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Corn:

Most corn in the area is looking good and dried down at this point with harvest getting under way. Based on moisture tests a couple of weeks ago, this week seems to be an optimum time to get the combines going. The weather forecast for the foreseeable future is quite hot and dry which will help in getting corn out of the field. The earliest corn has the greatest yield potential so I am hoping that some fields may yield better than expected, on average.

Grain Sorghum:

Sorghum is still looking good in most areas and some is starting to dry down some and getting close to reaching maturity, not already there. Some later planted fields I am checking are picking higher rice stinkbugs, and some leaf-footed bugs in fields that are at soft dough to hard dough and beyond. The stinkbugs numbers this week in some fields have gone up substantially as I have observed 1.4 to 4 stinkbugs per head. This includes adults and nymphs. Remember the economic threshold is (0.5 to 1 per head). So if you have later sorghum in the milk to soft dough stage now, be aware that you may have likely have enough stinkbugs to hurt your yields potential. We need to be diligent in this matter as stinkbug numbers are much higher at this point and can affect sorghum up until the hard dough stage.

I have also noticed recently that Lygus bug adults and nymphs are on the rise in later planted sorghum. I'm actually seeing more nymphs than adults late last week. I am not seeing "treatable" levels of lygus yet, but numbers have been fairly high on some individual heads. (Threshold is 12 lygus per head until hard dough stage, do not treat beyond soft dough). Figures 1 and 2 show a Lygus adult and nymph, respectively. Figure 3 shows some later planted sorghum.

Figure 1. Lygus adult

Figure 2. Lygus nymph

Figure 3. Later planted sorghum.

(Above photo credits are to Matt Matocha.)

On a more positive note, I am not seeing headworms being much of a problem. A couple of weeks ago I saw a few worms but none since.

Cotton:

Recently cotton we are continuing to see fleahoppers in later planted cotton that is from about 5 to 12 leaves. In some fields, I'm seeing them almost at threshold (7%) but it's advisable sometimes to go ahead and spray so the numbers don't greatly increase and cause damage to those tiny squares (threshold is 10-15% fleahoppers). It also makes sense if you need to make a herbicide application anyway then you may as well throw insecticide in tank since you are making a trip anyway. Some fields that need treatment for fleahoppers also have aphids numbers increasing as well. In this case one needs to consider using something that will control both fleahoppers and aphids with one application, such as, Transform or Centric. These products are a little more expensive but Centric will give longer residual control on aphids. If a grower decides to use Acephate + imidacloprid, then the imidacloprid will at least help slow down the aphids.

Unfortunately, we continue to see the progression of potassium deficiency in our cotton fields. This has contributed, along with our hot and dry weather, to continued square and boll shed in cotton. As has previously been mentioned either in newsletters or audio updates, a timely rain would allow cotton plants to access and utilize potassium in the soil. This is especially true of later planted cotton. Earlier cotton, in some cases, may be a little to far along in its growth stage to reap the benefits of a rain event. This earlier planted cotton has already shed a number of squares and small bolls and would likely not recover from potassium deficiency enough at this point to help contribute to yield.

Another issue I noticed a few of weeks ago is deer grazing some of the later planted cotton Milam County. Some of the affected cotton was only 3 to 4 leaf when deer snipped it off right above the cotyledon leaves. Other times I noticed cotton plants that were 5 to 6 leaves when grazed off. In some cases these plants were grazed a few leaves above the cotyledon leaves and did continue to grow, however, they had abnormal growth, such as what appeared to be two mainstems growing from the grazed off point on the plant. I have noticed as much as 10 acres affected by deer in a 79 acre field.

Figures 4 and 5 show plants that were grazed off by deer. Unfortunately, there is not a lot one can do to repel deer from grazing cotton. There is a process whereby one can apply for a permit to harvest the deer, but this is a rather difficult process and according my source on this these permits they are hard to acquire.

The damage in cotton fields is mostly where cotton fields are bordered by pastureland/wooded areas where deer have plenty of cover nearby. I have observed this when scouting later planted cotton. In fact, on a few occasions I have spooked deer out of these fields when I arrived to scout them. Usually it has been 3 or 4 doe.

If you have had this problem and may be interested in pursuing an application to acquire a permit the website to do so is:

https://tpwd.texas.gov/business/permits/land/wildlife_management/depredation/

Figure 4. Cotton grazed by deer.

Figure 5. Cotton grazed by deer.