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AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

July 10, 2001

Most of the Midsouth needs a rain. Some dryland cotton is blooming out the top. The bollworm flight expected last week has not generated the egg and worm levels that had been anticipated. Most insect pressure is light, and the aphid fungus has moved farther north.

The following reports were made between late Monday afternoon and today. We also include a synopsis of Roger Carter's week-end crop report from east central Louisiana.

Crop Reports:

Jack McDaniel, Technical Services Rep, Agro Distributors. (La. and S. Ark.), Oak Ridge, La.: "The insect situation is light. We've got little populations of several different things. A few bollworm moths are flying around, but egg lay is light. We're picking up a plant bug increase, some brown and green stinkbugs, and saltmarsh caterpillars are coming back. Grasshoppers have damaged some terminals. We have some spots where the aphid fungus hasn't controlled the pest yet, and in a few drier areas we've got

spider mites. There's enough accumulation that cleanup treatments are being made in some cases. Growth and fruiting are phenomenal. Whether we can hold all of it is another matter. Most of the irrigation pipe has been laid out, and about 40% is running. The rest will start going if we don't get a rain soon."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "The fungus is pretty much full blown in SE Ark. up through Pine Bluff. We didn't get nearly the egg and worm development expected from the moths we've been having. Stinkbugs are still bad, and a few people are treating. Where growers can keep up with watering the cotton looks good, but we're heading down fast in dryland fields and in cases where watering wasn't timely. I'm already seeing some cotton blooming out the top."

Bob Griffin, Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark.: "We're treating a few fields adjoining corn for plant bugs. We're seeing a few bollworm moths but no eggs. By this weekend we might have eggs, and that would coincide with full bloom on Bt cotton. In the last 3-4

days we've treated 7-8 fields for aphids with Centric at 2 oz/acre and Bidrin at 1:16 gal/acres. We've treated about a dozen fields for plant bugs in the last week. Our really good irrigated fields are running 8 NAWF, but we've also got cotton approaching cutout, and we will terminate some fields within 3 weeks. Some of our cotton is loaded up so well it's scary, but it's going to be impossible to keep up with irrigation on a lot of the crop if we don't get a rain soon."

Joe Townsend, Ind. Consultant, Coahoma, Miss.: "Aphids are building rapidly. We don't have a great deal of cotton at treatment level yet but we could be spraying every field by the middle of next week if fungus fails to develop. We're treating plant bugs next to corn and are still spraying stinkbugs but not as much as a week ago. We've treated 30-35% of our cotton for stinkbugs. Worms are someplace else. Even in the corn there aren't any roasting ears that would need their ends cut off due to worm damage. People are rolling out pipe and running water in some of it. Most of the cotton isn't stressed, but

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growers are trying to stay ahead of the curve. All the pivots are running. The crop is maturing so fast that it won't take much more water to finish it. Our good cotton is 5-7 NAWF now."

Charles Denver, Consultant, Agrilience., Dermott, Ark.: "Insect pressure is really low. We had a little round of worms and a light egg lay, but it probably won't reach treatable levels. Some aphids are present but the fungus has hit them. Plant bugs are out there but numbers are going down, whether due to eradication or something else. The challenge right now is keeping up with the demand for water with these high temperatures and dry conditions. Where cotton is being watered it's holding pretty well. But in unirrigated fields things are shutting down fast."

David Skinner, Ind. Consultant, Starkville, Miss.: "There's very little going on. In my Bt cotton I've been finding 2-3% eggs on dried blooms and tags. The highest plant bug populations are 7-8%. I am finding a lot of natural shed where plants with good loads are throwing off some small bolls. I'm expecting our usual bollworm flight around the third week of July. But a lot of people are pulling corn to put up, and they say it doesn't have worms in it. Our late July bollworm flight tends to come out of that, so I'm wondering if the flight will amount to much. Every pump is running on our irrigated Delta cotton. Except for one dry spot, though, my hill cotton has had good rainfall patterns."

Craig Massey, Area IPM Specialist, Brownsville, Tenn.: "We're still fighting plant bugs in places. Stinkbugs have lightened up from last week but remain a problem, and treatments are being made. Browns are the predominate one, but we've got greens, too. A lot of fields have what we consider medium levels of

aphids. Some treatments are going out, and there's no sign of the fungus. Mites are being spot-treated where they're bad. We've got some rain building in parts of West Tennessee today (Tuesday), and that may help on aphids and mites. We had light budworm populations last week in some areas. They were running 5-10% and have bumped up to 12% this week. We've got a good crop set, but rain is needed. We're 60-70% laid by now."

Ralph Bagwell, LSU Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "The biggest concern right now is water -- either there's too much or not enough. And there's not a great deal of geography separating the two extremes, maybe 30 miles between the two areas. On the insect front, we anticipated a bollworm flight last week, but for the most part we have yet to see a broadscale egg lay, just a few eggs and worms down low. Some treatments started yesterday (Monday). More treatments are apparently being made north of Interstate 20 than south of it, and it's spotty from one farm to another. And 20-30% is the high end, so by historic standards that's not overwhelming. We still have stinkbugs in low numbers on a fairly wide basis, and plant bugs are picking up slightly. We're out of the aphid business, thanks to the fungus. Leaf rollers are present in some fields in high numbers. In Concoria Parish one field had 1 per foot, the highest concentration I've ever seen. Despite rainfall extremes, we're in better shape than at this point in the last few years. Rain would help, though, in drier areas."

Merritt Holman, Arkansas Crop Technologies, Lonoke, Ark.: "We've had a trickle of worms, although moth traps indicate we should have quite a few. We're treating scattered fields with medium level pressure, and some treatments were for borderline populations

where plant bugs also were present. Aphids are building in a few places, with a little honeydew forming. If we don't get the fungus soon, treatments will be made within the next 10 days. Occasional treatments are being made for stinkbugs and plant bugs. Irrigated cotton is at 7-8 NAWF, but the crop is heading down where we can't water. We need a good rain."

Victor Roth, Roth Farm Service, Malden, Mo.: "We've got red spider mites in a couple of places where we tend to have them every year. We've treated a couple of fields for plant bugs. Weevils are at a low level with a few punctured squares, but nothing is at treatable levels. There's nothing much in the way of worms, either. I found a larvae today and a few eggs. Irrigation is going like crazy, and temperatures are unbearable for cotton and people."

From Sunday's crop report by Roger Carter, Agricultural Management Services, Inc., Clayton, La.: "Ammonium nitrate (100 lbs/ac) is being flown on many acres where rainfall has reduced our previously applied nitrogen. Plant bugs are returning. Immatures being found in abundance low on the stalks. Stink bugs have been present for some time and we are currently controlling those with methyl at 1:8. In many cases we are using combinations of methyl plus Orthene for stink bugs and plant bugs. Fungus has destroyed most of the aphid population, but some are returning. Bollworm/budworm numbers are increasing to treatable levels in most non-Bt cotton. Tracer at 1:70 by ground plus crop oil is the obvious choice...Found a few beet armyworms, yellowstriped armyworms and saltmarsh caterpillars, but none at treatable levels."