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AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

July 3, 2001

Several of our contacts this week say their areas are probably on the front end of a bollworm flight. Aphids are being treated in a few more areas, but fungus is now active at least as far north as I-20 in Louisiana. Plant bugs remain a problem in the upper Midsouth. Stinkbugs are heavy in a wide area in cotton, rice and soybeans.

Rains have been scattered, but some areas continue to miss showers. Irrigation is underway through many of the Delta counties.

The following reports were made between late Monday afternoon and late Tuesday afternoon.

Crop Reports:

Bill Brooks, Crockett Farmers Co-op, Alamo, Tenn.: "Blooms are showing widely now, and we're ranging between 10 and 15 nodes. A lot of the area had good rains in the last week, with most locations getting .5" to 2.5", and some up to 4". But some loca-

tions have missed recent rains, and spider mites treatments are being considered for some fields. Plant bugs are pretty much under control. We're still treating a few spots. Last Monday we started finding bollworms, based on moths we were seeing. They were running 2-3%, but it's thinned out this week. I picked up one worm egg this morning (Monday) and haven't found another one since then. Eradication has been going pretty well. In the last 3 weeks the counts on 700 traps in this area has dropped from 120 down to 30 and then down to 9 boll weevils."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "We've got a big bollworm flight coming into the southeastern part of the state. Numbers went up drastically today (Monday), with some traps yielding 300 moths. Most of the conventional cotton in that part of the state will start receiving applications Wednesday or Thursday. We've got to be careful. With this overhead heat right now, moths will lay down in the canopy, and you

won't necessarily find many eggs on top. We've got to be watching them on blooms in Bt cotton, too. This is a major flight. Stinkbugs are still real bad everywhere. There's a tremendous level in some fields. Threshold is 1 to 6 feet but we're finding them at 1 to 3 feet in some cases. Aphids are building real fast, and we could have a pretty good population across the state in 7-10 days. Predators and parasites have helped hold down aphids, but they're outbuilding that control now. A few fields are being treated, and tankmixes probably will be going out for aphids and bollworms. We're starting to see a few punctured squares in the south, but the eradication people appear to be doing a good job of running traps and keeping up on treatments."

Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.: "We're not treating anything in cotton right now. We've picked up a few little worms but not enough to even consider treating. Plant bugs are down and are nowhere close

Continued on next page

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to threshold. We're seeing a lot of stinkbugs but they're not at a point that it's a concern. Cotton is loading up good. Frequent showers have helped, and several areas have gotten quite a bit of rain. But we also have areas that missed showers. Some irrigation is underway."

Reynold Minsky, Minsky Consulting Service, Lake Providence, La.: "I don't believe I've ever seen cotton squaring as well as it is right now. We have plant bugs under control. We're treating a few fields for aphids, going with Provado. The fungus is moving rapidly. It's around Interstate 20 but hasn't made it up to this area yet. There's very little worm pressure, but we're seeing a lot of bollworm moths and anticipate a flight in the next week. We'll probably do a lot of overspraying if they materialize. They aren't in corn any longer."

John Raymond Bassie, Bassie's Agri-Service, Cleveland, Miss.: "I checked a lot of fields since Saturday and only found 19 acres that required treatments for plant bugs. In non-Bt cotton, we're finding 3-4% egg counts. In sweep nets in the non-Bt cotton we're also finding 3-4 saltmarsh caterpillars per 25 sweeps. They're just nibbling on leaves, but we'll start spraying if we see real damage. I'm probably finding 2 stinkbugs in the net per 25 sweeps, and I found one field today with a few aphids."

Wade Worley, Ind. Consultant, Sumner, Miss.: "Very little is going on. Plant bugs are real spotty. I'll see some in one part of a field, but most of the rest of the field doesn't have any. I'm not finding any worm eggs. Aphids are starting to build, but there's nothing close to treatment level. We've got

most of our irrigation running. Pivots are moving, and polypipe is being rolled out. The crop looks real good overall. It's somewhat late but catching up, plus fruiting real well and holding most of it."

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "We're in the quiet before the storm. Right now, we're probably on the front end of a bollworm flight and anticipate it within the week as they move out of corn into cotton. We're finding stinkbugs in a few fields, and tarnished plant bugs are in some places, but they aren't widespread like they have been lately. Aphids are being treated, mainly in the northern part of the state. But the fungus is getting established in many areas, and a lot of people are holding off with the expectation that aphids will crash. We've been getting scattered showers over the last 2-3 weeks. Most of the crop is in bloom. This is one of the best crops going into July that we've had in several years. For a change, we're not going into July with drought stress. Generally, moisture is good, and plants are responding."

Claude Bonner, Ind. Consultant, Cotton Specialists of Ark, Inc., N. Little Rock, Ark.: "Nothing alarming is going on at the moment. We're finding a few plant bugs. Stinkbugs are building in a few fields and are getting to be a bit of a concern, especially where's we're putting on a boll load. Aphids are still low in general and building a little. We've been expecting a big bollworm push but based on trap counts it doesn't appear to have started yet. We're trying to get around to everything with water and are cleaning up a few fields.

Overall, the crop looks good."

Phil Gurley, Gurley's Agricultural Consulting Service, Kennett, Mo.: "A lot of the crop is blooming, and it's really loaded up, especially where growers have irrigated. We're still fighting plant bugs hard and heavy, and spider mites are a problem in some fields. We're treating mites with Kelthane and Capture, and I've recommended Zephyr but don't think anybody has used it yet. Mites have been persistent. We've treated some cotton twice and may have to go a third time. There's a little worm activity, but beneficials have been active, too. However, there probably is a flight coming. The people with corn tell me there's a worm in every ear right now. Aphids have been spotty, with populations going up and down. One area along the Arkansas state line got 6" of rain last week, but most fields still need a good, general rain."

Steve Schutz, Ind. Consultant, Coushatta, La.: "We've had ample rainfall in most places over the last week, from 1.5" to 6". One grower recorded 10" on one farm during June. We've been at a real easy pace with the cotton lately but are seeing some fleahoppers and plant bugs now. We're still finding a few brown stinkbugs but so far have only sprayed a few fields that have bolls. Pix and the generic growth regulators seem to be holding well, considering the conditions lately. We saw a lot of aphids last week and planned on spraying, but we rechecked after it rained and sent the Furidan back to the warehouse. They were mostly gone. Where we've had aphids in pockets they've been taken out either by predators or the fungus."