

Crop Conditions:

Blooms are appearing through much of the valley. The first bloom reported in Merced County was on June 3, says Bill Weir, Extension farm advisor.

Cooler temperatures prevailed through the week, and that has trimmed some of the degree day accumulation difference between 1997 and historic trends. But readings remain well ahead of the 30-year average at every location (see next page).

First irrigation is complete through a wide area in the southern half of the valley and underway through much of the northern half. Lygus continue to be a concern in certain areas (see next page). The following reports were gathered on Friday, June 6.

Mite Report:

Bill Bland, PCA, Agrisearch, Visalia: "All the cotton we work in Tulare County pretty much has been treated. These are areas where mites can get pretty prolific, and we wanted fields to be relatively clean at this point. This cool weather has slowed mites, but we don't want to get caught when temperatures heat up again. In Kings and Kern Counties, we're treating on a more sporadic basis where mites are moving in from other crops or desert areas."

Don Arburua, PCA, Stanislaus Farm Supply, Merced: "Most treatments went on a week or more ago, and fields look pretty good."

Galen Hiatt, independent PCA, Fresno: "We don't have what I would call pressure, but we're making cleanup sprays so we don't have to come back by air."

Jim Hall, independent PCA, Fresno: "In Fresno County, pressure is running 40-45% after first irrigation, and we're going in there right away. I had some fields in that area last year where mites were a real problem. It could have been related to coverage. We're applying high rates of Kelthane now and will hold Zephyr in reserve while we watch the situation. In Kings County in the Lemoore area, mites are running 20-25%. We're anticipating first flower in 7-10 days and hope to delay a treatment until the first Pix application. In fields with a history of consistent year-long mite pressure, we're going with Zephyr."

Jerry Anderson, independent PCA, Dos Palos: "Mites pretty much are under control. We've treated everything except two fields that had to be replanted, and we're waiting for plants to gain a little more size."

Vern Crawford, PCA, Wilbur-Ellis Co., Shafter: "Mite pressure right now in cotton is about the most normal we've had in four to five years. There's no really outlandish pressure except in areas with resistant populations. The thing that's unsettling right now is the lygus situation and how it might affect mites in mid- and late-season periods."

Dan Munk, Extension farm advisor, Fresno County: "We've seen a few mite applications in the last one to two weeks, but mites have not been a serious problem in the county, as a whole."

Dale Deshane, PCA, Supervised Control, Bakersfield: "Most of our fields have been treated the first time and are looking pretty clean. Growers are debating in some cases

now about whether to come back with another treatment. On our traditional hotspots, we will treat."

Bill Weir, Extension farm advisor, Merced County: "Mites are better than they have been. Predation may be helping to hold down populations. There are occasional treatments being made, but not at the level of two weeks ago."

Ron Vargas, Extension farm advisor, Madera County: "An applicator in the Chowchilla area who we work with says that things are heating up from his perspective. He's running ragged spraying putting out miticide treatments, mainly Zephyr. He's also sprayed lygus some this week with Ammo. I also hate to think about it, but he said one grower treated two fields for aphids."

Ron Avila, PCA, Western Farm Service, Five Points: "I'm laying by everything now for mites. The treatments started a week ago Saturday."

James Brazzle, Extension entomology advisor, Kern County: "Things look really good in terms of mites. Populations are low, and the majority of treatments look good. I'm having trouble finding a place to put on spider mite trials. My immediate concern still is movement from almonds as we move toward hull-split and harvest. Cotton in the proximity of almonds needs to be watched closely."

Randy Delerio, PCA and partner, High Desert Ag, Mendota: "Fluctuating temperatures have kept thrip active and contained mites in a number of fields. Even where we haven't used a systemic, we haven't needed a miticide treatment before first irrigation. We have some treatments going on now ahead of irrigation in case we get caught in a heat wave. But compared to other years, I think more of our miticide will go on at layby instead of early."

Insect Summary:

Aphids: Scattered treatments being made.

Whitefly: Some are showing up in sweep nets in Kern County, but no problems reported.

Worms: Scattered treatments reported on the west side of Fresno County. Beet armyworm moth counts are running as high as 50 per night, reports Galen Hiatt, Fresno PCA. Heliothis moth counts are in line with what Hiatt would expect in mid-July. Hiatt treated one cotton field for beet armyworms Thursday night and is watching several others. Loopers also are being reported in the Five Points area, says Dan Munk, Fresno Extension advisor.

Ron Avila with Western Farm Service in Five Points says beet armyworms are showing up in corn, cotton and tomatoes. Other PCAs in his office have treated armyworms in cotton. Avila hasn't yet, but he has treated tomatoes. "We're finding plenty of predators, but worms are still there," he says. "The tomatoes we treated don't even have blooms yet."

Lygus: A number of PCAs in Kern, Kings, Tulare and Fresno Counties were weighing lygus treatments or sprayed some fields last week. Reports this week also included cases of lower retention associated with low lygus counts.

Overall, though, retention remains strong in many fields, says Pete Goodell, IPM entomologist. But some areas have experienced square loss due to migrating lygus.

Damage has been reported in parts of northeastern Kern County and in a general area from Wasco to Semitropic to Earlymart. Dale Deshane with Supervised Control in Bakersfield has treated 3,000-4,000 acres in that range. He tried Monitor but shifted to Capture to gain longer residual activity in the face of heavy migrations. Those treatments are holding 10-14 days, he says.

Deshane has found some 24" plants that do not have fruit. "In the other places we work, lygus still are an isolated problem influenced by other crops or weeds," says Deshane.

Vern Crawford with Wilbur-Ellis Co. in Shafter found nymphs this week in every field he checks.

"What you're facing with lygus right now largely depends on where you are," says Goodell.