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AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

June 19, 2001

Plant bugs continue to be treated on a wide basis. Budworms are building in some areas, though bollworms are present in certain locations. Hot conditions are sapping soil moisture. Irrigation has started in a few fields, and growers are gearing up to water on a wider basis if rain fails to develop this week. Growers also are playing catch-up with weeds and grass where weather delayed herbicide treatments earlier.

The following reports were made Tuesday.

Crop Reports:

Joe Townsend, Ind. Consultant, Coahoma, Miss.: "We're getting a handle on weeds now. There's still a pretty big problem with tarnished plant bugs. We're putting on Centric, Bidrin and Orthene. All are giving pretty good results, but plant bugs just keep coming. We've sprayed some fields 4 times. In some conventional cotton in Coahoma and Tallahatchie Counties we've had some pretty heavy tobacco budworm pressure. We've mainly been using Tracer, Denim and Steward. There aren't any bollworms to speak

of. When I check corn silks I usually can find bollworm eggs all over the silk. Finding 10 per silk isn't unusual. But this week you can look a long time to find just one egg. Aphids are present. They aren't at treatable levels but have been building. A great deal of Pix is going out, and in some fields 8 oz. isn't slowing it down. We already have fields with over 16 oz. The weather is absolutely perfect for cotton."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "We're still picking up plant bugs here and there. It's in areas outside of eradication zones or in places where weevil numbers haven't been high enough to trigger malathion treatments. Weevil numbers have been extremely low. Moth trap counts came up over the weekend, and a few fields are being treated for budworms in south Ark. and a bit up into east central Ark. Grasshoppers are still building along edges, and there are some spot treatments in cotton and soybeans. We're finding stinkbugs in different locations, and there's a little feeding on squares. They're primarily browns, which is a concern because pyrethroids don't appear to do a very good job on them. We can treat with Orthene in

cotton but don't have a state-use label for it in soybeans. The alternative is methyl. It's getting dry. This kind of heat really pulls out the moisture fast. If we don't get some good showers in the short term, irrigation is going to be needed pretty widely to maintain yield potential."

Bob Griffin, Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark.: "Plant bugs are pretty much in check. We've been treating the last 10-14 days. We treated some yellowstriped armyworms in small cotton last week where they were eating terminals and leaves. Aphids were starting to build last week but have pretty much disappeared since then. I saw my first bloom yesterday (Monday) and expect to have 2,000 to 3,000 acres blooming by the middle of next week and 75% blooming by July 4th. We could be terminating a lot of these fields by mid August, which is in line with our normal trend. We're getting dry, and I've told my growers to start irrigating. If we don't get a rain on some of this dryland acreage in a week or two we could be in trouble. Eradication is going smoothly in my area. Basically, there are no weevils to treat. Of the acreage I check, 30-40%

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hasn't been sprayed for weevils so far this year. We have stinkbugs in cotton, but we won't treat unless numbers increase and we start losing squares. We're finding both greens and browns. So far, we've put a minimum of 10-15 oz. of Pix on every field and on our strongest fields we're up to 22 oz."

Merritt Holman, Arkansas Crop Technologies, Lonoke, Ark.: "We're not seeing a lot of insects. We're battling a few plant bugs here and there, and grasshoppers are coming off turnrows and grassy bayous in places. We're seeing an occasional worm or egg in non-Bt cotton, but it's very, very light overall. Some of our area got 1" to 1.5" of rain last week but other locations got .5" or less, and cotton in drier places is really throwing on the breaks. Terminal growth is slowing down while square development continues, so you can look down that cotton plant and see bigger squares near the top. It's still growing some. If we can catch a rain, things will look good. If we don't, irrigation will start in 7-10 days and that will complicate some layby applications. This cotton doesn't have a very good root system at the moment. We've got a lot of complicated weed control decisions where grass, morningglory or pigweed came through in Roundup Ready fields. In conventional cotton, we were so concerned about weeds getting out of hand that treatments were fairly timely. Most guys have some Bladex left over and are using that and MSMA. There's also a little Caparol and MSMA going out."

Jack McDaniel, Technical Services Rep, Agro Distributors. (La. and S. Ark.), Oak Ridge, La.: "We're still cleaning up after tropical storm Allison. Most people are trying to get post-directed herbicide work done and moving toward layby. It's dry everywhere already. We got a lot of rain but everybody is running again. Tarnished plant bugs are still a persistent problem in older cotton, and we're begin-

ning to see stinkbugs in isolated areas, which is unusual this early. We sprayed some June generation tobacco budworms in about 60% of our conventional cotton, which isn't that many acres. We've got a good bit of corn earworms in corn along with some corn borers, so that's an indication of at least a moderate amount of activity that's possible in cotton. Saltmarsh caterpillars seemed to have cycled out in my area."

Mark Tackett, Manager, Terral Agri Service, Oak Grove, La.: "Cotton is growing fast and squaring heavily. It's jumping more than I've seen in recent years. Everytime anyone picks up something for plant bugs they're also getting Pix, and some Pix is going out by itself. Plant bugs continue to be pretty tenacious. We've been fighting them 7-10 days. Aphids are starting to show up. Last week, I found 1-2 in terminals, and this week it's 3-4. With aphids out there, we've shifted from phosphates to Orthene, hoping that will be a little softer on beneficials. We're also using some Provado. It's a fairly good plant bug material and strong on aphids. We think we've had our big June lay. It lasted 12-13 days and ended last Thursday or Friday. I'm finding 4-5% eggs in about a third of my fields. There isn't much moth activity, and I expect in a week or so we could have another big outbreak."

Charles Denver, Consultant, Agrilience, Dermott, Ark.: "We've got quite a few worms, though they're tapering off. It's mostly bollworms right now, but we haven't treated any yet. Budworms were prevalent 10 days ago, and we mostly used Tracer and something for plant bugs. We're seeing very few aphids, just one here and there. It's dry, and a good number of people are irrigating and others are scrambling to get ready. Without a rain this week a lot of crops will need irrigation."

David Skinner, Ind. Consultant, Starkville, Miss.: "I'm finding blooms

in my Delta cotton around Belzoni. The crop isn't quite blooming in my hill fields yet. We're battling a few plant bugs and setting 85-90% squares everywhere. Eggs and worms are low. We've got adequate moisture everywhere, but we do hope to get that rain that's in the forecast later this week. Compared to this time last year, we're in great shape. In mid June in 2000 we were already behind on rainfall and in trouble."

Gordon Andrews, Extension Area Entomologist, Stoneville, Miss.: "Plant bugs are still hanging around wild hosts and in corn and requiring some treatments. The calls I'm getting right now are mostly asking about what they can use on plant bugs that will last longer. Worms are starting to go downhill in some fields. We're seeing old damage but egg counts are trickling down. We're between generations right now. Last week it was mostly budworms, but the week before that it was mainly bollworms. The thing that concerns me is that there was no quick peak. This activity was spread out over a two-week period, and that might be a bad sign for some of this later cotton in terms of how much pressure we could find as those fields reach a vulnerable stage."

Victor Roth, Roth Farm Service, Malden, Mo.: "About the only thing we're chasing at the moment is plant bugs. They're a big concern now that we're into our second and third week of squaring. They're not showing up in every field. They are mainly coming out of no-till cover crops or weeds that were in fields at planting. We treated one conventional field today, but most if not all of the other treatments were in conservation tillage systems. Rains held us for a while but it's getting hot, and we have an area that's missed most of the weather patterns. We're ready for a good, general rain. We're 10-14 days from blooms, and cotton is squaring rather normally."