MiteFax
SJV Cotton
Where your crop comes first.

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

MAY 12, 2007
Here is this week’s MiteFax, sponsored by the California Cotton Team of Syngenta Crop Protection.

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As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.
Best regards,
Owen Taylor, Editor

OVERVIEW

More miticide applications are starting, especially in the south valley.

Seedling disease has taken a toll.

Wind in the last week gave cotton yet another spin.

Irrigation is starting earlier this year. Dry spring weather, coupled with wind and periodic heat, have dried out soils. Plus, there’s a push to compensate for some weakened root systems.

Nobody is overjoyed with the way stands look, but a couple of our contacts this week noted that the crop is still way ahead of where it was this time last year.

Other crops are generally reported in good condition. Dry weather has kept disease pressure from building in small grain and allium crops.

CROP REPORTS

Tony Touma, PCA, Bio Ag Consulting, Bakersfield: “Next week, we’ll start miticide applications on most fields in Buttonwillow. We already have treated a couple this week, some with Roundup and some with just a miticide where cotton was next to hay and mites were bad.

“We’re picking up a lot of mites on Pima. Last year, one grower didn’t have a lot of mites, and we didn’t spray. This year, mites are everywhere. Growers are working on their rigs, getting ready to treat before first irrigation, which will be sooner due to dry conditions and heat. Quite a bit of seedling disease showed up in the last 2 weeks. Overall, stands are okay, but there are bad spots in nearly every field in Buttonwillow. I won’t be surprised to see irrigation start sometime around May 25.

“Almonds look really good. There are no problems in hay. Armyworms aren’t showing up in cotton, although in the past we seem to always find them in our Temik fields. I can’t say why, exactly, but it’s something I’ve noticed over the years. This year, though, that doesn’t seem to be happening. One grower applied Temik, and we’re probably finding the least number of armyworms I can recall in many years. We’re hoping that means we won’t find many in the hay. Everyone

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would welcome that. Hay prices are high, and those worms are hard and expensive to kill, so maybe we’ll get a break. Rust in garlic has been very, very low. We applied Quadris as a preventive and have not seen any rust behind it yet. And, except for one field, we never found rust in the wheat.”

Kevin Lehar, Crops Manager, Woolf Enterprises, Huron: “The crop is starting to move a little. We got off to a good start, then it stalled with the cool conditions. Now, highs are in the 90s again and running 10 to 15 degrees above average. Temperatures are due to move into a more normal range next week, and that will help. With all the warm, dry conditions, we’ve moved up irrigation dates. Based on planting dates, we wouldn’t start for another 7 to 10 days, but we’ve been into some irrigation for the last couple of weeks.

“All the wind has complicated things, as well. Last Saturday, we had the fourth day since April 1 with winds up to 40 mph, and we couldn’t get any water run. The wind definitely sucked the moisture right out of the beds.

“Thrips are starting to move a little as wheat and garlic begin drying down. We had Thimet under everything at planting, so we’re in good shape. There are no mites to speak of. We haven’t had to treat anything in the wheat. In the onions and garlic, there are less-than-normal levels of downy mildew and rust.”

Jerry Salvador, Salvador’s Consulting Service, Tranquility: “We’ve got everything from cotton just coming up where we replanted to some at fourth to fifth node. Fields look ugly in spots due to seedling disease. The weather has not been kind. Most of us hit the planting temperature just right, then it turned cold – not just cool, but cold. That contributed to root disease. Now, everyone is rushing to fertilize and fur-

row, then start getting water on fields. There are no insect problems right now. We have a lot of corn this year, and it looks good. So do our tomatoes and sugar beets.”

Lowell Zelinski, Ind. PCA, Templeton: “The cotton I’m working at Corcoran looks okay. On a scale of 1 to 10, it’s a 7. Some is as much as a 9 and in other cases you would rate it a 5. Considering everything cotton has been through this spring, things certainly could have been worse. We’re still seeing some seedling disease popping up here and there, mainly rhizoctonia, and it’s thinning some stands. We need to keep in mind how much we still are ahead of last year. At this point in 2006, there were people who probably didn’t even have stands yet.

“Thrips aren’t so bad, but we are finding mites, and there’s a certain amount of wind damage. I don’t think the wind damage will impact yields because plants can lose quite a bit of leaf surface early. But it doesn’t make the plants look good. I was so optimistic about the start we made 2 months ago. It seems kind of strange to say that some of this cotton actually was planted 2 months ago. We’re 10 to 14 days from squaring now on our earliest cotton. For the longest time, it sat in that cold weather and did nothing.”

MiteFax: SJV Cotton is distributed at no charge to individuals who grow cotton in California or who work in related production occupations. It is published by AgFax Media/Looking South Communications, Owen Taylor, Editor, 142 Westlake Drive, Brandon, MS 39047. Telephone: 601-992-9488. Fax: 601-992-3503. By email: owen@agfax.com. Subscriptions can be requested at: http://agfax.com/subs. ©2006 Looking South Communications.