

AgFax: Midsouth Cotton

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Here is this week's *AgFax: Midsouth Cotton*, sponsored by the Midsouth Cotton Team of Syngenta Crop Protection.

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OVERVIEW

Parts of the Midsouth remain critically dry. NE Arkansas, SE Missouri and Mississippi's north Delta continue to miss showers. As we closed this issue Tuesday night showers were popping up across the region but nothing looked organized nor very close to the driest areas.

Plantbug treatments increased a bit. Thrips are still being sprayed. Aphids are present, and mites are an issue in places.

CROP REPORTS

Carl Hayden, Chicot County Extension Agent, Lake Village, Ark.: "Cotton is beginning to square. That rain 10 days ago really helped, and then we had spotty showers last week. I've never seen

a crop grow faster than this one. It's deep rooted because of dry conditions earlier."

Craig Massey, UAP-Midsouth, Somerville, Tenn.: "A large part of West Tennessee got from a half-inch to one inch of rain today (Monday). It was too quick and too fast. Spider mites are pressuring cotton in the river bottoms near Dyersburg, and we'll have to treat. We're spraying thrips in some fields where cotton is just coming up.

"Roundup is going out on a lot of cotton that's right at fifth node. Plants are moving quickly in places. Some at fourth leaf last Friday was already at fifth leaf today and rolling out the sixth leaf. So, we're moving out of the Roundup window and shifting to Envoke. Maybe 20-30% of our cotton is still in the Roundup window."

Bob Griffin, Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark.: "We haven't had rain for at least 3 weeks, and nearby areas have gone 5-6 weeks without significant rain.

We're running polypipe everywhere, a good 2 weeks sooner than we've ever done it. If we continue missing rain we could have 3-4 additional irrigations.

"We've started our second plantbug treatments on some cotton, going with Centric at 1.25 oz/acre. We're still not through with thrips. I've never made as many thrips treatments on smaller cotton. When some of this cotton was at the one-leaf stage, thrips already were infesting every plant. Dry weather worked against seed treatments. Also, we can pretty much confirm this year that you don't need a lot of wheat to generate heavy thrips.

"I'm concerned about slow node development. Normally, we put on a new node every 2.5 to 2.75 days. But with dry conditions, it's taking 4-5 days. It takes about 25 days for that first square to become a bloom. If node development is 2.5 days then we potentially have 10 nodes above first bloom. But if it's 5 days, then we'll only have 5 nodes above the bloom in 25 days. After that, we can

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put on maybe 1-2 more nodes.

“The ‘take home’ here is that this crop needs water. If it doesn’t rain within 2 weeks, a lot of dryland cotton that pushed 3 bales last year may only average 1.25 to 1.5 bales. And if people don’t start irrigating where they can, we will be setting ourselves up for a short crop on that acreage, too.”

John “Kim” Kimbrough, Ind. Consultant, Pro Tech Ag, Lexington, Miss.: “It rained this morning (Monday) at Oxford and even more at Holly Springs. That area desperately needed it and could use more.

“There are ragged spots where folks didn’t get complete stands. But cotton, overall, looks real good, especially in this area.

“Plantbugs were running 25% in a field of Paymaster 1218 that Brian Hayes checked today near Holly Springs. It was planted early, started squaring on the fourth node and already was at 7-8 nodes with about 4 squares. At the end of last week we found a spot with a good many plantbugs, but that cotton was too small to start squaring.”

John Raymond Bassie, Ind. Consultant, Bassie’s Agri Service, Cleveland, Miss.: “A lot of polypipe has been rolled out. We have areas that really need rain. From Gunnison north along the riverside it’s particularly dry. Since sometime in April those fields have only gotten 5-6 tenths. We’re spraying younger cotton for thrips. I have not done any plantbug applications yet but will probably start tomorrow (Tuesday). We’re finding 5-6 counts in some of older cotton.”

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: “There was a little bollworm flight last week. We started picking up a few eggs and

small larvae, but nothing that concerned us. This was primarily April-planted cotton. Our biggest problem continues to be dry weather in NE Arkansas and the way it’s driving thrips and mites. We’re treating thrips on 5-leaf cotton because it’s not growing fast enough. A good rain would really help. Mites are still bad in places. If it stays dry we may be fighting them all year.”

Bobby Phipps, Missouri Extension Cotton Specialist, Portageville, Mo.: “The bootheel, as a whole, needs rain – big time. Showers have been very spotty. Major weather patterns either bypassed SE Missouri or brushed the edge. The crop still looks good. A few people are irrigating. Thrips have been a little easier than usual. Cotton in the very southern part of the bootheel is just getting to the point that we’ve got to worry about plantbugs.”

Steve Schutz, Ind. Consultant, Coughatta, La.: “We finally got rain on most places, ranging from a tenth to 2.5 inches. It rejuvenated cotton. We had fertilized a good part of the crop, mostly DPL 555. I told growers to have the Pix waiting on the turnrow because cotton was going to really take off when it did rain.

“Fleahoppers developed ahead of plantbugs. We’ve been finding light numbers of stinkbugs on corn. This includes greens, browns and red shouldered stinkbugs. They’re out there, just waiting.

“We’ve got several hundred acres of DPL 555 that was planted dry in April, and we’ve just gotten enough rain to bring it up. Seed was in the ground for 4 weeks, and we had about 80% germination.”

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: “Everything looks pretty

good. We’ve been getting rain over the last few days but have had sunshine in the mornings. Plants are adding new nodes like there’s no tomorrow. After that drought period, plants definitely have deep roots.

“We are picking up an increase in plantbug and aphid numbers. I’m not seeing treatable densities yet, but it won’t be long. We need to be careful about scouting and insecticide selection so that we don’t treat for one pest and then have to come right back for the other. Plants are growing rapidly now and somewhat diluting insect populations. Most retention is 90% or better, so we can sustain some pressure.”

Angus Catchot, Mississippi Extension Entomologist: “We’re still spraying thrips on some later planted cotton. Spider mites remain a problem in places, and in a few cases a second application has been made. A few plantbug applications are being made in the Delta.”

Gerald Daniel, Ind. Consultant, Clinton, Miss.: “Everything I’m checking has gotten at least some rain. Our main need now is to do field work. Some of our cotton at the 4-leaf stage has not been sprayed. We’ve got a lot of DPL 555 that’s just coming up. So, we’re going to be planning our Pix applications very closely to see if we can shift it from a long-season variety to something in the medium-season range.

“We have fields that need attention to thrips, and growers are adding something when they spray Roundup. There are cases where growers have been waiting to spray older cotton with 4 leaves, and some of it has gotten thrippy. But cotton that’s just emerging is taking up systemics, so thrips aren’t an issue.”