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AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

May 14, 2002

Here is this week's issue of *AgFax: Midsouth Cotton*, sponsored by Valent U.S.A., maker of Orthene, Select and Valor. We also publish reports on Midsouth rice and soybeans. Let us know if you want to be added to those lists.

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Overview

This continues to be a month of extremes.

Dry weather still plagues much of Louisiana and parts of the south Delta in Mississippi. Planting has stopped on a wide basis until it rains again.

The rest of our coverage area has had consistent showers and extreme accumulations in some areas. Several of our contacts this week noted an increase in seedling disease. Cool nighttime temperatures in the first half of this week could further complicate that situation.

These reports were made Monday-Tuesday, April 13-14.

Crop Reports

Mike Sartor, Ind. Consultant, Sartor's Ag Consulting, Clinton, Miss.: "Rain has been variable.

Around Yazoo City they probably got 1.5" or more early this week but areas south of there showed only .2". Moisture in Hinds County was fair, but at the end of last week we needed rain to finish planting.

"We've seen very little cutworm activity. We had to spray thrips on some Temik cotton where we didn't have enough moisture to activate it. So far, I haven't seen as much rhizoctonia as in the past. But we've got cool temperatures for the next two nights, and we may find more of it after temperatures warm up again.

"Our cotton ranges from just planted to 5 true leaves. Stand counts look pretty good, from 41,000 to 45,000. Our growers did a good job of planting and got seed spaced out nicely."

Keith Collins, Richland Parish Extension Agent, Rayville, La.: "It continues to be dry here. We got very little rain early this week. The most I've heard about was .5", and I only had .3" at my house, while the south part of the parish got none. Isolated areas last week measured up to an inch, and that helped a few farmers start planting again. We haven't had widespread rain here since April 7-8.

"We're probably 75% planted.

The unplanted acreage is on Macon Ridge, and it's been too dry there to plant. Where people can they're watering to plant or to bring up what they have planted."

Rusty Elston, Consultant, Pest Management Enterprises, Cheneyville, La.: "Quite a bit of Roundup is going out, and some thrips are being treated where systemics weren't activated enough due to lack of moisture. A lot of the cotton is about to get past the stage that thrips will hurt it.

"Between 25% to 30% of our expected acreage hasn't been planted yet, and some of it may not get planted. We were really counting on this last rain (Sunday night and Monday). North of Bunkie, we got .5". South of Bunkie, it fell off to a couple of tenths."

Virgil King, III, King's Ag Consulting, Lexington, Miss.: "We're still trying to finish planting in my area. About 80% has been planted, and we hope to finish this week. Insect activity has been fairly low. We're treating thrips in a few areas and cutworms in fields here and there. We're seeing more seedling disease than we had been finding, and I'm a little more concerned about that with the cooler tempera-

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tures this week. Rains last week varied a lot, from .3" to 1" in places. Fields have been drying out pretty quickly. We got less than .1" Monday."

Ronnie Bibb, Jimmy Sanders Seed Co., Hollandale, Miss.: "Rain early this week varied from nothing to an inch in places. From Panther Burn south it's dry. In the area that missed the rain I've got some milo that is stressed.

"All my cotton is planted and up, thank goodness. I've treated thrips on half my acres that didn't have Temik at planting, and some has been sprayed twice. As it happens, we didn't get rain where no Temik was used. Where we had Temik we got rain and have had enough uptake."

Craig Massey, Area IPM Specialist, Brownsville, Tenn.: "We're still dealing with marestail in several counties. Whether this is resistant marestail or caused by something else probably won't be determined for a while. Out of 3,000 acres we may find 500 acres with pretty solid infestations and another 500 acres with spotty populations.

"Where growers sprayed early and put ammonium sulfate with Roundup they didn't do as well in the cooler weather. When they shifted to Karmex and MSMA the temperatures cooled down again, and they didn't have the right conditions then, either. Whatever is going on here, I still expect to see Valor or Clarity going out with the Roundup to take care of it next year.

"Cotton is 60% to 90% planted, depending on the area and whether growers jumped in the field before recommended planting dates. This last round of showers gave us another .6" to 1.3" of rain, and that's shut down field work again.

"Thrips haven't been a problem, but we're finding a beetle attacking the tops of cotton plants in Hardeman County to the point that we've made some treatments. We're

not sure what it is, though it may be a western wireworm beetle. We hope to get a confirmed ID in a day or two."

Bob Griffin, Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark.: "We've been treating cutworms, especially where nothing was applied at planting, but we've also treated a few fields that had a band at planting. That's kind of unusual, but there are a lot of cutworms this year. We're also treating thrips on all the cotton that didn't have a systemic. Some western flower thrips are turning up. We also are treating some fields where cotton had Gaucho and Cruiser but just stalled out in the cold weather.

"Our crop is about 85% planted, and we have cotton anywhere from just out of the ground to 4 true leaves. We should have some cotton squaring in the next week if it will keep growing. We've had some cotton at the 3- and 4-leaf stage for the last 7-10 days. A lot of this cotton is pretty beat up from wind and even hail. Generally, though, it looks pretty good, and we expect very little replanting.

"We've probably averaged 6" of rain in the last 10 days in my main areas in Phillips and Lee Counties. Farther north in Jonesboro where I live we've only had 2" to 3"."

Victor Roth, Roth Farm Service, Malden, Mo.: "We started planting in this area about April 15-23, and most of the cotton looks pretty good. We've had some heavy rains here the last couple of days. Around Malden we got 2" to 3". The Dexter area had rain and started planting in the first part of May. They're a third to half planted and need dry weather to finish in a timely manner. Cotton planted in early May is just coming up to a stand."

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "Along the state line some fields were inundated early in the

week, but rains played out farther south. Most areas didn't get enough rain to matter. We've got fields being watered so growers can plant, and I'm also seeing some small cotton being watered.

"It continues to get drier. Thrips are bad in some fields, but everybody I've talked to has decided not to do anything.

"About 40% of our crop still hasn't been planted. Overall, the crop that's up doesn't look that bad, but those little seedlings plants just don't grow in these conditions."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "Problems associated with cold and wet conditions are slowing down the cotton. Some seed treatments and even the infurrow applications are breaking down, and thrips are keeping the plants behind. In a lot of cases it took 13-14 days for these plants to come out of the ground when 8-9 days is kind of pushing it. When it takes above 10 days the plant has used up all its energy.

"In many cases we're seeing 1 to 1.5 plants per row foot, and that's a borderline stand, not to mention that the plants are already physiologically stressed from just trying to push into daylight. It's a hard call to decide whether to replant or let it go.

"We're also seeing fields in Lonoke County today (Tuesday) that had something at planting for cutworms but now require treatment. This seems like a cutworm year in cotton as well as in grain sorghum, corn and even rice.

"Where thrips broke through and growers are treating, the (seed treatment) companies have been working with them and are trying to make it right. We've been recommending Orthene when asked, and we're getting calls from Desha County in southeastern Arkansas and up through the state."