

# MiteFax: San Joaquin Valley Cotton

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## APRIL 23, 2004

Here is our first regular issue of *MiteFax* for 2004. *MiteFax* is once again sponsored by the California Cotton Team of Syngenta Crop Protection.

Thanks to all the PCAs and Extension workers who continue to provide the information that makes up our weekly reports. We wouldn't be able to publish *MiteFax* without their insight and cooperation.

We welcome your suggestions and comments.

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## A COUPLE OF NOTES

- We will begin our degree-day coverage in early May.

- MiteFax also is available by email. If you'd like to switch to electronic delivery, write your email address on this week's cover sheet and fax it to: 601-992-3503.

## OVERVIEW

The crop is making great progress,

thanks to favorable weather conditions. Our contacts this week say the crop is anywhere from 3-5 weeks ahead of 2003 and perhaps 2 weeks ahead of normal (although after the last few seasons it's kind of difficult to say what "normal" really is).

High winds through parts of the valley roughed up cotton late in the week, but damage appears to be superficial, based on feedback we received Thursday and Friday.

## CROP REPORTS

*Tony Touma, PCA, Bio Ag Consulting, Bakersfield:* "Cotton looks beautiful. We're at first true leaf in many fields. In a very few places, we're at second true leaf. The crop is very healthy, no problems at all. This time last year we had worms on cotyledon leaves. We are starting Agrimec treatments on a lot of blocks of almonds. Mites are beginning to move in almonds, and we've got a heat spell in the forecast. We wanted to get the material out while leaves are still tender."

*Bob Hutmacher, Extension Cotton Specialist:* "Everything looks pretty

good at the places I've been this week, which would be mostly in Kern and Fresno Counties, plus brief stops in the Dos Palos and Firebaugh areas. Most cotton I've seen is up and out of the ground. The vast majority of our crop has been in the ground for at least 10 days, and 95% of the crop has been planted.

"It's been windy the last couple of days, but I don't think we've had the kind of conditions that make this as bad as it could be. There hasn't been a rain to smooth things out, and a lot of fields have been tilled, so we're not seeing as much damage as might be expected in sandy soils.

"It also hasn't been as cool as predicted. The soil temperature Wednesday morning was close to 70 in places I checked.

"Some of this cotton is quite far along, especially where growers planted in mid March. Everything continues to indicate that we're at least 3 weeks ahead of last year and certainly 10 or more days ahead of normal."

*Sheldon Childs, Valley Agronomy*

**Continued on next page**

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*Service, Fresno:* "I've been doing stand counts, and they really look healthy. Several guys are putting on Staple right now. A few of our earliest stands are at two true leaves. It looks like we should start watering some of these fields in 3-4 weeks, but temperatures are supposed to get into the 90s, and that may accelerate our irrigation schedule. With one client it already looks like we will start irrigating a month earlier than last year.

"This cool spell didn't seem to hurt anything. It didn't get cold enough at night to really have an effect. The challenge this year may be to keep the crop from going into premature cutout. We like plants to start cutting out around August 25, but a lot of fields will try to cut out in July. This will be a problem, but it's a good one to have."

*Jerry Anderson, PCA, Anderson Consulting, Dos Palos:* "The wind hasn't been that bad on the cotton. Some looks a bit ugly and dried out, but it should snap out of it. I haven't seen any dead plants. The wind, I suspect, is harder on people right now than the plants. In one case, growers stopped planting this week because it was pretty dusty, and the tractor driver had trouble keeping everything lined

up.

"I've got a little cotton that's actually approaching fourth true leaf, but later plantings are just pushing out of the ground. A very small percentage of our cotton hasn't been planted yet. This time last year we only had half our crop planted, and what was up looked sick. The cool weather turned plants a little yellow, but their color improved as temperatures warmed up.

"We're not finding any worms in alfalfa. Last year we had them crawling out of alfalfa and eating the cotton. I found three mites last week. That was all. We're training a new field checker and looked two days to find any mites in cotton to show him. But there are plenty of weeds to go around. We're on our second shot of Roundup on two ranches."

*Scott Foth, PCA, Britz Fertilizer, Five Points:* "The wind blew all day Wednesday and Thursday on the West Side, and it's delayed herbicide applications. Weeds don't quit growing just because it's windy. Timing is critical with Staple. Overall, cotton looks good. Stands are beautiful, and plants are growing."

*Justin Cordoza, PCA, Agri-Tech, Merced:* "The season is starting out

fine. Just about all our cotton is in the ground. Among all my growers, maybe 100 acres is left to plant. Everything has been coming up in a good, strong way, and the weather forecast looks favorable. With all the wind this week we've seen light sand blasting, nothing severe."

## **PIMA SUMMIT, MAY 11**

The 2004 Pima Production Summit will be held May 11 at the Visalia Convention Center. Registration starts at 8 a.m.

Sessions include:

- Supima Report, Marc Lewkowitz, Executive VP, Supima.
- Market Outlook, Jeff Elder, VP Cotton Marketing, J.G. Boswell Co.
- UC research reports.
- A grower panel.
- A look at future cotton varieties.

Preregistration is required by May 7. Fax your request to Harry Cline at Western Farm Press at 913-514-3641.

**Include:** your name, address, fax and phone numbers, the number of people who will be staying for lunch, and the number of acres of Pima you expect to grow in 2004.