

MiteFax: San Joaquin Valley Cotton

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Here is this week's issue of *MiteFax*, sponsored by the California Cotton Team of Syngenta Crop Protection, maker of Zephyr®, Centric® and other products designed for SJV cotton production.

OVERVIEW

The bug battles continue in the southern valley, but several PCAs farther north noted that pests remain relatively quiet in their cotton. The crop continues to lag behind by 2-3 weeks, several PCAs estimated. These reports were made Thursday and Friday.

CROP REPORTS

Mark W.F. Carter, PCA, Agri-Consultants, Los Banos: "We've had some 1-3 counts of lygus in cotton that's just squaring, and we treated a couple of fields Monday and Tuesday.

"Generally, though, we're not finding as many lygus as we thought we would. Instead of consistent 3-4 counts there are more 0-1 counts. Where we treated, it was in our southernmost cotton south, and maybe they're just

piling in there first. Our most advanced cotton is at 7-9 nodes with 2-4 squares. We treated nearly everything for mites, and Zephyr is doing a pretty good job."

Clay Houchin, PCA, Buttonwillow Warehouse, Buttonwillow: "A lot of lygus sprays are going out, and I've been writing more recommendations today (Thursday). Where some guys went earlier with Capture, the lygus are moving into the cotton again. There are a whole lot of lygus out there. I'm getting counts of 4-20.

"The pressure is still mainly in pockets. The southern end of the valley continues to be one of those hot spots. How bad they are largely depends on what's next to your cotton. We've been going with 4-5 oz/acre of Capture, depending on counts.

"Worms are cycling in, but they're nothing like we saw earlier. Some growers are using Steward for worms and to gain some activity on lygus. That's with a 4-count. If lygus are running 6-8 then we're going with something stronger."

Lowell Zelinski, Ind. PCA, Bakersfield: "Materials seem to be working well, and we're getting about

the length of residual we'd expect, although I'd like for it to be longer. With lygus, we're seeing 7-10 days of control. But we're also running into some relatively low counts that are causing problems. Retention is in the 60-80% range in some fields, which indicates that even some of these 1-3 count are doing more damage than we'd like.

"Most growers are choosing to be cautious, and they're spraying sooner than we normally might because we're got to save as much early fruit as possible. I've been talking to people in the northern valley, and they've definitely got lighter lygus pressure, but I won't be surprised to see it increase.

"Worms are present but not enough to justify treating. Cotton is growing pretty well, and they aren't bothering the fruit. We're being cautious about them and monitoring numbers closely. Another PCA told me today (Thursday) that they were finding a few aphids near Delano. There also are some blooms in Pima at Buttonwillow.

"Most of the fields I'm checking are squaring and running 8-10 nodes, with some at 5-6 and not squaring yet.

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(Sponsored Message)

This crop is running 2-3 weeks behind normal. On about two-thirds of our cotton we'll see some blooming about July 4th, but the rest won't be into blooming until sometime after that."

Jim Hall, PCA, Hall Agronomics, Fresno: "In certain areas we've had a 2nd hatch of armyworms and had to treat a good portion of the acreage. They were getting into the growing points and taking out some tips. We treated some before 1st irrigation, some after, and we went with Steward to take out any lygus.

"We started running low rates of Pix at matchhead square, trying to get the plant into a fruiting mode a little sooner. On some later cotton we're seeing squares on the 5th node. That's encouraging. Our real early Pima — the cotton that started in those unfavorable conditions — began fruiting at the 7th node and now has plenty of positions, so that looks good, too.

"We had mites that we thought we'd treat before 1st irrigation, but they weren't moving up, and numbers remained low. Either thrips or cooler weather gave us a break.

"We've reduced nitrogen 15-20% to keep cotton from going any later than necessary. We'll monitor petioles and supplement, if necessary."

Rudy Perez, PCA, Western Farm Service, Firebaugh: "The cotton is starting to look a little better, and insect pressure seems to have slowed down some. We haven't sprayed lygus except where we had migration out of weeds, almonds and safflower. Worm pressure has dropped off.

"We're sitting at 6-8 nodes, and some cotton is squaring. Cotton that we watered earlier is being laid by now with herbicides. We'll have some early July blooms, but not many. We won't see blooms in most cotton until mid July or later. I've even seen a little cotyledon cotton this week.

"Cotton is about 2 weeks behind normal where it's responding to bet-

ter growing conditions. But we've got some that's still growing slowly, and it's about 3 weeks behind. We've sprayed about 20% of our cotton for mites and will likely spray most of the rest after the water."

Pete Goodell, Extension IPM Entomologist, Kearney Ag Center, Parlier: "Lygus seem to have settled into the parts of the valley where they're going to make their first big appearance. We're waiting for the next wave to come out of crops like safflower, and I'm seeing some of that now. We need to be watching carefully. The movement this week was rapid."

Larry Holcomb, Area Manager S. SJV, UAP West, Firebaugh: "In the Hanford area I was finding some 4-5 counts of lygus 2 weeks ago, but we held off spraying because they were all fliers. They've dropped to mostly 1 counts now. Overall, we really haven't had much problem with insects except in hot spots.

"At Tranquility and Firebaugh the lygus counts are running 2-3. But, again, they're all adults, no nymphs. We're finding a few armyworms, but

nothing close to treatment level. Mites were treated in the cotton I have at Hanford, but we won't start miticides at Firebaugh until layby."

LYGUS STUDY

UC Davis researchers are asking PCAs and growers to let them know if they have fields that fit into either of these two categories:

1. More damage to cotton than you'd expect, given the number of lygus being found in the field.
2. Less damage than you'd expect, given the number of lygus present.

They are looking for fields that fit either description and would like to quickly sample the cotton. Their goal: determine why some seemingly small counts do heavy damage while some high counts barely affect retention.

Fields must be in upland varieties and cannot have been treated with an insecticide (including Temik) in the past 3 weeks. If you have fields they can sample, contact: Kim Steinmann, 530-304-2075, kpsteinmann@ucdavis.edu, or Jay Rosenheim, 530-752-4395, jarosenheim@ucdavis.edu.

DD60 Table: 2003 Compared To 1998

As of: 6/20/2003	3/15	4/1	4/15	5/1
Shafter	783	712	662	614
Kettleman	870	793	742	694
Five Points	675	619	579	544
Los Banos	592	542	510	478
As of: 6/20/1998	3/15	4/1	4/15	5/1
Shafter	546	481	466	345
Kettleman	538	476	464	345
Five Points	502	446	435	320
Los Banos	419	378	372	277
Difference	3/15	4/1	4/15	5/1
Shafter	237	231	195	268
Kettleman	332	318	279	349
Five Points	173	173	145	224
Los Banos	173	163	138	201

* Positive number indicates 2003 is greater than 1998