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AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

May 21, 2002

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

Overview

Heavy rains late last week made a bad situation worse for a large part of our coverage area.

Cold, wet weather is taking a toll in the north Delta and through much of Arkansas. More disease problems are apparent. Thrips are pressuring slow-growing plants.

Louisiana received a partial break from its lingering drought when last Friday's line of thunderstorms moved through the state. But in sharp contrast to the saturated north Delta, parts of Louisiana missed good rains and remain too dry to plant.

These reports were made Monday-Tuesday, May 20-21.

Crop Reports

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "Thrips are a problem. In some areas, there is pretty significant pressure, and people are spraying. We have some things going on with thrips that we don't quite understand. For one thing,

the infurrow insecticides haven't been working in areas that tended to be getting rain. Those were the areas where you'd expect good uptake.

"In drier areas, thrips weren't an issue until this week. But in some of these areas I think recent cold and wind damage is being mistaken for thrips, especially on light, sandy soils."

Harold Lambert, Ind. Consultant, Innis, La.: "We're still dry. Rains last week fizzled out just west of us. One small area I work around Morganza got 1", but most areas got .1" to .2". So, it's not a good situation.

"We will be beyond the crop insurance deadline on May 25, and I'm expecting that acreage will be way down if we don't get more rain. My clients are about 60% planted. The cotton that's up looks pretty good, but it's been growing slowly due to cold weather and lack of moisture."

Lee Rogers, Rogers Entomological Service, Steele, Mo.: "We need hot weather pretty badly. We've got thrips now behind the Cruiser. That cotton was putting on its third true leave, and it's suddenly getting a little thrippy. We're treating thrips now in older cotton.

"So far, we've probably lost 500 acres to river flooding and seep water. A lot of our cotton went into the ground on or just after April 15, but we've still

got about 5% of our crop left to plant,"

Trent LaMastus, Ind. Consultant, Cleveland, Miss.: "Our fields in Humphreys County have picked up 2.5" to 5" of rain, which would be a pretty reasonable amount if we had warm temperatures. But cold conditions have been a drag on the crop. You can tell the crop is stressed from the cold and rain. This is some of the ugliest cotton I've ever seen. Wind and sand have been beating it up.

"We've had a lot of thrips. With seedling disease working on the plants, we're not getting uptake of infurrow insecticides. But we're also seeing cases where there should be adequate uptake but thrips are getting ahead of us. I'm running into some 50% to 100% infestations with light to moderate damage.

"We're seeing plant bugs in cotton ranging from just emerged to five true leaves. We've found a few pinhead squares, and have pinhead treatments on a small percentage of our crop."

Reynold Minsky, Ind. Consultant, Lake Providence, La.: "Thrips are bad. A lot of what is out there is cold damage, but I know it's not cold damage when you can shake off the thrips in your hand. It's widespread. Most of our cotton had Temik under it. Where thrips are the worst is where

Continued on next page

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we've had the most rain. I don't know what the problem is, and I think a lot of people are trying to figure this out, too. We're on our second treatment with Orthene now in some fields that had 3.5 to 5 pounds of Temik."

Mike McCain, Manager, Agriliance, Shelby, Miss.: "A good bit of thrips are building. Orthene and some Bidrin have been going out in combination to take out thrips and prevent spider mites from flaring. The cold weather is going to slow down everything. Cold temperatures, wind and blowing sand are promoting seedling disease."

Blake Layton, Mississippi Extension Entomologist: "Cool weather and thrips are compounding each other, and cotton isn't growing much. A lot of thrips treatments are going out, especially if nothing was put under at planting. But a number of treatments are being made where something was used at planting."

"Most calls I'm getting concern whether or not these materials are working. As long as you're just seeing adults and not immatures, then you're probably dealing with reinfestations. They've got to feed to ingest materials, so they aren't controlled immediately. In some cases you may not be buying that much time if you treat. But being this cold and plants growing slowly, people are rightly lowering thresholds because the cotton can't take another beating."

"We're about 80% planted with 60% emerged. The state isn't far behind the average on planting and emergence, but we're lagging in crop development. We're also getting calls about seedling pests this year in no-till cotton."

Joe Townsend, Ind. Consultant, Coahoma, Miss.: "This last round of wind has the cotton looking horrible. I'm sure most of it will rebound with warmer weather, but an awful lot is being replanted."

"Thrips are extremely bad. We sprayed 2,000 acres that had 5 lbs. of Temik under it and hadn't been out of

the ground two weeks. I think weather is inhibiting uptake."

"We've got some pretty serious situations with weeds, especially in Roundup Ready fields. People were delayed making second or even first applications, and they've got terrible marestail and big morningglory that Roundup doesn't work well on anyway. We've moved past the point now on some cotton that we can apply Roundup. Valor looks great where it was tankmixed with Roundup at burndown. Some growers already say they will go with Roundup and Valor next year and plant conventional varieties in more cases."

"I saw my first square Monday, but we've still got a whole lot of cotton still in the sack."

Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.: "We've sprayed quite a bit for thrips and are looking at some more today (Tuesday). Some of our later cotton got caught in cooler weather, but I think we still will have good enough stands."

David Hydrick, Hydrick's Crop Consulting, Inc., Jonesboro, Ark.: "Cotton is looking pretty bad. The storm Friday did some damage. We've got between 20,000 and 30,000 plants per acre in some fields, but we're trying to be cautious about replanting. We will spot replant 2% to 3% and maybe replant 1% entirely. Between extra costs and time delays we're willing to go with a thinner, earlier stand than a later, thicker one. We have thrips on every bit of our cotton and are treating and foliar feeding, trying to salvage as much as we can."

"We're losing 4,000 acres of cotton behind the Mississippi River levee due to flooding."

Marion Farris, Extension Area Entomologist, Coushatta, La: "Weather damage is the major thing right now. We're finding a lot of leaf crinkling and burning around leaf edges. Some people want to blame it on Roundup, but what I've seen has been due to general growing conditions. Rain varied here last week, from .3" to 1.5".

Some places got none. We still need a 2" soaking rain. I've only heard of one person, so far, treating thrips."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "Our cotton is in extremely poor shape. Growth has been slow, and we have thrips everywhere. We're having control problems in some fields with foliar treatments where people used minimum rates. Some folks think we have western flower thrips in the mix. We're gathering samples now."

"Planting is getting to a critical point. If we get another big rain this week it will delay things more and set us back on final acreage. Some people are just getting back in the field again. I know two 1,200-acre growers in SE Arkansas who just started planting."

"This has been a very lackluster start in a very important year. Some growers are just hanging on by their bootstraps and need a good season without excessive costs."

"We have scout training May 28 in Jonesboro at the Farm Credit Service building and May 29 in Pine Bluff at the Extension office. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m."

Craig Massey, Area IPM Specialist, Brownsville, Tenn.: "We're in a mess. We had maybe two days last week that we could be in the field. We're maybe 90% planted and probably 60% up, but we may be looking at replanting 20% of that. With the cold, wet weather we're dealing with a wide range of diseases. Our worst problem fields are in heavy bottoms."

"Thrips are eating on the cotton pretty good. There's no uptake of systemics. Treatments are going on, including some with Roundup over the top. Lauderdale County lost 60,000 acres due to Mississippi River flooding."

"We have scout schools this Wednesday in Brownsville and Thursday in Somerville. Both are at the county Extension offices, and registration starts at 8:30 a.m."