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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

Spider mites are becoming a frustrating, expensive problem across a wide part of the region. Plantbug spraying picked up a bit, and scattered aphid treatments are being made. More irrigation is starting. Much of the upper Midsouth remains dry.

CROP REPORTS

Robert Wells, CRC Ag Consulting, LLC, Monticello, Ark.: "We're picking up a few plantbugs and treating here and there. We treated 3 non-Bt fields with plantbugs and a few small worms. A big group of fields at Dumas had spider mite pressure, enough that the Extension service put a trial there. But we got an inch of rain Friday, and that may have knocked them out enough that we won't have to retreat.

"A lot of people need to be cranking up their wells. Cotton has a good load and is still holding a pretty high percentage of everything it's put on. Weed control has gone okay, especially where we made 2 Roundup applications over the top. We're starting layby and Pix applications now. I've been in 3 fields so far today (Monday) with red blooms. We planted a little earlier than normal this year, but I still wasn't expecting blooms until the end of this week or early next week."

Grady Coburn, Consultant, Pest Management Enterprises, Cheneyville, La.: "About 40% of our cotton is in early bloom, with a little in the second week of bloom. We're seeing a few small bolls. The crop is a little later than normal. The main focus right now is initiating plant growth regulator programs. We've applied quite a bit already. We'll come back in 10-14 days if it rains more.

"Some cotton hasn't required a growth regulator yet, either because it's too young or hasn't had enough rain. Generally, all of our commodities are in pretty good shape in terms

of moisture."

Phil Gurley, Gurley's Agricultural Consulting Service, Kennett, Mo.: "We're treating plantbugs in a few hot spots and have been spraying mites, too, where the rain didn't take care of them. We also have a field or two with aphids. We're putting out plant growth regulators and running Vydate on sandy ground for plantbugs and to see if we can also work on nematodes. The main thing we need right now is rain. Cotton is loading well and retention is strong."

Mike Sartor, Ind. Consultant, Sartor's Ag Consulting, Clinton, Miss.: "We're finding a few aphids. Where we're finding aphids and still going after plantbugs we're using In-truder at eight-tenths of an ounce. Some non-Bt cotton has a few eggs and a sprinkling of worms, and we're using Steward at a gallon to 11.1 acres, plus a pint of vegetable oil. We're putting out Pix in a few places. Retention is very good, overall. We've got good moisture. We're finding a few blooms in older cotton. A

Continued on next page

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few spider mites are around, and we've sprayed Comite."

Bert Falkner, Ind. Consultant, Land Service, Aberdeen, Miss.: "Our cotton is at 8-12 nodes. As of today (Monday) about 50% has had one shot of a plantbug material.

"This part of the state got 4-6 inches of rain last week out of (tropical storm) Arlene. Cotton was laid over some, but it's still pretty small, and you couldn't tell it today. It rained off and on the week before Arlene. We're trying to clean up fields now. We got at least one Roundup application over the top, and on a lot of it we're coming back with the second shot underneath. In some fields we made 2 over the top, and are going underneath now. A little layby work has started on 30-inch rows.

"Cotton, overall, has grown off slowly, and we're working with a late crop. We usually start finding scattered blooms by June 25, but I doubt if we will this year. If any blooms are out there in June, they will be few and far between."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "Despite rain last week in SE Arkansas, mites are still building and are as bad as they've been in NE Arkansas. The rain had some effect on populations. But after treatments we're finding immatures and heavy egg lays. We've seen that behind Capture in a trial and also in one field treated with Kelthane. The spider mite situation could get worse if we move into a dry pattern. We saw aphid hot spots last week, and a couple of fields were treated, but aphids don't seem to be any worse in most cases this week.

"We saw another blip in moth trap counts. Some beet armyworm activity has been evident in Jefferson County. It doesn't look like they're established, but it is a little early for them to be out and about."

Trent LaMastus, Ind. Consult-

ant, Cleveland, Miss.: "Mites are reaching near-epidemic proportions in some parts of Humphreys County. We're getting knockdown but are having to come back. Aphids are increasing in a few areas. The neonicotinoids are holding them down for the most part. We're coming back on some cotton with our second round. We are treating some areas for plantbug nymphs and adults with Diamond, and I'm finding dead nymphs 4 DAT.

"Our oldest cotton started blooming over the weekend, but we also have fields that won't bloom before July 10. Pivots are running, and we're encouraging growers to get pipe ready and start running water once we move past layby."

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.:

"A lot of fields are being sprayed for plantbugs and, to an extent, for aphids. We still have a light, scattered egg lay. I don't think it will amount to much. Most cotton hasn't started blooming, so it would be hard for worms to establish themselves on Bt cotton.

"Spider mites definitely are cropping up, and we're getting into some of the issues that folks have been facing in surrounding states this season. We've got a long list of possible materials but are hoping to narrow down the options, based on trials Gus Lorenz is running in Arkansas and our initial results here. We're starting to rethink some of our ideas about Capture or bifenthrin. It's given good results in the past, but we're not seeing that right now. Some people are going with Denim. There are newer miticides available, but we don't have a price structure on them yet. If they're priced mainly for the western market, they'll probably be more than people here will want to spend."

Scott Stewart, Extension Cotton Entomologist, Jackson, Tenn.: "We have heavy plantbug numbers in places, particularly in the Mississippi

River bottoms. Otherwise, populations are kind of run of the mill. We still have bad spider mites in isolated areas, but we're beginning to pick them up on a wider basis. We're finding aphids, too, but not as generally as we're finding mites."

Bobby Phipps, Missouri Extension Cotton Specialist, Portageville, Mo.:

"The crop looks terrific, but it needs rain. Some growers are watering in our southern counties. We got scattered showers a couple of weeks ago. Amounts weren't large, but it remained cloudy and moisture soaked into the soil. I've never seen such a small amount of rain do so much good. But if we don't get significant rain soon, we'll be irrigating before bloom on a wide basis."

Angus Catchot, Mississippi Extension Entomologist:

"Spider mites are reaching levels that are concerning people across the state. This started in the south and central Delta but calls from north of U.S. 82 are increasing. A couple of new miticides are on the market, but there doesn't seem to be enough of either Zeal or Oberon to spray many acres.

"We are trying to obtain a 24C label to use Zephyr east of the Mississippi River. As far as pure miticides go, we mainly have Kelthane and Comite. Capture was an option, but it's not looking as good in some evaluations this year. We may be getting a quick knockdown with it, but there are so many eggs that mites are hatching, then moving up plants and infesting new foliage.

"Some fields have been sprayed 3 times with one material or the other. Overall, we're getting more consistent control with hollow cone or flat fan nozzles with plenty of water volume and high pressure. By air, it's taking 5 GPA. If control has been poor we're almost always finding it was by ground and that low-drift tips were used."