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AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

July 2, 2002

Here is this week's issue of *AgFax: Midsouth Cotton*, sponsored by Valent U.S.A., maker of Orthene, Select, Cobra and Valor.

OVERVIEW

Rains over the last week brought relief to some of the drier parts of Louisiana and the south Delta. Scattered rains have fallen elsewhere, but much of the region could use more showers. Parts of the upper Delta have been dry for about 3 weeks.

Aphid fungus has been confirmed since last week in Ashley County in SW Arkansas and in Attala and Lafayette Counties in the hills of Mississippi.

CROP REPORTS

Marion Farris, Extension Area Entomologist, Coushatta, La: "We're still dealing with aphids. Some people have treated, and others haven't. I believe we have the fungus now, and populations are falling in some locations. Bollworms have started filtering out of corn into cotton. Stinkbugs aren't a threat yet but will be. There is some plantbug activity now. Rain has been scattered, from .25" up to 2" or more, but our drier spots can still use another inch or two."

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension

Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.:

"Most everybody got rain over the past week, and that cured more ailments than anything else. Plant were stressed going into bloom. Also, it should help clear up spider mites. About 95% of the people who can irrigate have turned off the pumps for the time being.

"A lot of our cotton doesn't look that good to me because we have an incredibly high fruit set and too many squares. We haven't had sufficient insect densities to cause the amount of fruit shed that's necessary to push the plants into a compensating mode necessary for better yields.

"Plantbug pressure still hasn't been that high. It looks like we're on the front end of a bollworm flight as they move from corn to cotton. We're picking up fungal infections in aphids at least in southern Louisiana, and with rain it won't be long till it's widespread. We're also seeing more stinkbugs moving out of corn, and in the absence of soybeans they'll go into blooming cotton."

Claude Bonner, Ind. Consultant, Cotton Specialists of Ark, Inc., N. Little Rock, Ark.: "We have some good cotton and some that's still struggling. We're up to 15 nodes in some but mostly 12-14. In the last few weeks we've recovered some and are moving toward a more normal schedule.

"Spider mites are scattered, and

we've treated a little. We're seeing a little plantbug activity, but we perhaps are slowing down a little on that. There are a few more stinkbugs, but we haven't treated yet. Although I've seen more worms this morning (Monday) than I have all season, they're still light.

"Nodes above white flower are running pretty good. We're trying to get water on the crop to keep it going. We have a lot of crop with a poor root system, and it could react adversely if it isn't irrigated in a timely manner."

Harold Lambert, Ind. Consultant, Innis, La.: "The fungus has wiped out aphids in some fields. They'll probably come back, but that's okay. As long as we're getting showers and heavy dew the fungus will be around to minimize pressure. I had to treat a few fields before the fungus developed, but we're not treating now. Rains varied last week. We've got places that still have only had 1.5" in the last 11 weeks, while others are up to 4" to 5" in that period.

"We've recommend plantbug treatments in isolated areas adjacent to corn where they were reducing square set. In later cotton we don't want to delay the fruiting cycle if we can avoid it."

Joe Townsend, Ind. Consultant, Coahoma, Miss.: "We're having a tremendous go with plantbugs. Centric is about gone, and we don't know what

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Intruder will do. We're starting to get brown and green stinkbugs in cotton and have already sprayed a little with Bidrin. We're also treating a fair share of the non-Bt cotton for worms with Double Threat or Curacron.

"Irrigated cotton that's already blooming looks great. We have cotton in the first week of blooming that's 10-12 nodes above white flower. A tremendous amount of Pix is going out."

Lee Rogers, Rogers Entomological Service, Steele, Mo.: "We're dealing with plantbugs and fleahoppers in a few fields. Also, we're doing some border treatments for spider mites, mainly with Capture and some Kelthane. The stinkbug hasn't gotten bad yet due to eradication treatments. But this week eradication personnel are just hitting problem fields, so there may be an opening for stinkbugs. Showers last week were spotty, and we could still use a good, general rain."

Michael McCain, UAP, Holly Bluff, Miss.: "Cotton looks better after rains last week. We got a general rain over 95% of our crop, ranging from .5" to 2". That was the first rain in some areas since planting.

"We've got heavy spider mite pressure in some areas. Rain will help to an extent. We're still treating some behind the rain but hoping cotton will grow out of it. We've had unusually intense mite pressure for it to be this early. We had some knee-high cotton that the mites seemed to be sucking into the ground. We've used a good bit of Capture and Comite. Plantbugs are heavy now, especially around corn fields."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "We're seeing some egg lays in SE Arkansas. There's a big moth flight in Louisiana, so we expect it here in a day or two as more moths move out of corn. We have plantbugs here and there and scattered aphid populations. I'm getting calls about fairly high numbers of stinkbugs on prebloom cotton. We still have mites building, mostly in drier areas.

"We're on a bubble right now with this crop. We've got to stay ahead of the demand for water. Some cotton is

already showing stress, with NAWF at 6-7 when we need to be seeing 9 as cotton starts blooming."

Scott Stewart, Extension Cotton Entomologist, Jackson, Tenn.: "We're still seeing plantbugs, and 70% to 80% of our crop has been treated at least once. It's not a horrible plantbug year, but they're lingering and moving around. Cotton is already late, and we're reluctant for them to make it any later.

"I saw one non-Bt field today (Monday) that had a treatable level of worms. A few older fields are at bloom, but most of the crop isn't close. Some folks are seeing stinkbugs in prebloom cotton. I don't think they're doing anything, but it indicates we could have problems later.

"Spider mites may be fading a bit. We're seeing some aphids build. Very few fields in West Tennessee have been directly treated for aphids, but other applications have knocked them back."

Trent LaMastus, Ind. Consultant, Cleveland, Miss.: "We've had adequate rainfall last week in some places, but we're still irrigating in other locations. People are rushing to layby, but we have growers who are running polypipe before layby because they're still dry.

"We've got nymph plantbugs in cotton and have had some success controlling them, but we've also run out of Centric and are now looking at Trimax, Orthene and Bidrin. We put out 13 oz/acre of Malathion. It looked pretty good where it didn't get washed off by rain.

"Rains last week ranged from dust settlers up to 2.5", and one grower got rain today (Monday) south of Silver City. We're still spraying mites every chance we get, treating edges and some whole fields. We've held back mites for 3 weeks with Kelthane or 2 shots of Capture, but they're building back now. Aphids have flared behind eradication sprays or treatments with Kelthane or Steward. I started finding bollworm eggs today on blooms in low numbers."

Michael Boyd, Extension Entomology Specialist, Portageville, Mo.: "More eradication sprays are going out. We've got a lot of variability in growth,

so some pinhead treatments are being made and other applications are based on trap counts. We're in our plant bug season, and quite a few treatments are underway. I'm reminding people that we can't count on eradication to control plant bugs. If treatments help then that's a bonus. But we've still got to stay on top of them.

"Some folks are treating aphids, which were coming on before eradication spraying started. It's been pretty dry in the last 3 weeks, and we're finding spider mites. A consultant said he's finding 2-5% worm infestations, and we've got a fairly decent tobacco budworm flight starting now."

Blake Layton, Mississippi Extension Entomologist: "The main thing right now is that aphids are building. We've taken samples today of what we think are aphids infected with the fungus. We did rating trials in Grenada on all the standard aphid materials, and they all seem to be giving equivalent control 7-10 days after treatment. We're generally between the June and July worm generations. The egg lay hasn't started, but we look for it most years right after the Fourth of July. Plantbugs are mostly low, but there are some at threshold. We're still making calls to check spider mites. In the last few years we've seen that they don't immediately go away after a rain, but they don't cause as much damage."

David Hydrick, Hydrick's Crop Consulting, Inc., Jonesboro, Ark.: "We're spraying budworms in conventional cotton, and we've got them thick in places. We're not treating every field, but we've sprayed some twice now on a 5-day schedule. They're heaviest against the levee and other places you'd expect to find them. We've mainly used Double Threat along with some Baythroid-Tracer and Karate-Tracer combinations.

"We're treating some spider mites, too. Double Threat has worked well on mites. We also banded Zephyr, and it worked good. We've been treating plantbugs, too."