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# MiteFax: San Joaquin Valley Cotton

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

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## OVERVIEW

Just when you think this season can't get any weirder, a Pacific storm pushes daytime temperatures into the 60s and 70s across the valley. The effect will linger into next week. Based on the last forecast, Merced won't hit 90 again before Wednesday, with nighttime lows in the 50s for the next 5 days.

Lygus treatments stepped up over the last week. Heaviest pressure seems to be in Kern and Kings Counties.

## MEETINGS

**Kings/Tulare monthly cotton production meeting** will be a breakfast session starting at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 21, at the Kings County Cooperative Extension office at 680 N. Campus Drive in Hanford. The topic: *Playing catch-up in cotton management*.

The breakfast menu includes chorizo, linguica and Mexican rolls.

**The Central Coast Cotton Conference** will be held November 16-18 at Cliffs Resort in Shell Beach. Lowell Zelinski announced this week. We'll have further details later, or go to [cottonconference.com](http://cottonconference.com) for more info or to register. Along with production and safety sessions, there will be a special session titled: *Changing Tides: How to stay afloat in the changing California cotton industry*.

## DD60 TABLE

We are starting our DD60 table this week. Pete Goodell, Extension IPM Specialist, produces these tables every year. Next time you see Pete at a meeting, be sure to thank him for putting this data together every week.

## CROP REPORTS

**Nick Groenberg, Indep. PCA, Hanford:** "Things are getting busy pretty quickly now. We're finding a lot of worms in cotton, and lygus are just starting to show up. I'm hearing reports of really high lygus counts in places.

They haven't hit here yet in high numbers except next to weedy fields and similar places. We've treated a few fields, just sporadic cases, so far.

"Our worms are mainly cabbage loopers and beet armyworms. Levels are quite high in some fields. The mix varies. In some fields it's one or the other, while in other fields we're finding both types. We can find at least a few in most fields, but fields with treatable numbers are grouped together in the same areas. We'll begin our second miticide applications next week as we move toward layby."

**Ron Vargas, Madera County Extension Farm Advisor:** "For the start we've had, cotton actually looks pretty good. A lot of first irrigation is going on right now. I haven't heard of a lot of lygus activity yet. In sweeping alfalfa for a pea aphid project I've found very few lygus in those fields."

**Dan Buchak, PCA, Gillespie Ag, Porterville:** "Cotton is probably at 10-11 nodes or moving into that range. It's

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squaring really nicely. We've had some lower lygus counts. One guy will treat some fields today (Friday). Our layby Temik treatments are coming up, and we'll start our maintenance miticide sprays soon, too."

**Jim Hall, PCA, Hall Agronomics, Fresno:** "We started irrigating the first part of this week on a lot of fields and are cycling through the ranches now. Cotton development is coming along, although there's an obvious disparity between cotton and grapes. We're doing things in grapes on about a normal schedule, while cotton is behind. We will be hard pressed to see blooms by the Fourth of July.

"Lygus counts are coming up a little in cotton. Numbers are really jumping in alfalfa, which makes us nervous. We're leaving strips in the alfalfa. We'll probably go in right behind this irrigation with a miticide and clean up lygus in some fields. I've picked up small spots of aphids in the last few days, but predator levels look good.

"Our strategy is to push for earliness in a delayed season. We're trying to protect early fruiting branches and will come back with Pix after the water. Cotton is just big enough now to sweep. We're getting some 6 counts on 50 sweeps in cotton after irrigation. In alfalfa you can make 10 sweeps in places and come up with more lygus than you care to count."

**Tony Touma, PCA, Bio Ag Consulting, Bakersfield:** "Lygus are in 100%

of our fields and are quite bad in certain areas. We've treated maybe 10% of our cotton, so far, for lygus. The weather is going against us. Temperatures dropped into the high 60s, and materials don't work as well. Lygus also tend to disappear from the field.

"With Capture, we're getting 2-3 more days control than with Dimethoate. How long it lasts depends partly on migration activity and on the pressure, too. But nothing is holding much more than 5 days. I found aphids on one ranch yesterday (Thursday) where I always tend to find them. Another ranch south of Bakersfield had quite a few loopers.

"Some cotton is behind 4 weeks or more. There are no blooms yet, and we don't expect to see any until the Fourth of July on a lot of it. Some Pima may have blooms in 10 days, and that's extremely late for Pima."

**Rick Sandberg, PCA, Agri-Consultants, Cantua Creek:** "A little bit of lygus are turning up, and we've sprayed a couple of fields. These were relatively low counts, but we wanted to knock them off right away because this is the kind of year when you need to keep everything you get. We're already looking at a significant drop in yield potential because the crop is so late.

"We've got good retention in most fields but are seeing some of our taller, fast-growing plants throwing a few squares. That could be due to something physiological plus lygus. We'll

put on mite sprays after first irrigation. Overall, this colder, cloudy weather is not helping the crop."

**Steve Lenander, Technicare, Bakersfield:** "Lygus are unbelievable right now. They're doing more damage than you can imagine in some pockets, moving into a field in a day or two and decimating the top 5 fruiting branches. One field went from 90% retention to 35% this week after a wave hit. We're mainly seeing this in Kern County and somewhat in Kings County, but we're not finding the pattern in Tulare County.

"Compared to one long-term average, we're exactly 12 days behind. I did not include 2004 in that average since it was extremely early. I still have hopes for this crop, but it's going to be a year for diligent management. Last year you could make a pretty decent crop, almost regardless of what you did. This year we'll have to watch closely, keep mapping plants, go with a good nutrition program and stay on top of lygus. Things have the potential to change rapidly, and you've got to be in the field at least twice a week.

"One field went from 1-2 counts to 11-12 counts in just 2 days. I don't think I've ever seen lygus pressure like this. The field that fell to 35% retention is near a slough and other native habitat, and the only word to describe the migration was 'massive'. We put on one shot of Vydate and 2 shots of Capture and still saw top 5 retention fall to 35%."

## Degree days >60 through 6/17/05

\*Number of days difference between this year and 30-year average.

Planting Dates	15-Mar			15-Apr		
	2005	30 Yr	Days/Diff*	2005	30 Yr	Days/Diff*
Shafter	623	738	5	533	616	3
Kettleman	665	802	5	576	673	3
Five Points	548	711	9	483	595	5
Los Banos	461	571	8	413	472	3