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AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

May 22, 2001

Since last Friday most parts of our coverage area received rainfall. Some places picked up only a few tenths, but most locations caught good showers with accumulations from 1" to 3". In scattered areas totals ran up to 5".

Saltmarsh caterpillars are cycling down, according to reports from areas where they were heavy in the last two weeks, though the pest remains a factor. Several of our contacts noted aphids on young cotton.

Cool weather this week could slow down cotton growth, a potential concern as thrips pressure builds.

The following reports were made late Monday and Tuesday.

Crop Reports:

Harold Lambert, Ind. Consultant, Innis, La.: "A few spots got a decent rain but many areas only received a few tenths. It's pretty dry, and we needed more than that. We're having to spray thrips in a number of places. Any little error or complication with Temik application has shown up in this hot, dry weather. And we're finding thrips related to the plant's inability to pick up enough Temik. We haven't had to spray all of our cotton

but certainly more than we're accustomed to treating. We've been piggy-backing treatments where we can with our Roundup applications."

Mike Sartor, Ind. Consultant, Sartor's Ag Consulting, Clinton, Miss.: "I'm in Hinds County today (Tuesday) and it looks like we got a pretty good rain. Some areas received up to 2". Rains up until now have been extremely spotty. I drove across a three-quarter mile Delta field last week that was dusty on one end and so muddy on the other end that I had to shift into 4-wheel drive. We've got cotton ranging in some cases from just coming up after last week's rain to some on the same farm with 6 nodes and pin squares by the end of this week. We're spraying thrips in a few fields where we had application problems with Temik. We mostly got enough moisture for good uptake otherwise. I've seen very little disease. We are finding a few winged aphids in fields, which I hope isn't some indication of what we're going to see later."

Dale Wells, Ind. Consultant, Cotton Services, Inc., Leachville, Ark.: "Over the course of the weekend we got a little over 4". We were pretty dry here. Over the last two months a lot of rain activity went all around us, and

we've been dry enough that we were watering up cotton. The rain is helping everything. The only concern right now is being able to get the second shot on the Roundup Ready cotton after all this rain. The fields will be pretty hard to get around. But compared to the way things looked last week, we can deal with this problem. We're finding a few thrips on cotton. We aren't spraying anything. The Temik is starting to wear down, and I'm concerned because we've got all these low temperatures over the next few days, so the cotton won't be growing as thrips pressure increases. Toward the end of the week we may start some treatments. We are starting to build an aphid population. Last week when I walked across fields I would see a plant now and then with an aphid. This week I started seeing plants here and there with 10-12 aphids on them."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "We got pretty decent rainfall in several spots that really needed it, and that will help a lot. The saltmarsh caterpillar is still working on us pretty good in some areas, mainly south of Interstate 40. I noted that Blake Layton (Extension cotton entomologist in Mississippi) gained good control with Intrepid, and that's what appears to be

Continued on next page

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giving the most economical control here, too. We've got tests out that we will recheck Thursday. Thrips we're seeing aren't a big problem, and that's good news. There's a little cutworm activity, mainly associated with low- and no-till fields. The rain really helped. But at this point things will be dry again in another 7 days, so I'm sure hoping there's more rain coming soon."

Reynold Minsky, Ind. Consultant, Lake Providence, La.: "We received anywhere from 1" to 2" of rain in most areas, and it was needed. The cotton wasn't suffering where it had made a good stand. But the rain will help where we have some acreage that will be replanted. It was planted half dry and never got a rain, so at least now we should have enough moisture for good germination and emergence. We've sprayed 200-300 acres for thrips, either where Temik wasn't used or where cotton didn't grow off very well."

Wade Worley, Ind. Consultant, Sumner, Miss.: "We've gotten three little rain events over the last 5-6 days and totals amounted to only about .5". It was enough to settle the dust. We're not really dealing with any insect problems right now. There is a myriad of insects in the field, like plant bug nymphs on seedling cotton and a few yellowstriped armyworms and saltmarsh caterpillars. We're also finding stinkbugs on seedling cotton. Nothing requires treatment. A lot of this appears to be associated with minimum-till and no-till fields where weeds were sprayed after the cotton was coming up and this was about the time surrounding vegetation was drying up, too. Thrips pressure is real light this year. Our cotton really isn't in bad shape. Fields are dusty on top but plants have put down good roots and are searching for moisture. It's one of the best starts we've had in years."

Craig Massey, Area IPM Specialist, Brownsville, Tenn.: "We've got 15% to 20% of the crop with 4 true leaves and most of the rest at 1-3.

Maybe 10% to 15% of the crop is just coming up. We got 1.7" to 3" of rain in most parts of West Tennessee. It was slow and easy in some areas and a gully washer in others. Where cotton was treated with an infurrow material, thrips are running 3-4 per plant. They're mainly banded and soybean thrips along with some tobacco thrips. Treatments are going on. We're still treating some cutworms on emerging cotton. We had some false chinchbugs in small spots. Grasshoppers are starting to increase in field borders around cotton and soybeans. Before this rain there were a few spider mite treatments, and we're seeing a few aphids on seedling cotton. The cooler weather may prompt some thrips treatments next week because plant growth could be too slow to outpace pressure."

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "The central part of the state got 2" to 3" inches of rain, and at least 1" accumulated in many locales. I think everyone in Louisiana cotton country got some, and we needed it, no question about it. One nice thing is that the rain should clean up a lot of what I call trash insects. The latest one is the false chinchbug. That always seems to happen with a rain after you've accumulated a lot of odd insects in a dry spring like this one. Thrips have been real heavy, too. Saltmarsh caterpillars started dying down last week. We don't have a lot of spraying for them."

Bill Brooks, Crockett Farmers Co-op, Alamo, Tenn.: "Most areas around here received 2.5" to 3", in total. One area in Haywood County had 4" to 5" of rain, and some cotton was flooded out. Hail damage earlier in the month actually took out 1,000 to 2,000 acres in the county. One farmer replanted 600 acres. Other than that, cotton is generally off to a good start. Planting is mostly done. We've seen some thrips at threshold levels in 2- and 3-leaf cotton, and some sprays are going out with Roundup Ready treat-

ments, either Orthene or a pyrethroid at a light rate. Weevil counts are pretty low. There are a few hot spots, but we had a good, cold winter, and that will help a lot. Between the eradication program and treatments growers can put out, we've got a good chance to knock the weevil in the head. I'm just hoping people don't ignore the opportunity. I am concerned about the cold spell coming up and the fact that plants may not be growing as thrips pressure increases. Another concern is it's too wet to make Roundup treatments as a lot of this cotton is approaching its fourth true leaf."

Claude Bonner, Ind. Consultant, Cotton Specialists of Ark, Inc., N. Little Rock, Ark.: "Rainfall amounts this week ranged from .75" to 1.5", with most in the 1" to 1.5" range. We needed it desperately. Some of the small cotton on lower ends of fields barely came up to begin with and they were having a tough time developing roots to keep up with the downward movement of soil moisture. Cotton on better soils is looking pretty good. We're mainly concentrating on weed control right now. We have a few fields where thrips are a concern. We saw aphids last week and the week before but are finding only a few now and then after the rain. Perhaps the rain has removed some of that. We haven't seen much in the way of saltmarsh caterpillars for the last two days."

Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.: "We've got thrips coming in pretty good in places. We're also picking up a few saltmarsh caterpillars chewing leaves off in spots. So far, we haven't sprayed any, but we may have to treat if they get much worse in some areas."