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MiteFax: SJV Cotton

[Owen Taylor](#), Editor (888-327-6329)

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serving the cotton industry of the SJV!

Here is this week's *MiteFax: SJV Cotton*. MiteFax is once again sponsored by the California Cotton Team of [Syngenta Crop Protection](#) as a service to growers, PCAs, industry personnel and Extension workers. We welcome your suggestions and comments.

Owen Taylor, Editor, owen@agfax.com
888-327-6329

OVERVIEW

Conditions continue to be warm and conducive for cotton emergence and growth. Plenty of cotton has been planted, and progress is being made on a wide basis. Some post-emergence herbicide applications have started in the southern SJV.

No big weather shocks appear to loom in the immediate forecast. PCAs this week said that the crop is running 3 to 4 weeks ahead of 2003's crop for the same time period.

Our reader survey in March shows some continued shifting in the varieties being planted through the valley. We sent our survey request to 300 growers and PCAs, and about 15% responded.

Those taking part in the survey indicated that they would:

- Plant less Sierra this year. While a few growers said they would, in fact, increase Sierra acreage, there were 4 times as many who said they would reduce Sierra acreage or drop it altogether. More than half those said they would not have the variety in their mix this year.
- Decrease Maxxa acreage somewhat. While some growers said they would trim Riatta acreage, those reductions seemed to be offset by other producers who expected to increase Riatta plantings.
- Plant more Phytogen. More than half those taking part said they would either increase Phytogen acreage or add one of the varieties to their mix. Phytogen 72 and 78 were the main ones cited. DP&L 340 was the third most-listed gainer.

- Reduce Acala and increase Pima – no surprises there. Uplands also declined. Three growers also said they would try hybrids this season.

We're continuing to tabulate our results and will bring your further information next week.

The following reports were made Friday.

CROP REPORTS

Rick Sandberg, PCA, Agri-Consultants, Cantua Creek: “This season is off to a much different start than 2003. We didn't start planting last year until April 25. Here we are on April 9, and nearly everything is in the field, some cotton is just coming out of the ground and we've decapped half our fields already. Everything looks good. Tomatoes are growing like crazy, and the grapes are probably 2.5 to 3 weeks ahead of last year.

“Overall, the cotton is a good 3-4 weeks ahead of last year.

“We're already finding mites in grapes. We put in some Kelthane with our fungicide to hold them off for a while, then we'll come back with Agrimec. It's hard to say if this indicates we'll have a heavier mite year in cotton. But we've had a couple of years with extremely low pressure, and now the temperatures are running in the 80s, so everyone wonders if this is setting us up for more pressure.”

Vern Crawford, PCA, Wilbur-Ellis Co., Shafter: “This is the most perfect planting season I've seen in my entire life. It's sort of altered everyone's perspective. We had one case where guys planted cotton, and they thought when it wasn't up in four days that there was something wrong with the seed, even though it usually seems to take 14 days to get full emergence. Three days later it was up to a perfect

stand.

“The weather has really pushed things. I just saw one field where they were running sprinklers to water up cotton where they had lost moisture.

“How this all affects the pest complex is an open question. If temperatures continue like this, you almost have to think we’ll have whitefly in June. There’s a lot of lygus in the hay right now, and we found a lot of stinkbugs during weevil sampling. Sometimes that means something, sometimes it doesn’t.

“If cotton isn’t up yet, most of what’s left will be by late next week. Everything I’ve driven past seems to have been planted, and most fields have been up to a beautiful stand in a week. I would say our acreage is up 15-20%, and the lion’s share of the increase is Pima. We’ve just about exhausted our source of seed.”

Dan Buchak, PCA, Gillespie Ag, Porterville:

“We’re ahead of last year by 3-4 weeks. Last year we were still planting cotton in the first half of May and didn’t finish the last field until May 18. There’s a chance of some thunderstorms coming up next week, but there doesn’t seem to be anything in the forecast that could hurt us.

“We have stands now with cotyledon cotton. I haven’t seen any true leaves in any of my fields yet, but there may be some around.”

Mike Molatore, PCA, Western Farm Service,

Mettler: “We’re already spraying some fields with Staple for nightshade. Some of our cotton already has its first set of true leaves, and cultivation should begin in a few fields next week. Much of the crop has been planted or growers are trying to finish. I only know of one guy who hasn’t begun yet, but he’ll be

going Monday.

“All the cotton I’ve looked at is clean, no mites. A lot of the time we’ll put some Zephyr in with the Staple to take care of mites, but that doesn’t appear to be necessary with these first sprays. That may change completely in 10 days, of course. Right now, though, mites aren’t evident. For what it’s worth, thrips are active in other crops.”

Galen Hiatt, Independent PCA, Fresno: “All of my cotton planted during the first window looks absolutely gorgeous. With the hills drying down and the weeds dying, I’m somewhat optimistic that we might have a light year with lygus, although that’s something you can’t fully predict.

“It’s been fun to check cotton this year, considering how quickly it’s coming up and how great everything looks. A year ago we only planted 3 full fields during the first window in March, and it was basically May before we could plant anything else. This year we’ve got what looks like 100%, and some of our earliest fields will be ready for Staple next week.”

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- **To contact us:** 142 Westlake Drive, Brandon, MS 39047-9020
USA Office: 601-992-9488, Fax: 601-992-3503
Email: owen@agfax.com
(Editorial)
Email: laurie@agfax.com
(Circulation)

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