

MiteFax: San Joaquin Valley Cotton

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APRIL 29, 2005

Here is our first regular issue of *MiteFax: SJV Cotton* for 2005.

This marks the beginning of our 13th publishing season for **MiteFax**, and we greatly appreciate the continued support of the **California Cotton Team of Syngenta Crop Protection**.

Our thanks, as well, to the PCAs and Extension workers who provide the information every week that makes *MiteFax* possible.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Owen Taylor, Editor

OVERVIEW

Weather that many people describe as “odd” and “crazy” continues to influence the start of the 2005 season.

Heavy rains fell over parts of the valley late last week. At one

point Thursday afternoon while we were talking with Cotton Specialist Bob Hutmacher, pea-size hail was pelting his car.

Some areas only picked up a few tenths of rain Thursday but numerous areas recorded a half-inch. One location in the northern SJV received about 3 inches. There's at least a chance for more rain next week in the northern half of the valley.

We're already hearing about worms.

We will begin posting our degree-day table later in May.

These reports were made Thursday afternoon and Friday.

CROP REPORTS

Bob Hutmacher, Extension Cotton Specialist: “This has been a crazy planting season. A number of people have said it's the worst since '98, while some tell me it's the worst they remember in 30 years. A lot of people who thought they were

in pretty good shape in terms of moisture are finding now that the wind last week took away a good deal of it.

“I'm estimating that 85% of the people who intended to plant Pima have done so. I can't say what percentage of them are dissatisfied with their stands, but it's not an inconsequential number – 10%, maybe even 25%. They are looking closely at those stands. But, based on the data, it's too late or almost too late to do a whole-field replant.

“Some of the east side growers have stands that actually look pretty good. They received multiple rain showers, but a lot of those soils warm up faster. On the west side there are problems with stands, partly due to three days of wind last week.”

Nick Groenenberg, Indep. PCA, Hanford: “With this last rain we got enough to settle the

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MiteFax: San Joaquin Valley Cotton is published by Looking South Communications, 142 Westlake Drive, Brandon, Miss. 39047.

Phone: 601-992-9488, Fax: 601-992-3503. Editor: Owen Taylor, owen@agfax.com. MiteFax is transmitted via fax or e-mail each weekend during the cotton growing season. It is free to growers, PCAs and others involved in SJV production. ©MMIV Looking South Communications.

dust. I've heard about some bigger amounts, but we missed those. All my growers have finished planting. Stands are coming up and look pretty good.

"Cotton is growing, and some has its first true leaves. A few stands are struggling, but I think they will make it okay. I've heard of a little replanting. One grower will do spot replanting, maybe 15 acres out of 30. The rain also should germinate a lot of the nightshade, and we'll start up Staple applications next week."

Vern Crawford, PCA, Wilbur-Ellis Co., Shafter: "Although I'm not finding any larvae yet, I am shocked about the amount of armyworm moths I'm seeing all over the place. One PCA this week said armyworms were heavy in cabbage. I'm seeing painted ladies webbing over alfalfa in places. Who knows for sure, but this certainly is looking like it could be a year with heavy worms.

"With this weather, cotton isn't growing very well. But, at least, my growers have pretty good stands right now, all things considered. There isn't a lot of seedling disease. The only replanting I've heard about is in the Arvin area where a wind storm last week blew some seedlings out of the ground. So far, I haven't seen anything that looks like a substandard stand.

"Overall, it's beautiful today (Friday) and the first true leaves

are starting to show up."

Ron Vargas, Madera County Extension Farm Advisor: "We got a pretty good rainstorm Thursday in spots. We had a big trial planted on one ranch, and the grower called to say he got 3 inches of rain. Both the trial acreage and a good deal of his regular cotton is in the cap and needs to come off, but he can't get into the field. The weather is still not settled. They're talking about another system coming through about the middle of next week.

"Overall, about half the cotton is planted. One ginner near Dos Palos said that heavy soils in his area were pretty wet after the rain, and that could delay a lot of work into the middle of May. Some guys there aren't sure now how much cotton they will plant or if they will plant, he said.

"A lot of cotton was planted last week, but in less-than-ideal circumstances. I'm noticing fields that are real cloddy after being worked while they were wet. We do have some cotton peeking out of the ground. But, in general, we're behind."

Tony Touma, PCA, Bio Ag Consulting, Bakersfield: "This is nothing like last year. Cotton is still in the cotyledon stage and struggling. Loopers are laying eggs. I found one plant with three eggs, and there are a lot of worms in every

crop."

Jerry Anderson, PCA, Anderson Consulting, Dos Palos: "By Monday we'll probably have half our cotton up, and most of it doesn't look too bad. I've been surprised. Some was in the ground for three weeks, but the roots actually are in pretty good shape.

"We're already putting some Zephyr out in 7 or 8 fields near sugar beets. Mites were running up to 100%, and the little plants were drying out, so we went ahead and treated.

"There are no armyworms in alfalfa that we've seen, but we are finding loopers in the hay. We've got plenty of loopers, in fact, to go around.

"The big rains this week mostly missed us. We got wet, but that's all. It was nothing like some of those 2" totals that were reported in spots. It's 74 degrees right now (Friday afternoon) and the rest of the week is suppose to be warm. Overall, we're not that far behind, I think. I do have a few growers who are still pre-irrigating, but most of my guys are either planting now or are done."