:3 or 1:4. Fields with higher numbers of western flower thrips are getting higher rates. A couple of growers used Bidrin. In our second round of planting we saw more shift to stacked gene varieties to pick up worm control in late season conditions. Weevil numbers are high. We're about 10 days away from first pinhead treatments."

Trent LeMastus, Ind. Consultant, Cleveland, Miss.: "I'm finding light numbers of plant bugs, and just a few fields justify spraying for boll weevils, based on trap counts. Eradication sprays start Monday. On some late planted cotton, we're still finding thrips, and

Continued on next page

Control Early-Season Pests With Curacron®

Curacron provides effective and economical control of tough early-season pests, such as tarnished plant bug, aphid, tobacco budworm, bollworm, and mites. Curacron is an effective ovicide and larvacide. It works through both contact and ingestion activity. Curacron penetrates the leaf surface through translaminar action for excellent rainfastness and good photo stability. – SPONSORED MESSAGE

Curacron®
NOVARTIS

©2000 Novartis. Novartis Crop Protection, Inc., Greensboro, N.C. 27419-8300.

Curacron® is a Restricted Use Pesticide. Important: Always read and follow label instructions before buying or using these products. Curacron® is a trademark of Novartis.

we had to clean them up this week. We have a field that actually has aphids sapping four- to six-leaf cotton, and it will have to be treated next week. Spider mites are present early on some two- to four-leaf cotton. Two fields with mites had them last year, but two others didn't, and we haven't done any more spraying in these fields this year than we did in 1999. We're finding a few yellowstriped armyworms in terminals of some older cotton. Overall, we don't have any big problems this week, although the two previous weeks were pretty ugly due to thrips and cutworm activity."

Blake Layton, Mississippi Extension Cotton Entomologist: "First, a reminder that we need to make sure every cotton field in the state has boll weevil traps around it. If it doesn't, that means the eradication people don't know about it, so it won't get trapped or treated. We also need to be aware that some of the aphids we might be seeing right now are not cotton aphids. This has happened in plots on the campus where they moved into the cotton and then were gone in seven to ten days. Enough aphids might cause some stunting, but watch closely and don't jump to an immediate conclusion."

Terry Erwin, Moorehouse Parish Extension Agent, Bastrop, La.: "We're seeing a lot of thrips damage. Many people didn't use systemics, counting on foliar applied treatments if they were needed. With all the rain we've had, they couldn't make timely applications. They're out there now applying Orthene or other materials. In some cases, we're already seeing where terminals were damaged. We also have had to treat some cutworms, even in many fields where farmers put down insecticides be-

hind the planter. We've got replanting due to cutworm damage and seedling disease. Some of these roots look ugly, and plants are just now coming out of that and putting on healthy, white lateral roots."

Craig Massey, Area IPM Specialist, Brownsville, Tenn.: "We're still fighting thrips wide open, with three to eight per plant in the worst fields. Infurrow treatments have helped some, but not in every case. High populations of western flower thrips are dominate in a good many areas, but the population mix has some variability, with soybean banded thrips and other thrips present. Some fields are on their second treatment and a few are on their third. We're trying to get past the fifth true leaf. This is the worst I've seen thrips going all the way back to when I was 12 years old and checking cotton with my father. Pressure seems heavier in low lying areas and no-till fields, but thrips are being found pretty widely. We're seeing a few aphids in spots. Cutworms seem to be behind us."

Bert Falkner, Ind. Consultant, Land Service, Aberdeen, Miss.: "Thrips are terrible. Some cotton that didn't have an at-planting insecticide is on its second treatment. The cotton with Temik has held up pretty well. Growers who planted no-till this year got a stand. In the no-till fields, we had more cutworm problems and also some odd things we don't normally see. In some fields, the burrowing bug was present in heavier concentrations than I've seen in the past in seedling cotton. We got some control with pyrethroids but it wasn't adequate in a number of treatments. We've also had snails on the underside of leaves but they aren't doing much. Our cotton is 65% to 70% to a stand, ranging from one to five

true leaves. The remainder of our crop is planted but not up. About 80% of our area got a rain Thursday night, with up to 1.5" in places. We're hoping that gets the rest of the crop up."

Steve Schutz, Ind. Consultant, Coushatta, La.: "We're 90% planted and up, from one leaf to pinhead. We're predominately Roundup Ready, and almost everything has had one shot of Roundup. Gaucho worked to about the second true leaf, and we've had to spray dimethoate in a few spots for thrips. We've had root diseases and disintegration in some cases. Seed-coated fungicides failed. Other fungicides held up pretty well. We've got fields where nearly every seed came up. A lot of this cotton was planted in real cold sandy soils with a lot of rain. We're finding regular cotton thrips and have seen some fleahoppers. With all the rain and heat we've had, we expect to start Pix treatments next week and probably will max out on Pix in a lot of our crop this year."

Roger Carter, Agricultural Management Services, Clayton, La.: We're seeing a slight buildup of aphids where thrips or cutworms have been treated. Eradication treatments began this week, but the wind has held up a lot of applications so far. We're finding a level of beet armyworms scattered throughout Catahoula, Concordia, Avoyelles and Tensas Parishes. We're seeing a good deal of wind damage. The damage is very similar to thrips, so we've had to be careful in trying to distinguish between the two and closely check thrips populations to make sure treatments are actually warranted.