

AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

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Here is this week's issue of *AgFax: Midsouth Cotton*, sponsored by the Midsouth staff of Valent U.S.A. Corporation, maker of Orthene®, Cobra®, Select® and other products used to protect Southern cotton.

OVERVIEW

Growers in the upper Delta continue dealing with the effects of too much rain in the first half of May. A couple of our contacts this week said that some growers in north Mississippi may take insurance payments and, based on planting termination requirements, let the ground fallow.

Parts of south Louisiana remain dry, with no significant rain in 2 months. Between "too wet" and "too dry," a portion of the Midsouth has optimum moisture.

No extreme insect problems were reported. A few treatments were being made for thrips, plantbugs and aphids. High counts of tobacco budworm moths continue to be reported in NE Arkansas and SE

Missouri.

The following reports were made Monday afternoon and Tuesday.

CROP REPORTS

Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.: "We're picking up thrips on younger cotton, but older plants have grown off pretty good. We're trying to get out a little Roundup. Mainly, we're in a cleanup mode. We missed the big rains that saturated things north of Cleveland. Cotton ranges anywhere from 1-2 true leaves to 5-6."

David Skinner, Ind. Consultant, Starkville, Miss.: "Our cotton in the Delta (Humphreys County) looks good. So does our cotton in Noxubee County. But from Hamilton north there are a lot of fields being planted for the first time or replanted after the rain took care of the first attempt. A couple of weeks ago, some areas got 7.5" of rain in 24 hours. North of U.S. 82, there's been 20" of rain measured in May in some areas.

"Overall, we're not doing much with insects. A little Delta acreage has

been sprayed for thrips. The Temik had worn out, so we added Orthene to the Roundup."

Joe Townsend, Ind. Consultant, Coahoma, Miss.: "We're in good shape now. The flood waters are falling. We did lose some cotton and a huge number of soybean acres, but most of the soybeans have already been replanted. We also had some localized flooding on field ends, as you'd expect. Where we haven't had to replant, the cotton looks remarkably good.

"We've sprayed a little cotton for thrips in the last 4-5 days. The earlier cotton is past the point that thrips can do much. I'm looking at some cotton today (Monday) that's too big now for Roundup. With all that rain, this cotton grew fast. Our very first squaring has started, and we should see plenty of blooms by July 4th."

Dale Wells, Ind. Consultant, Cotton Services, Inc., Leachville, Ark.: "It's been a mess with all the rain and flooding. Before the rain, we were about 90% planted. Now, we'll end up replanting about 30% of that.

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In a normal year we might try to cut back on fungicide and such. But with the weather we've had, we're not taking anything for granted. We can't afford another replanting, either financially or with the amount of time left.

"We're just now reaching 5th true leaf on our earliest cotton. We still have fields that are too wet to get into, and as sandy as our soil is, that's saying a lot.

"We're catching high numbers of tobacco budworms. We are checking 7 days a week, and the only time it's going down is right after a storm. Budworm moths have been running 75-90% since we put up the traps 14 days ago. Counts have run over 100 per night in extreme cases, but they're at least ranging from 10 to 40 and up to 60 per night on a regular basis.

"Normally this time of the year, we expect 0-1 counts, maybe a 2. These are huge numbers, not what we usually get here. I never made a recommendation for a tobacco budworm treatment until last July 21."

Claude Bonner, Ind. Consultant, Cotton Specialists of Ark, Inc., N. Little Rock, Ark.: "The problems we've had with rain haven't been so much the amount as it has been the frequency. We've had areas with 2" up to 5", but it's rained just often enough to keep people out of fields in many locations. Some fields are getting a little wooly, but we're about to get that in hand. I'm checking applications from late last week, and results mostly look good. We caught most cotton before the cutoff for the 2nd Roundup application.

"Thrips are out there, but part of our problem is that terminal growth slowed down with low temperatures. We added something for thrips with

herbicides, but we mainly need several days of warm weather to bring the crop around."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "Sunshine and a spell of dry weather is perking up the cotton, but we've still got a lot of sick plants around the state. Between rhizoctonia and leaf blight, cotton generally looks poor in many areas. Plus, the rain delayed Roundup applications, which gave weeds an opening.

"Thrips are picking up here and there. That's mainly where no seed treatment or in-furrow was used. But we're finding them, too, where seed treatments were used but the cotton stalled out in the cool weather and thrips started reproducing.

"It's a bad start. A lot of growers are still planting. In NE Arkansas, they were 70-80% planted, then lost 20-30% to the weather. We'll need a good, long fall to fully make some of this later planted cotton work.

"We're still catching a lot of budworm moths in north Arkansas. I'm hearing about 90 per night in spots that usually don't have 90 all season."

Scott Stewart, Extension Cotton Entomologist, Jackson, Tenn.: "We're trying to finish planting this week. We've still got some wet fields, but maybe they'll be dry enough for planting by the end of the week if no more rain develops. We're not hearing about any big pest problems, but we've got to keep checking for thrips and also stay on top of Roundup applications. It's easy to get so focused on planting that we can't get back to the cotton that's already up."

Trent LaMastus, Ind. Consultant, Cleveland, Miss.: "Very little is going on. We've got cotton from cotyledon up to 8-9 nodes. Quite a bit has been squaring for the last 2 weeks. Plantbug pressure is light, cer-

tainly compared to this time last year. We've only treated a couple of corners with Centric next to woods or levees.

"We've mostly made it through the thrips season with light pressure, but they've jumped on some late cotton that stalled out in this cooler, wet weather. They're present, whether there was a seed treatment or in-furrow material. It's not a widespread problem, but this is more thrips than we had in late April and early May."

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "A couple of areas remain very dry and have continued to miss nearly every rain that's come through the state. Outside of those areas, the cotton actually looks pretty good. We've got decent soil moisture through much of our growing area. And even where it's getting a little drier, plants are still actively growing. We're past the point that most cotton is susceptible to thrips.

"The oldest I've seen has 10-11 nodes and squares. We've still got some cotyledon cotton, too. The vast majority is at 4-6 nodes.

"More aphids are moving into fields, and a few treatments have been made. I'm getting calls from Catahoula to East Carroll Parish. We've gotten through a bollworm flight. We're not seeing budworms to an extent, but it's about time for the flight we typically get in late May or early June."