

AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

Owen Taylor, Editor (owen@agfax.com, 888-327-6329)

May 20, 2003

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

Owen Taylor, Editor

OVERVIEW

As we closed this issue Tuesday night, parts of the Midsouth were caught under more rain. Most of the activity was over northeast Arkansas, which already is coping with the effects of heavy rain and flooding.

As one of our contacts from that area said Tuesday, "At this point, we're measuring rainfall more in feet than in inches." Some places in the upper Delta, including parts of Mississippi, have caught 1.5 feet of rainfall since late April. In spots, the total is pushing the 2-foot mark.

Storms have stalled planting progress, delayed glyphosate treatments on Roundup Ready cotton and triggered stand losses due to seedling diseases, sand blasting and flooding.

Ironically, south Louisiana remains mostly dry. Showers late last week

brought some moisture to that area, which will get planting in gear again. But more rain is needed there.

One more thing: tobacco budworm traps in northeast Arkansas and the Missouri Bootheel are turning up unseasonably high moth counts. See comments by Lorenz and Boyd.

These reports were made Monday and Tuesday.

CROP REPORTS

John "Kim" Kimbrough, Ind. Consultant, Pro Tech Ag, Lexington, Miss.: "Everybody in this immediate area has enough rain now. The least anybody got over the weekend was 1". But in north Mississippi where we work cotton near Oxford they are extremely wet and in terrible shape. One grower hasn't planted an acre yet, and others are half finished. Their ground was already wet before last weekend, and even the notill ground is really mushy. They've had over 13" of rain in the last 10 days.

"We only finding small spots of thrips. The dry weather before this rain didn't seem to affect uptake of systemics, but the wet weather has slowed it now. In really saturated fields the thrips are jumping on coty-

ledon cotton.

"Until this rain, the Delta portion of Holmes County was way too dry, and people planted until they ran out of moisture. Some large growers had planted maybe half their crop. They were glad to get rain. Some people were trying to irrigate cotton to emergence. Early planted cotton, though, jumped out of the ground, and some is 6-8" now with 4-5 true leaves."

Terry Erwin, Morehouse Parish Extension agent, Bastrop, La.:

"I can sum up things in one word: wet. Over the last 30 days we've had 8-10" of rain. Very little farm work is going on. Cotton is mostly in the seedling stage up to 2nd leaf. It hasn't experienced any dry weather since emergence and is holding up well. Parts of some fields have gone under water, and that acreage has suffered.

"With the way we've been getting rain north of I-20, there's a risk that some Roundup Ready cotton will get past the 5th node before we can spray. More rain is in the forecast, and fields look a bit wooly where growers haven't been able to spray."

Harold Lambert, Ind. Consultant, Innis, La.: "We definitely need

Continued on next page

ORTHENE®

AgFax: Midsouth Cotton is sponsored by Valent U.S.A. as a service to cotton growers and industry professionals.

<http://www.valent.com>



Orthene® For Control In Seedling Cotton

Orthene controls aphid, cutworm and thrips early and can be tank mixed with many herbicides, including Select® 2 EC and Roundup® (and other glyphosates). In late planting situations, *Orthene* can go out by hopperbox, in-furrow or in foliar sprays. It gives critical protection to seedlings to reduce growth delays caused by insect feeding. (Sponsored Message)

Orthene is a registered trademark of OMS Investments, Inc. *Select* is a registered trademark of Valent U.S.A. Corporation. Roundup is a registered trademark of Monsanto Company.

more rain. Last Thursday we got .2" to .3" and then Saturday it rained another .3" to 1". We're better off than a week ago. This will help even out some stands, perhaps, and bring up cotton that was planted dry ahead of the rain.

"But we've been at such a deficit that this was more a teaser than anything else. It's getting questionable about whether we'll be able to plant cotton on all our intended acreage if we don't get more rain soon."

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "We finally got rain in a lot of areas that have been dry, and that will allow people to finish planting. Where we've had adequate moisture, cotton is growing rapidly. Some plants are putting on a new node every 3 days, and we're finding cotton in the Texas area that's squaring. A lot of people are scrambling to make the 2nd Roundup application if they still can.

"We're seeing signs of thrips injury in nearly every field now, whether or not it had an infurrow. There's no significant damage, but some insecticides are going out with the glyphosate. Yellowstripe armyworms are here and there, but none are being sprayed, as far as I know."

David Hydrick, Hydrick's Crop Consulting, Inc., Jonesboro, Ark.: "We got 8" of rain out of this last system, and it's raining right now (Tuesday). At this point, we're measuring rainfall more in feet than in inches. So far in May we've had nearly 2 feet in places, and the ditches seem to be flowing backwards.

"Fortunately, my growers are about 80% planted. We'll have to replant some low spots, but that's about all we're finding right now. That doesn't count 3,500 acres behind the levee that was running 5-6 true leaves. That's all lost to the river now. With the rest of our crop, our most advanced fields are 3-4 true leaves. Most of my grow-

ers would still take this year's stand over last year's when it was so cold and we ended up with matchsticks. We've lost some cotton in the last few days to wind damage, mainly where we didn't have wheat in the middles.

"We've got thrips and a few cutworms. When the Roundup goes out we're adding Orthene to keep the thrips off of it, especially where they're building on sick cotton."

Michael Boyd, Extension Entomology Specialist, Portageville, Mo.: "Planting pretty much shut down after we got another 3" of rain in places over the weekend, and it's kind of rainy today (Tuesday). I don't expect more planting until late this week. We're maybe half to two-thirds planted, but half of that — especially our early fields — may have to be replanted.

"One worrying thing is the fact that we're picking up high counts of tobacco budworm moths in traps. In a 4-night period we counted 133 in one trap. Last year we didn't get that kind of count until early August. That was the worst year we've ever had up here with budworms. It's hard to say whether these numbers will translate into heavy pressure later, but it's something to consider when picking varieties to plant on remaining acreage."

Grady Coburn, Consultant, Pest Management Enterprises, Cheneyville, La.: "We just got 1" to 2.5" of much needed rain. It will allow us to finish planting and complete emergence on a lot of what already has been planted. We're pleased with how good much of the cotton looks. Our most advanced fields are up to 8 true leaves with pinhead and match head squares in places. With the dry weather, we've been able to keep up with herbicide work."

Ronnie Bibb, Jimmy Sanders Seed Co., Hollandale, Miss.: "All my cotton is up and looks good. We've missed the torrential rains that hit ev-

eryone north of Shaw over the last several weeks. Last weekend we got .8" to 1.25", so that will help keep things going. Insects are light."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "The biggest challenge is the wet weather. There's so much vegetation because of delayed herbicide treatments that you've got to part the weeds just to see if the cotton has bugs on it. And we do have an undetermined amount of cotton acreage that's under water, and that's another problem altogether.

"We've got some traps in Mississippi County that are catching tremendous numbers of budworm moths. Some are running 60-80 per night in locations that otherwise might turn up 30 in a whole season.

"What this means is anybody's guess. Will we have a bad worm year? We don't know, although budworms did hit hard in that part of the state last year. We can also forget the idea that cold winter weather would have an impact on survival. It didn't.

"Anyone who's sitting on the fence about whether to plant Bt cotton has a reason to at least consider it now with these moth counts."

Scott Stewart, Extension Cotton Entomologist, Jackson, Tenn.: "We're probably 40% planted, with 20% out of the ground. Cotton planted in the 3rd week of April is taking a bit of injury from thrips, depending on how vigorously it's growing. Some needs to be treated. Most of our cotton, though, has just emerged, and we've got good Temik and Gaucho activity.

"Our ideal planting window closes today (Tuesday). We planted a lot of late cotton last year, and it turned out to be our best. But we may be looking at reduced acreage this year. We thought the total would be 600,000 acres, but at the rate things are going, 500,000 might be more realistic."