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# AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

## May 30, 2001

Nearly all of our coverage area received at least some rain in the last week, with most of it developing between last Thursday and this Monday. Accumulations of up to 6" were reported in a few areas, but most totals ranged between 1" and 3". It was all needed. Hail damaged some stands. Parts of northern Louisiana, in particular, remain dry.

In some areas thrips pressure remains light, especially compared to last year's runaway pressure. No widescale insect outbreaks were noted. The following reports were gathered Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning.

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## Crop Reports:

**Terry Erwin, Morehouse Parish Extension agent, Bastrop, La.:** "Cotton is probably our best looking crop right now. We've got adequate moisture in the southern end of the parish, due to the fact that it caught some fronts moving through. But the northern end is bone dry and needs a rain. Cotton ranges from pre square to starting

to square and is fairly clean. Some plant bug treatments are going on. No weevils are showing up in traps. We've already got reports of stinkbugs in corn, and some treatments have been made."

**Jack McDaniel, Technical Services Rep, Agro Distributors. (La. and S. Ark.), Oak Ridge, La.:** "Most of our cotton is planted and up. Cool weather last week, with four nights in the 50s, set it back a little and triggered some seedling disease but nothing that the crop can't overcome. We continue to have thrips pressure as most of the infurrow treatments wear off. Insecticides are going out with Roundup. It's still dry in parts of Louisiana. Most of the recent rain fell in Arkansas. If it hasn't rained by the time growers finish applying Roundup, they probably will consider irrigating cotton. Right now they're too busy pumping water on corn to think about irrigating cotton."

**Joe Townsend, Ind. Consultant, Coahoma, Miss.:** "The big rains this week also included hail in several locations. In the worst case we had, it killed maybe 10% of the cotton. Most of the damage I've

seen wasn't so bad that the cotton can't grow out of it. We're about through spraying for saltmarsh caterpillars. Intrepid was what we used. We've sprayed a significant amount of no-till cotton for grasshoppers with .5 pound of Orthene. I've sprayed less than 5% of our cotton so far for plant bugs. This has mainly been our very exceptional cotton that's been protected from wind and already has 2-3 squares per plant. In that cotton, I'm finding a few bollworm eggs but nothing that requires treatment right now. It's been the lightest thrips year I can remember. Even in cotton that didn't have a systemic. We got 1.5" or more rain in a wide area and up to 6" in southern Tallahatchie County. I saw one straight levee rice field with so much water that you couldn't see the levees."

**Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.:** "We've still got a little bit of everything in our fields. Thrips remain a concern in some fields with younger stands. We're finding plant bugs in quite a few of our older cotton fields and treatments are un-

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derway. Plant bugs are mainly on edges and in things like horseweed. We found a few beet armyworms today and are hearing reports of them in Concordia and Franklin Parishes. Our two-month-old cotton has 3 fruiting nodes now."

**Mark Tackett, Manager, Terral Agri Service, Oak Grove, La.:** "Everybody I know is plowing cotton. They've just fertilized, and most are putting out Orthene for plant bugs. We've got some 5th and 6th node cotton. About 50% of the crop is just putting on pinheads. I talked with a boll weevil eradication worker in a field Friday that had 3 boll weevils in traps, and that was the only field where he had found any. I don't know of any applications so far. This year's wet, cold winter helped knock back those populations, I think. Fire ants are hard to find, too, even in pastures. We haven't had rain worth mentioning at our location, though some areas just five miles to our northeast and northwest measured up to 6" last Thursday. It's been that spotty."

**Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist:** "Southeastern Arkansas had hail damage and torrential rainfall out of this last system. In the McGehee and Kelso areas, people reported as much as 4" of rainfall in 17 minutes. One farmer in that general area suffered severe hail damage on 1,000 acres. Insect-wise, I think we're on the backside of saltmarsh caterpillars. They appear to be declining. Thrips counts remain low for this time of the year, although there are a few areas with enough thrips to be a concern, and treatments are going on. Some grasshopper populations are evident but not to the extent I'm hearing about them in Louisiana. A lot of cotton is beginning to square. Boll weevil counts continue to be real low throughout Arkansas."

**Victor Roth, Roth Farm Service, Malden, Mo.:** "Temperatures are up and helping the cotton along. We've got everything from cotyledon that was helped up by the last rain up to four leaves. I feel pretty comfortable with the way the crop looks. Since last week we've gotten 1" to 3" of rain in much of our area. Insects are quiet. There aren't many thrips, and weevil counts are real low. A few fields have had lingering aphids but beneficials have been working on them, and the rain should help some of this cotton to pick up more Temik."

**Bob Griffin, Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark.:** "About 80% of our cotton is at 4th node and the oldest is at 8th to 9th node. We're pretty much finished with cutworms. We've treated an occasional field for thrips where no systemic was used, but our Gaucho and Temik fields have held, so far. But even where we didn't have a systemic, a large portion of the acreage hasn't been treated. Thrips are mostly irrelevant. We treated some borders last week for saltmarsh caterpillars coming out of wheat and ditch banks. Overall, the insect situation is nill. We got .5" to 3" of rain over our crop, and one field had 30% hail damage from this last system. This remains some of the best looking cotton I've ever had and it's further along than I've ever seen it. If we don't get any more cool spells 80% of our cotton will be blooming by the last week of June. We've got squares on approximately 5,000 acres and should have them on 15,000 acres by this time next week."

**Tucker Miller, Ind. Consultant, Drew, Miss.:** "Everything is progressing, and rains over the last several days helped. We got from 1" up to 6" around the Glendora area. There was some hail damage on 400 acres of cotton that we'll have

to baby along now. And two pivots were lost where the storm was most concentrated. We've started a few plant bug sprays on older cotton, which is at 8-9 nodes, and more should be going out next week. We're not sure yet what kind of a plant bug year this will be, but we're finding pretty good numbers in ditches and host crops as well as corn. Worm eggs are running zero to 4%, but most of our cotton is Bt so it's not a concern. Overall, we've got a decent looking crop. We've been getting out our second Roundup application, post-directing Staple on our conventional cotton and also tankmixing Staple with Roundup where morningglories are big."

**Merritt Holman, Arkansas Crop Technologies, Lonoke, Ark.:** "We're still treating a few fields for thrips. We would have mostly outgrown thrips by now but cool weather combined with thrips damage slowed down growth. We've gotten by for a while with Temik or Adage and some Orthene-treated seed. Wheat in our area has been late, and thrips didn't really start moving into cotton until about 12 days ago. We had hoped that leaf area development would have helped dilute the pressure but that hasn't happened entirely. We'll probably treat about 40% of our crop for thrips. We're treating a few borders for grasshoppers or saltmarsh caterpillars. We've got enough chinch bug pressure in some fields that it's pushing us into treating for thrips. A lot of our cotton is sitting right at 5 nodes with squaring at the 5th or 6th node. We got from 1.25" to nearly 3" of rain in a lot of our area."