

# AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

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

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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 and Select. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Owen Taylor, Editor

## OVERVIEW

While much of the upper Midsouth is recovering from last week's storms and excessive rain, parts of the southern Delta could use a rain. And south Louisiana remains desperately dry.

This spring drought trails west into the Texas Coastal Bend. Paul Pilsner, a consultant in Wharton, Texas, said today that his area southwest of Houston hasn't had significant rain since early March.

"We had a super wet, El Nino winter, then it got dry enough to plant -- but it dried so quickly that some fields didn't get planted or were planted after moisture ran out," Pilsner reported. "My growers' acreage could be down 20-30%. It's that extreme."

In the Midsouth, a different weather problem is coming: Mississippi River flooding. Contacts in Ten-

nessee and Louisiana said forecasted crests will drown significant acreage.

These reports were made today.

## CROP REPORTS

**Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist:** "Most growers are still having trouble getting cotton planted. A lot of areas got 1.5" last Saturday night, and in the 2 weeks before that caught a couple of inches each week. Some spots missed rain, but we mostly need things to dry out.

"Overall, we're probably more than halfway planted. No real reports of insect problems in cotton."

**Mike Sartor, Ind. Consultant, Sartor's Ag Consulting, Clinton, Miss.:** "Cotton, so far, is doing well. I'm not seeing a lot of disease. With the last round of rain, all our cotton finally gained ample moisture to emerge. Stands are quite uniform. No thrips or cutworm pressure to justify treating. Our cotton ranges from germinating all the way to 5 true leaves."

**Ralph Bagwell, La. Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.:** "We got isolated rainfall in south Louisiana in the last couple of days but nowhere near enough. It's still dry in that part of the state, and that's our

main issue. In northern Louisiana, stands look good and at-planting materials are mostly working.

"Thrips are showing up in places, and a few fields are being treated specifically for them. Some older fields are at 3rd and 4th true leaves."

**Cecil Parker, AgriServices, Ltd., Vidalia, La.:** "Overall, the cotton that's been planted looks good, but we've got areas where it's been too dry to continue planting. In south Concordia Parish we've gone almost 8 weeks without rain. Cotton planted in sandy soils along the levee is holding up well where moisture percolates up through the sand.

"But we're also going to flood stage on the river around May 24. A lot of cotton on the river side of the levee will go under water, and it really looks good right now.

"Our older cotton is at 4th to 6th true leaf. It's getting thripy where Temik and Gaucho played out, and we've adding something with the Roundup for thrips."

**Phillip McKibben, McKibben Ag Services, Mathiston, Miss.:** "We've had a ton of rain. Generally, all the cotton that was up before the

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rain looks fine. We will have a good bit of replanting. Notill fields fared much better than conventional ones.

“With 6-8” of rain early last week, some conventional fields washed down to the hardpan on a few ends. In notill fields, though, you could still see the planting tracks in the middles.

“Overall, we’re probably 75% planted. Thrips are light. I’ve seen one cutworm all year. Too much water is our only problem right now. With these warm temperatures, the cotton looks unusually good.”

**Bob Griffin, Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark.:** “The only problem we’re having is the rain. We’re still trying to get the last little bit planted after starting on April 14. We’ll have some cotton squaring next week. Stands are just about what we consider ideal, averaging 2.7 plants per foot. We treated one field for cutworms, aside from our spraying at planting. Also, we’ve treated thrips in fields where a grower didn’t use anything for them at planting, but we aren’t seeing thrips otherwise.”

**Robert Wells, CRC Ag Consulting, LLC, Monticello, Ark.:** “A little area from Dermott to McGehee remains dry. North of there, we got 5-7” last week and the week before that. South of our dry area, we also caught good rainfall Sunday night.

“Cotton looks really good, ranging from 1st to 4th true leaf. Where we put something under it, the materials are holding. We’ve only sprayed a couple of fields for thrips where the grower didn’t have a seed treatment or something in the planter box.

“I sprayed one field for saltmarsh caterpillars, the first I’ve run into all year. It was a thin stand, and we couldn’t let them go any further. Quite a bit of Roundup is going out on cotton ground when we can catch periods between wind and showers.”

**Scott Stewart, Extension Cotton Entomologist, Jackson, Tenn.:** “We were 15-20% planted before the

bad weather started early in the month, and a lot of it looks pretty good where it didn’t drown out. With the warm temperatures, it really came out growing. But we’re also replanting some where we had standing water. And there’s a forecast for Mississippi River flooding, which will take out some pretty significant acreage.

“We’re hoping rains hold off because we need 4-5 good days to get things dry and catch up. Insects are quiet. We’re in our recommended planting period until May 20, but growers are swapping some of the new fuller season varieties they intended to plant for the shorter season varieties we typically grow.”

**Bobby Phipps, Missouri Extension Cotton Specialist, Portageville, Mo.:** “Right now we’re trying to dry out. I was only able to plant research plots today in notill areas where things remain firm. One consultant said he had 10” of rain in 10 days in some areas. I know of one field that had 15”.

“From 33% to 50% of our cotton has been planted in the south end of the bootheel where most of our acres are. A week ago it looked pretty good, but now the ends have been flooded out on a lot of fields. We could be looking at 20-25% replanting. Normally, I try to talk people out of replanting in 9 out of 10 cases. But I was recommending it in some fields Monday -- too much water, plus hail damage and disease.

“Still, though, we’ve had warm temperatures, and disease isn’t as bad as last year. But it’s suppose to rain tonight (Tuesday), and that won’t help.

“This is the fewest thrips we’ve ever had in Missouri, although that could pick up. Systemics may be over the hill.

“On replanting decisions, be careful about how you judge things. In 2 years of tests, we’ve found that there’s no yield penalty here at 1 plant per row foot as long as they’re evenly

spaced. Even at 1 plant per 18”, yields drop off only 8-10%. That still may be better than the penalty for late replanting. There are cases where it pays to replant, but research is showing here that there aren’t as many as we once thought.”

**Jon Tate, Ind. Consultant, Indianola, Miss.:** “We’ve got an excellent stand. Seedling disease is real minor. We’re hardly losing anything, and thrips aren’t a problem. No cutworms are showing up, and there essentially are no saltmarsh caterpillars. The last storm system went to the north and south of us. One place near Lake Washington got .3” to .4”, which will help finish out some rough spots in the stands. Farther east, the Inverness area picked up about 1.5”. Overall, we’re not hurting for rain.”

**Tucker Miller, Ind. Consultant, Drew, Miss.:** “Cotton looks pretty decent in places and pretty ragged in others. Along U.S. 82 from Greenwood to Indianola it needs a rain. We got up to 1.5” out of this last system. North of there into Tallahatchie and Sunflower Counties the rain and wind really worked over the cotton. We’ve had to replant some sand blows, and seedling disease is evident. Cotton in Quitman County looks a little better than maybe it should, considering the rain it’s had.

“We sprayed a few spots for thrips where we didn’t have seed treatments. Other than that, we haven’t had insect problems. We had to fly on some Roundup where we were nearly out of the treatment window.”

**Rusty Elston, Elston Crop Management, Cheneyville, La.:** “Our cotton is 75% planted, and it looks good, running 2-4 nodes and growing well. We’re doing a lot of weed control work. Insects aren’t a problem. Some growth regulator applications could start in 7-10 days. We need more rain to get the rest of the cotton planted.”