

# MiteFax: San Joaquin Valley Cotton

## Overview:

Warmer temperatures are helping move the crop on track again. That's the first piece of good news.

The second bit of good news has to do with lygus, or rather lack of them. Populations in fields are low, and several PCAs noted a general absence of lygus in alfalfa and safflower. However, in southern Kern County, high counts were found in wild mustard on freeway edges. Mite treatments continue, though activity is winding down in many areas.

We include a crop update from Bob Hutmacher, Cotton Specialist.

## Mite Report:

**Chris Morgner, PCA, Agri-Valley Consulting, Merced:** "A few more fields were sprayed for mites, but we've pretty much taken care of that over the last two weeks. Mites were spotty but very bad in places. About 25% of our acreage was treated. If there was no outside influence from alfalfa or sugar beets, we didn't have a lot of early pressure. Where we had some hotspots, predators kept mites in

check."

**Dan Buchak, PCA, Gillespie Ag Service, Porterville:** "We're starting to do a few more mite treatments with Zephyr or Kelthane, especially where no Temik was used at planting. Where we used Temik, decisions are being made about whether to spray now or hold off until after irrigation, then we'll come back with Zephyr or Comite."

**Sara Savary, PCA, Crop Care Associates, Fresno:** "Only mites are being treated. Most of my fields in the northern part of Fresno County and Merced County have been or are being treated. Mites are just slowly coming up in Mendota. One interesting thing we're seeing is what seems like more mites on Roundup Ready cotton. We're not sure if it's due to stress put on the plant with spraying or simply the fact that we put the varieties in sandier soils with sedge infestations and mites are moving off weeds. It hasn't been a problem, but it's been something we've noticed."

**Miguel Romero, PCA, Britz Fertilizer Co., Tulare:** "We're treating more cotton than normal at this point in the season, including the

Pima. This is the first time I've treated Pima for mites before first irrigation. I'm treating everything now with Zephyr. Some growers haven't decided whether to sidedress Temik, so the treatments should keep things manageable where they skip Temik. Populations are very light but generally everywhere. Since plant growth has been delayed, we've been concerned that things will blow up when temperatures jump."

**Rick Greenlee, PCA, Simplot Soilbuilders, Edison:** "We sprayed 90% of our Acala with four ounces (per acre) of Zephyr. I've got four weeks now on the first application, and mites seem to be holding well. We treated 80% before irrigation, and we're treating some fields now for the first time as they come off first irrigation. The cool weather has helped keep things from exploding, and we've had good thrip activity."

**Tony Touma, PCA, Bio Ag Consulting, Bakersfield:** "We have treated 85% for mites already and are making applications on another 10% now. We mostly make treatments every year before first irri-

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## When the Weather Heats Up, Mite Pressure Can, Too

Keep a close eye on pest populations when the mercury rises. Temperatures 80° F or above can trigger rapid mite reproduction. A lay-by treatment with Zephyr® miticide/insecticide can help prevent a "mite explosion" and help maximize your cotton's yield potential.--Sponsored Message

**Zephyr**®  
0.15 EC  
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gation, but we had high numbers this year, quite bad in the Buttonwillow area. Maybe 5% of the fields will have to be treated again after first water, since cotton was very small when it was treated the first time. We have had higher spider mite pressure on Pima than normal and in some cases higher than on Upland varieties."

**Kevin Lehar, PCA/Production Manager, Boston Ranch Co., Lemoore:** "It's been pretty quiet in our area. A little mite is around, but we haven't treated. Predator populations are as good as I've seen here in 10 years and are keeping pressure down. Most of our cotton is Pima, but mites are light on our California Uplands, too."

**Dan Munk, Extension Farm Advisor, Fresno County:** "A few mite treatments still are going on, but a lot of cotton is still untreated. Things are holding pretty well. Mites we're seeing are twospotted, with almost no strawberry."

**Bill Weir, Extension Farm Advisor, Merced County:** "Almost everybody around here has sprayed for mites, and treatments are holding and numbers are low."

## County Meetings:

Meetings are scheduled for Merced-Madera and Kings-Tulare counties this week (see last week's MiteFax). Meetings also are on tap for Kern and Fresno Counties.

**Kern:** Tuesday, West Conference Room, Shafter Research and Extension Center, 9:30 a.m. registration. Topics: plant development, growth regulators, lygus outlook, insecticide efficacy update, and industry updates.

**Fresno:** Thursday, San Joaquin VFW Hall, 8:30 a.m. registration. Topics: "Building A Power Plant," irrigation, fertility, growth regulator management, insect update,

IPM strategies, lygus management, industry update.

## Insect Summary:

**Lygus:** Several contacts this week reported little or no lygus activity, even in alfalfa and safflower. Warmer weather might spur movement, several PCAs cautiously noted, but the overall low presence is seen right now as a positive sign.

However, heavy populations were found in freeway edges this week, says Rick Greenlee in Edison. Greenlee picked up several hundred lygus on his first sweep in yellow flowering vegetation.

**Aphids:** A few have been seen, but PCAs say beneficial counts are high in most fields, and they are holding down any buildup.

## Crop Report:

**By Bob Hutmacher  
Extension Cotton Specialist**

The crop is improving in most areas with our warm-up this past week. Weather is predicted to be in the 90's for the next five days or more. Many growers have irrigated in the past two weeks in alternate rows just to give the upper soil profile a little shot of water and to water in their side-dress fertilizer or

Temik.

Many fields have plants in the 7- to 9- and even 10-node stage, this week, and the more recent leaves in the upper canopy are good-sized and growing out of thrip injury. As in 1998, some California Upland varieties seem more susceptible to thrip injury than Acalas and Pimas. However, in 1998, these varieties grew out of early injury quite well.

In some fields, growers have put out very early Pix applications (on 9-node plants). Unless you have fields with a history of rank growth, early lygus (high vigor plants), most UC research would not support this very early use of growth regulators, at least not at the higher rates.

There remain some low vigor fields which have shown slow recovery even with "warming" weather. Causes of low vigor can be many (seed quality, dry seedbeds, seedling diseases or treatments).

As weather turns hot, evaluate the root system to be sure adequate secondary roots exist to reach soil moisture. If the root systems remain weak, irrigations may initially need to be earlier or more frequent.

### Degree days >60 for 6/10/99

since 4/15/99 for San Joaquin Valley

since 4/24/99 for Sacramento Valley

Location	1999	30 yr.*	Days **
Arvin	453	611	-9
Shafter	490	553	-3
Visalia	458	518	-4
Stratford	453	553	-6
Kettleman City	526	553	-2
Five Points	455	516	-4
Tranquility	443	516	-5
Firebaugh	406	516	-7
Madera	368	503	-9
Los Banos	387	478	-7
Colusa	360	435	-5

Degree Day calculated with single sine, horizontal 60 F baseline.  
\*30-year historic average  
\*\* - is behind;  
+ is ahead

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