

Crop Conditions:

Hot weather last week pushed early fields into overdrive and helped bring lagging stands along in many cases. Problems remain with some later plantings and those planted just before colder weather in late March. A few fields still are being watered up, and growers are sprinkling or irrigating to even out some stands.

Generally, the crop looks good at this point, with heat units running 7-14 days ahead of 30-year average, notes Pete Goodell, IPM specialist. Squaring is reported from Kern to Merced Counties, running ahead of model-based forecasts.

More first irrigation is forecast for this week, and it should be in full swing on earliest stands before the end of the month, based on PCA reports.

Mite Report:

Dale Deshane, PCA, Supervised Control, Bakersfield: "We treated our first hot spots about 14 days ago, but in the last week we started treating across quite a few fields. Mite pressure still has been relatively light compared to the last few years. We have cotton in Buttonwillow that, so far, has only needed treatments on edges near almonds or hay."

Jerry Anderson, PCA, Anderson Consulting, Dos Palos: "We're finding mites all over the place. We started spraying more than a week ago on fields downwind from alfalfa or sugar beets or where corn had been the year before. This week we're starting to write up some fields that aren't downwind from anything."

Randy Delerio, PCA and partner, High Desert Ag, Mendota: "In general, there's quite a bit of mite activity out there, and they now are moving from cotyledons to leaves. I haven't treated anything, yet, but will start spraying shortly, especially smaller cotton that did not have Temik at planting. Where Temik was used, it's starting to play out a little. Threrips are helping. In our fields west of Mendota, we've had mites for a couple of weeks, but we're hoping to delay treatments until squaring in case we need to treat lygus, too."

Galen Hiatt, independent PCA, Fresno: "We're finding some mite, but we had Temik on most fields, and they aren't a problem."

Jim Hall, agronomist/PCA, Hall Agronomics, Fresno: "In fields that didn't have in-furrow treatments, mites are running 30-40%. We're treating some fields prior to irrigation, primarily with Kelthane. On fields with a systemic, mites are building but not fast enough that they will necessarily require treatment before first irrigation. I'm also laying down Temik in fields near residential areas."

Vern Crawford, PCA, Wilbur-Ellis Co., Shafter: "My guys are tooling up for treatments and will be coming in with Zephyr when plants are in the 10-12" range. Within two weeks, we'll be going full blast. It's an interesting year, so far. I haven't had to spray, but people are having to treat already as far north as Merced. One thing we've tried to get growers to do is get their Temik down with the seed instead of putting it behind the press wheel. In the hot, dry and windy conditions we've had this spring, I think that's helped us maintain that activity."

Don Arburua, PCA, Stanislaus Farm Supply, Merced: "Mite pressure in Merced County has been fairly light, but I do know some people spraying. I think things are about normal. My Temik fields are clean, and mites are running 10-20% where we didn't use a systemic. I'm certain we will treat everything for mites before first irrigation, which will be about June 1. Our biggest problem right now are dry spots in fields. With no rains, growers are irrigating and sprinkling to straighten out stands."

Bob Ritchie, PCA and manager, Simplot, Delano: "On our own fields, we're finding occasional mites. There are some moderate to heavy infestations on edges next to almonds or alfalfa. Generally, our growers used Temik and a pretty clean and have started some first irrigation. They will put on a miticide after that. Thrips have been active. Considering the temperature, we might have it a little light in terms of mite activity."

Bill Bland, PCA, Agrisearch, Visalia: "In central Tulare County, some twospot mites are coming off almonds. They aren't damaging leaves yet, but they are there. In Kern County in the Lost Hills area, I'm treating some cotton. Mites there are coming off hay. It's a susceptible area and one of the first that tends to be treated."

Bill Weir, Extension farm advisor, Merced County: "Mites haven't gotten any worse since last week. We have some people spraying in spots, but not across the whole area."

Insect Summary:

Aphids: PCAs are finding either no aphids or trace amounts. Predators and parasites are active.

Lygus: No spraying reported and most fields are too small for sweeping. In Kern County, PCA Dale Deshane found 10-12 counts in the Wasco area in some pre-square acreage. In fields with squares, counts were 3-4.

Worms: PCAs in Fresno and Kern Counties reported sugarbeet armyworms, but no treatments made so far. Vern Crawford with Wilbur-Ellis in Shafter finds some terminal damage and will assess the acreage early this week. "So far, I've held off spraying, but I may change my mind," says Crawford. "I think there's a hatch getting underway."

Whitefly: Pressure reported in Kern and Tulare Counties. Bill Bland with Agrisearch found whitefly in Lost Hills acreage in Kern County.

In eastern Tulare County, whitefly moved from citrus into young cotton. "It's a unique situation in a couple of fields, and it looks like the grower could be fighting it all year," says Pete Goodell, cotton IPM specialist. "Agrevo and Valent both had representatives in the field when we were there with the farmer and his PCA. The companies discouraged using IGRs this early, since there's only one shot. The products are translaminar, and they advise getting more size to prolong residual activity."

The PCA was considering an Ovasyn-endosulfan tankmix, then Provado when he treats lygus, says Goodell. That might buy time for plant growth before coming back with an IGR, he adds.

"Mites also were present, so it could be some expensive cotton," says Goodell. "The grower has cotton farther south and it's not a problem."

Goodell emphasizes that the outbreak should not be a wide concern. "We've got more treatment options this year," he says. "We're still doing whitefly sessions at meetings. If a grower hasn't attended one, it would be a good idea to do so."