

# 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**.

## OVERVIEW

The Midsouth needs more rain and fewer spider mites. Mississippi received a 24C special needs label to apply Zephyr miticide, probably the first time it's been approved for use east of the Mississippi River. Zephyr is generally considered the standard mite treatment in California.

Plantbugs are around, but several of our contacts this week noted that pressure has been relatively light. Some aphid treatments are underway in Louisiana.

## CROP REPORTS

**David Skinner, Ind. Consultant, Starkville, Miss.:** "In terms of pest pressure, I'm kind of escaping most of the storm. Everybody is talking about spider mites. I've treated a few mites in our Delta cotton around Belzoni, but that's been it for spider mites. We've treated all of our

Noxubee County cotton twice for plantbugs. Our cotton farther north in the Hamilton area is younger and has only had spotty plantbug pressure. Overall, I'm impressed with how our hill cotton looks this year. It's late but otherwise has made a strong start, and a lot of it got 1 to 1.5 inches of rain Sunday. I saw my first bloom in Noxubee County today (Monday). My Delta cotton has set up pretty good but needs a rain."

**Bill Brooks, Mid-South Farmers Cooperative, Alamo, Tenn.:** "Hooded sprayers have been running to clean up weeds. Cotton is in the range of 8-14 nodes. It looks good. We do need a rain, although I've yet to see any cotton wilting. I was in a field today (Monday) that was at 12-13 nodes that will be blooming toward the end of the week. We're still a couple of weeks off from seeing a lot of blooms, though. Plantbugs aren't widespread yet. Some Centric, Vydate and Trimax have gone out, and it all seemed to work. This morning I've been in my first field of the season with spider mites and I've also found my first field with aphids.

Beneficials were working them over."

**Tucker Miller, Ind. Consultant, Drew, Miss.:** "We're spraying spider mites in quite a few spots, perhaps more than we've ever had. This hot, dry weather has really flared them. We're mostly using Kelthane. At first we were trimming and hitting spots, but 3 days later there were more spots, so now we're treating whole fields in some cases. Most treatments are by air since people are irrigating. Some are laying by with hoods, so they'll be spreading mites around as they go.

"A few plantbug are around, mainly next to corn and spots like that, and we're picking up nymphs now. Cotton is starting to green up with irrigation, and we're watering as fast as we can. It's extremely dry."

**Charles Denver, Denver Crop Consulting, Watson, Ark.:** "Not much is going on in our cotton except that we're treating spider mites and a few plantbugs. There's an aphid field here and there, but it's mostly quiet. We're ready for another rain. Growers are irrigating full blast on

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cotton and soybeans. Our crop here looks pretty good, but from Dewitt north it's rough in places. For mites we've run a little bit of Zephyr and some Kelthane, but Capture seems to be the material that's mainly available here right now."

**Victor Roth, Roth Farm Service, Malden, Mo.:** "We're dry. It's still June and some of my growers at Senath are talking about irrigating for the second time, and those with pivots have run them 2-3 times. We have a few spider mites in the New Madrid area and really don't have a good explanation for it. In the Dexter area we haven't seen many mites and at Kennett and Senath they seem to have gone away.

"We've treated more fields with spider mites than plantbugs. Some fields at Senath and Kennett received eradication treatments, and that helped with plantbugs. But in other places they just haven't been around much. We haven't treated any aphids yet, which is surprising with malathion going out. We've got cotton at 10-14 nodes and up to 24 inches tall. It's putting on a good square load with strong retention. We'll see a few blooms by July 4-7."

**Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.:** "We've got spider mites and plenty of spider mite eggs. It's the heaviest concentration of mite eggs I've seen in a long, long time. Mites were scattered a week or so ago, but now we're treating whole fields. With the egg numbers I'm finding, we're looking at potential for a spider mite explosion, Kelthane, Capture and Comite have been going out. Some guys already have made 2 shots. Plantbugs are unbelievably light. In some fields we're not finding any at all."

**Angus Catchot, Mississippi Extension Entomologist:** "Our mite problem hasn't been alleviated any. We're steadily spraying, but mites are

getting worse. Mississippi received a Section 24C exemption label for Zephyr miticide in cotton today (Monday). I don't know if any has gone out yet, but product has been moving into the state. Everybody I've talked to is battling them to some extent. Numbers are high enough now that we're recommending a true miticide. Materials that provide a quick knockdown aren't holding up to the pressure.

"Some treatments still are going out for plantbugs, but spider mites are the main focus. We're seeing a lot less mite pressure in the hills than in the Delta. Our hill cotton received a little more rain, which may be the reason."

**David Hydrick, Hydrick's Crop Consulting, Inc., Jonesboro, Ark.:**

"We've gotten one rain on most of our crop since it was planted. That's all. The crop still looks good, but we're burning up. We've got cotton at bloom and cotton with 1-2 leaves – and it's in the same field, maybe even on adjoining rows. Most of it was planted into moisture and came right up, but a planter unit might have been set just enough differently that some seed wasn't placed in moisture. They didn't emerge until 2 months later.

"Spider mites are eating us alive. Where we used Temik at planting there's been less pressure. We're applying a lot of Zephyr but also have been going with Capture to have something with a broader spectrum. The 2 main problems right now are plantbugs and mites, but mites are the predominate pest. Plantbug pressure is as light as I've seen it in years. In the last 3-4 days we've sprayed more for mites than plantbugs. We treated 80% of one grower's cotton today (Monday). His cotton looks good but mites are all over it.

**Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist:** "Mites are getting worse, and there's probably not a place in the state that doesn't have mites coming on now. I talked to one

grower today (Monday) who has spent \$36 an acre trying to control mites. He started with Capture, and after that didn't work he came back with Zephyr.

"The other interesting thing has been calls from 2 consultants – one in Ashley County and the other in Mississippi County – saying they're finding beet armyworms at treatment level, one on DPL 444 and the other on DPL 555. There may be some suppression, but not control. They were seeing 3-5 hits per 100 feet. We saw beet on cotton last week in Jefferson County, probably associated with pigweed. We're coming into bloom and are expecting a bollworm flight, too. Hot, dry weather always seems well suited to Lepidoptera-type insects.

"The only pleasing news is that plantbugs just aren't there. Except for our usual hot spots, plantbug numbers are decidedly down compared to the last few years. You can search all day in some areas and only find 3-4."

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

"Our crop ranges from needing rain to desperately needing rain. Aphids have jumped up in many fields like you would expect. Most everybody has them, and treatments aren't uncommon. Plantbugs are still out there, and they're consistent and persistent. We've seen them earlier than normal this year. Populations aren't necessarily heavy everywhere, but you can find them across many fields.

"The insect of the week is the spider mite. They're particularly bad in one parish in NE Louisiana and part of another one in NW Louisiana. We're not dealing with the statewide pressure folks in other states have this year, but in our worst areas growers have sprayed 3-4 times and are probably looking at 5-6 applications in some fields.

"A good 50% of our cotton is blooming now, and a large portion of it started blooming this week."