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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.

OVERVIEW

A number of areas have received rain since last Friday. But considering how dry it's been, more rain would be welcomed, especially in the upper half of the region.

Spider mites appear to be crashing in at least some cases in Mississippi. A trace amount of aphid fungus was confirmed in Ashley County, Ark., the Aphid Fungus Sampling Service reported. Egg lays are starting on a somewhat wider basis.

CROP REPORTS

Bob Griffin, Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark.: "We're treating a few plantbugs, and spider mite applications have gone out in a handful of cases. We're finding small numbers of worms on non-Bt cotton.

"The biggest thing right now is water, or the lack of it. We got about a three-quarter inch rain on half our

acreage last week, but the rest received little or nothing. Cotton watered in a timely manner is holding up well. Temperatures at night have been 75 or less, and that's going in our favor where people are irrigating. About 40% of our cotton looks as good as it ever has. But dryland potential is declining. One grower hasn't had measurable rain in 80 days."

Gerald Daniel, Ind. Consultant, Clinton, Miss.: "We've had some falloff in control with at least one neonicotinoid. We've had cases where it knocked aphids back but didn't eliminate them. Even at high rates it wasn't providing adequate stinkbug control, and we've been coming back with Orthene. Mites are picking up some but still aren't bad. It's interesting that pressure isn't nearly as high on old timber-burn sites, which would have higher levels of potash. In the past we've sprayed potassium nitrate and seen reduced mite pressure.

"I've looked at a lot of cotton that's just starting to bloom, and there aren't many nodes above white flower. We've gotten showers in 1 or 2 places

but no general rain as of today (Monday). Compared to cotton I work in Louisiana, my cotton in Mississippi tends to be on sandier soils. Some of those fields from Jackson south received 7 tenths to 3 inches of rain, and they absolutely needed it."

Steve Schutz, Ind. Consultant, Coushatta, La.: "We're still in the dry zone. About 85% of our cotton is in pretty good shape, but it's starting to bloom, so water requirements are increasing. Centric and Trimax gave 10-21 days of control on aphids, but aphids and a few plantbugs are coming back now. We've started spraying some Bt cotton for bollworms.

"The crop is moving very fast, and I don't think some of it can hold any more fruit. We've had cooler nights, so plants haven't spent as much effort staying cool, and they're putting that energy into growing."

Bobby Phipps, Missouri Extension Cotton Specialist, Portageville, Mo.: "It remains dry throughout much of our production area. Last night (Monday) we got four tenths,

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Bt Oversprays and Late-season Insect Control

Be vigilant in your insect control. Scouting for *lepidopteran* and other non-target insect pests is critical for successful cotton farming, both conventional and transgenic. Foliar over-sprays may be needed on transgenic varieties if flushes occur during the season.

Curacron® and **Karate®** with **Zeon Technology™**, used alone or tank mixed, are cost-effective options for effective control of *lepidopteran* and secondary cotton pests.

Turn to **Syngenta Crop Protection** for this and other innovative solutions, backed by one of the most knowledgeable Southern cotton teams in the industry.



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and a few areas may have received more. Every little bit is welcomed, but that's not nearly enough for the deficit we've got. This is shaping up very much like 1980. An irrigation well this year is a valuable asset. In general, some cotton probably won't have nearly enough nodes once it starts flowering. Mites are the main problem right now. Lygus are around but aren't severe. We've still got to keep looking for them. Lygus will appear. It's just a question of what day."

Scott Stewart, Extension Cotton Entomologist, Jackson, Tenn.: "We've still got spider mites. A wide part of West Tennessee received 1 to 1.5 inches of rain last night (Monday). That will help with mites but not necessarily eliminate them. I got a couple of calls this morning about mites, so they're still with us. We're seeing a few plantbugs and stinkbugs in early cotton. One agent said both insects were hitting thresholds in fields along the Mississippi River. I've received calls about browns in some cotton before bloom. In fields I have been checking over the last few days I saw quite a few green stinkbugs, including immatures. Most of our fields will have blooms by the end of the week."

Gus Lorenz, Arkansas Extension IPM Specialist: "We've received rain in NE Arkansas, and that's eased mite pressure for the time being. Mite eggs are still present, but we at least got a slight reprieve. Except for hot spots, plantbugs are fairly nonexistent in that part of the state.

"In SE Arkansas people are kicking up a lot of bollworm moths, and I think we're on the front end of a good egg lay. About 5% of our Bt cotton there has been treated. That probably will increase substantially. Yellow striped armyworm are starting a cycle. They've been reported in Ashley, Desha and Jefferson Counties.

"Plantbugs and mites are still pretty low in SE Arkansas. Mites don't seem to be getting a lot worse. In Ashley

and Chicot Counties some treatments are being made for aphids with a mix of plantbugs. Aphid fungus was confirmed in Desha County."

Craig Massey, UAP-Midsouth, Somerville, Tenn.: "Plantbugs are still moderate but a bit on the increase, and we're finding immatures. Everything probably has been sprayed once for plantbugs and some fields twice. We're still finding spider mites but hope the rain last night (Monday) will knock them back. We're finding a few worm eggs and worms on non-Bt. Stinkbugs are increasing in spots."

Merritt Holman, Arkansas Crop Technologies, Lonoke, Ark.: "There are a few pockets of plantbugs that we've treated near corn and hedges, and we're applying a little Pix and trying to wrap up layby work. Overall, things look relatively good. We're a week or so behind last year, but by the end of this week 70% or more of our cotton will be flowering. We've had to deal with a lot more mites than normal, primarily around England. Some Zeal, Zephyr and generic material went out. We've got an excellent fruit set. We haven't spent much on plantbugs but have made up for that with fertilizer and diesel."

Ronnie Bibb, Jimmy Sanders Seed Co., Hollandale, Miss.: "Our irrigated cotton looks great, and the crop, in general, has plenty of fruit. But we're in dire need of a rain. A few plantbugs are around but aren't a real problem. Mites have been the thorn in our side, especially near well traveled turnrows or gravel roads. By the end of this week we will be treating a lot of cotton for the second time. Best results have been where we sprayed under a pivot. And even in furrow-irrigated cotton the results seem to be a little better."

Angus Catchot, Mississippi Extension Entomologist: "We're still spraying plantbugs in places, but not

at the level we were this time last year. A few aphid treatments have gone out in the hills in the last 7-10 days. We're kind of holding off in places now because this is about the time the aphid fungus develops. Somewhat spotty showers in the central Delta and hills today (Tuesday) could help encourage the fungus.

"Spider mites started crashing in some soybeans last week, and 2 consultants said they're seeing that in cotton, too. Mites also crashed in untreated plots in a mite trial at Stoneville. I'm not sure if this is an epizootic, but I hope that's the case. We're still spraying mites in places.

"I'm getting calls about eggs in non-Bt cotton and whether they're bollworms or budworms. People aren't carrying ID kits like they did a few years ago. If folks can't flush moths to identify, that kind of leaves you up in the air, except for trap counts. Those are only an indicator. We're trying to get some kits now."

Ralph Bagwell, Louisiana Extension Entomologist, Winnsboro, La.: "We're in fields today (Tuesday) with eggs, worms, plantbugs, mites, aphids and maybe some other things. I suspect that it won't be hard this week to find other fields like that. Mite populations seem to be getting larger and expanding into more acreage. The egg lay is light, and we're flushing a lot of bollworm moths. The problem with all this mix is determining what materials will control the main pests and mites – or at least not get us into trouble with mites.

"Aphids are up and down. I was in fields last week with heavy populations that looked like they were going down, and by this week aphids were gone. On the other hand, I was in fields last week with light populations that had increased when we rechecked this week. If the fungus is working, it's still more of a localized factor. Populations in some areas still haven't reached a critical mass to trigger the fungus."