

Crop Conditions:

Plenty of squaring is underway. First irrigation is in full swing and more than halfway completed in some areas in the southern half of the valley.

Heat units are still ahead of historic averages (see table, next page). Overall crop conditions are good, but growers are paying a price for see-saw temperatures and prolonged winds earlier in the year. Rudy Perez with Western Farm Service in Dos Palos says 75-80% of his cotton "looks pretty good," but the remainder has plenty of catching up to do. Perez's comments were typical of what other PCAs told us this week.

"Anytime you have to water in May, it's an indication that we're not working with a bumper crop," Perez observes. "We still can make a good crop, but it probably won't set any records."

Mite Report:

Bruce Roberts, Extension farm advisor, Kings County: "We starting to see mites and some cleanup sprays are being made. The big push right now is to get first irrigation on to maintain early momentum and keep the crop from stressing. After that, more of the cleanup treatments will be made."

Bill Weir, Extension farm advisor, Merced County: "Mites haven't gotten any worse in the last week. A few people have treated. We're finding 30-40% in our test plots right now."

John Tatum, PCA, Buttonwillow Warehouse, Buttonwillow: "We've made some miticide treatments--1,900 acres at Wheeler Ridge and 1,150 acres in the Lakeview area. But we're not dealing with anything out of the ordinary."

John Usher, PCA and manager, Western Farm Service, Hanford: "We treated about 30% of cotton for mites before first irrigation and the rest will be sprayed after the pipes come up. We're spraying quite a bit with Zephyr right now. The majority of our cotton is being treated now or is scheduled. In some cases, we're adding something for lygus. We also have been adding materials in a few fields for armyworms and aphids. We're dealing with a very active insect complex."

Nick Groenenberg, independent PCA, Hanford: "We're finding mites, but the overall pressure is light. We treated quite a few fields before first irrigation, based mainly on field history, and will make cleanup treatments on the remaining upland cotton after first irrigation."

Pete Goodell, IPM entomologist, Kearney Agricultural Center, Parlier: "In the fields I've been in this week on the West Side, mites aren't a concern. A few ground rigs are moving through the field, but these are normal May-June cleanup treatments. I don't know of any hotspots."

Nick Soares, PCA, Wilbur-Ellis Co., Selma: "My growers used Thimet on about 90% of their acreage and it held up real well. Mites are just now building in the fields. We're treating some before water and some after. We've got 10-12" cotton in many fields and feel pretty good about it."

Ron Avila, Western Farm Service, Five Points: "We've had light mite and armyworms early. Nothing is out of hand. We had high mite populations on some field edges, but sprayed no more than 20 acres. My guys in the Five Points area are just starting first irrigation and expect to layby with Zephyr afterwards."

Rudy Perez, Western Farm Service, Dos Palos: "Mites aren't that bad. We sprayed some fields with Zephyr last week and are stripping some this week with Kelthane before irrigation. After irrigation, we will come back with Zephyr in those fields that we stripped."

David Simoni, independent PCA, Visalia: "In upland cotton, mites just now are coming on. We're coming back with a Temik sidedress right now. We haven't made foliar treatments yet but we're close in some fields."

Dan Buchak, Gillespie Ag Service, Porterville: "I'm just starting to write recommendations for Zephyr and Kelthane. Mainly I'm writing it up for the guys who are coming back with a Temik sidedress. We're doing a cleanup spray between when our planting time systemic tapers off and the sidedress picks up."

Dan Munk, Extension farm advisor, Fresno County: "Some treatments are being made where first irrigation hasn't started yet."

John Moore, PCA, Growers Crop Consulting, Bakersfield: "In the past week, mite infestations have increased in the Shafter-Wasco area. We went from 20% the week before to 50% to even 100% in extreme cases. We've been putting up with some high infestation levels, but we've also had a strong thrip-to-egg ratio. Our growers wanted to make one irrigation before treating in most cases. Cotton is about 13" tall now, and we can get a good application of Zephyr on it now."

Insect Summary:

Aphids: A few miticide treatments also carried something for aphids this week, but aphids mainly aren't a concern. Predatory populations remain high.

Worms: Reports of treatments were made in Kern, Kings and Fresno Counties. Most larvae are beet armyworms but some loopers also are turning up. Part of the pressure is associated with riverside vegetation.

Lygus: Treatment activity is picking up but not heavily. Counts vary widely, depending mainly on proximity to other crops, vegetation or foothills.

"On the east side of the county near the Sierra foothills, several growers are spraying lygus, but lygus aren't showing up on the west side," says Bill Weir, Extension farm advisor in Merced County.

Farther south on the west side, lygus are more apparent. Some 14 counts were reported in the Lost Hills area of Kern County, says Pete Goodell, IPM entomologist.

Whitefly: Dan Buchak with Gillespie Ag Service in Porterville found whitefly eggs on cotton in the Lindsay area but not at treatable levels.

June County Meetings:

Topics this month include insect overviews, resistance management guidelines, fertility management, and Pix treatments.

Kings-Tulare: June 18, 9:30, International Agri-Center, Tulare.

Fresno: June 19, 9 a.m. registration, San Joaquin VFW hall.

Madera-Merced: June 19, noon, San Juan Ranch shop area just off Highway 152 and San Juan Road. Sponsored lunch.