

# MiteFax: San Joaquin Valley Cotton

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Here is this week's *MiteFax: SJV Cotton*, sponsored by the California Cotton Team of Syngenta Crop Protection.

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## OVERVIEW

More lygus treatments were reported this week. Also:

- Kern County PCAs are invited to an informal meeting Wednesday at noon at Carl's Jr. on I-5 at Buttonwillow to discuss pest issues with Pete Goodell, IPM coordinator.

- As we closed this issue Friday night, Vern Crawford with Wilbur-Ellis Co. at Shafter said that another PCA in that office found high counts of stinkbugs in a bean field.

- We will begin posting our DD-60s table next week.

## CROP REPORTS

Jerry Anderson, PCA, Anderson Consulting, Dos Palos: "Pressure

from yellow striped armyworms finally subsided in alfalfa, thank goodness. We started spraying right away, and I wrote recommendations on 84 fields in 3 days.

"Thankfully, we had all the miticide on already. Fields were late and we didn't want anything to hold cotton back any more. Cotton is squaring all over the place, and everything looks real clean.

"We haven't found lygus in cotton but have started turning up some in alfalfa. I sent a fax to all my growers saying to leave strips now when they cut. One PCA who has cotton along I-5 and near tarweed said he swept some of the wild vegetation and counted 50-60 lygus in one sweep."

Sara Savary, PCA Crop Care Associates, Fresno: "Our cotton ranges from one leaf up to 10 leaves and 4 fruiting branches. Overall, it seems to be doing alright. Everybody is getting around on first irrigation, and that's good because moisture had probably gotten marginal in some

fields. This weather is kind of funny. It's been cool. I was in Stockton yesterday (Wednesday) and it rained all morning there and we had drizzle in Firebaugh today, just enough to settle the dust.

"We're getting our pre-flood miticide spray on now. Mites range from 20% up to 80%. But the 80% is being held in check by thrips. In fact, I've got good activity from thrips in all my mite colonies. Numbers are high but we don't have any situations that are screaming for attention.

"I haven't seen any lygus or missing squares. Most of my cotton isn't big enough yet to sweep. I'm reminding all my growers to leave strips on the next alfalfa cutting because we've got squares now in the cotton."

Bob Ritchie, PCA, Buttonwillow Warehouse, Delano: "Things are kind of dead right now. The temperature is only running 75 to 76 degrees. There's no mite pressure and no lygus pressure, either. We're just get-

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ting ready to start first irrigation and will plan on coming back with our miticide at layby. Overall, we're 10-14 days behind where we normally would be on June 9."

**Dale Deshane, PCA, Supervised Control, Bakersfield:** "We're finishing up our first miticide treatments. Except for a few hot spots next to drying weeds, control looks good and there are no big problems.

"Lygus are a different story. They're widespread, from Mettler to as far north as we work. We started with consistently low counts in almost every field. We went from 2-4 counts up to 6 counts. We could quickly see that it wouldn't be long before we wouldn't have any squares left.

"A lot of those fields were hurt early by thrips and were up to the ninth or tenth node and just trying to set squares. We sprayed a lot of fields in the last 10-12 days. Our March-planted cotton reached 175,000 to 200,000 squares per acre, and we're leaving it alone if counts run 6 or less. One ranch hit a 10-15 count, and that's the only place we've used Capture, so far."

**Galen Hiett, Independent PCA, Fresno:** "Cotton is growing out of the thrips now and starting to square. I've treated lygus in a field at Highway 33 and I-5, which historically is the first field every year where we have to start these applications. It seems to mostly start around the same time every year, too, certainly within a week, one way or the other.

"A few lygus are around, and we began losing squares. We've been checking twice a week and went from one square missing out of 33 to retention falling into the 75% to 80% range by the next visit.

"There was no sense in sitting on it another 3-4 days and finding a further drop in retention. Another field is running 69% to 80% retention, and I'm going to check it right away and make a decision about treating.

"We've started putting Temik on and will begin watering right away so we've got some protection down the road. Pete Goodell (Extension IPM Advisor) made a presentation at the Fresno County cotton production meeting today (Thursday) that pretty much mapped out the lygus populations that are concentrated in all that tarweed. We decided to go ahead and treat because who knows what lygus will do in another week? On the rest of our fields we're running less than one lygus per 50 sweeps, and retention is 90% to 95%."

**Bob Hutmacher, Extension Cotton Specialist:** "Dan Munk (Fresno County Extension Farm Advisor) made an important observation at his county production meeting yesterday (Thursday). He pointed out that we had a nasty, weird start to the season in 2003, but a lot of growers still averaged 4 bales or more that year. His message was simple and reasonable: it's not that late, and nothing is too dire, yet.

"We've still got time to make a good crop. What we're looking at now is a delay of 1-2 nodes on the development of our first fruiting branch. On average, the first fruiting branch is appearing at the sixth to seventh or even higher. Last year everything was remarkably early. This year it will be a little late.

"Overall, it's been relatively quiet. The main calls I'm getting have to do with whether there's a down side to irrigating now. Generally, the callers want to put Temik on. Folks

closer to the foothills are looking at all the tarweed, and they pretty much know the score with lygus. They've been through enough of this before that they're putting on the Temik and going ahead with irrigation."

**Miguel Romero, PCA, Britz Fertilizer, Tulare:** "This has been really great weather for people, and I think it's exactly what the cotton needed, too. It's allowed the crop to get a little more established after a really rough start. If we had gone into a string of days at 100 or above we probably would have lost some squares. As it is, we've got good retention, and I'm pretty happy with it right now. Our upland cotton started squaring at about the seventh or up, some of our Phytogen started around the sixth, and we've been finding first squares on Acala as low as the fifth.

"Our cotton that's 12-13 inches tall is moving toward first irrigation. We've been going with a miticide, either Kelthane, Zephyr or Comite – the grower's choice for that application. We'll start second irrigation in the June 20-25 period on cotton that's 16-18 inches tall right now, and we'll go with Zephyr so we don't have to worry about mites after that point.

"Some of this cotton is really starting to grow, and we'll be making Pix decisions next week. I looked at my notes from last year, and we already had put on 1 to 1.5 pints of Pix on our earlier cotton.

"The downside to the recent weather is that it hasn't been good for the corn. It's at the stage that it does need hot weather."