

WEST PLAINS IPM UPDATE

News about
Integrated Pest
Management in
Hockley,
Cochran, and
Lamb Counties
from
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Current Crop and Pest Situation

Cotton ranges from just beginning to bloom with more than 6 nodes above white flower (NAWF) to past physiological cutout with 2 NAWF. Using our IPM scouting fields as a representation of area cotton crop, we see that 68% of fields have reached physiological cutout (<5 NAWF) this week. For those fields we need approximately 400 more heat units (HU) to accumulate to be safe from bollworms. With the current weather trend of +20 heat units per day, those fields which have reached cutout should be safe from bollworms around August 23-27. The remaining 32% of the cotton acreage has such a wide range of maturity levels that it would be difficult to be as certain of when it will be safe from worms. I would approach these later maturing fields from this angle. We historically say or last effective bloom date ranges from August 20 (out on state line) to August 25 (near Ropesville). These are dates in which a boll can be formed, have time to mature, and contribute to yield. Therefore, if we continue with this weather pattern into September, and we are accumulating 20 HU/day, we can add 20 days to these dates. Thus, would give us a target of September 9-14 for those late fields needing to be scouted and protected from worm issues. The point being is that NAWF is an important gauge of maturity and can help project time needed to be safe from worms and even manage irrigation.

Currently, bollworms are infesting area fields and need to be scouted and possibly treated; particularly those varieties with Bollgard II or no Bt technology. Lygus, stinkbug, and cotton aphids should be included in those scouting procedures.

Peanuts are generally healthy and developing a good pod load. Those who have keep up with water demands of peanuts this last month should be seeing a very good bloom, peg, and pod load. In general, the dry-hot weather has suppressed disease pressure. Reports from the south of us indicate some spider mite activity. I am seeing very light worm feeding to foliage. Weeds continue to be a challenge where irrigation is mostly continual.

Grains are all over the board in terms of growth stage. Sugarcane aphids are present in few fields mostly north of the Sandhills in Lamb County. Worms and mites are also present.

You or someone must scout. We are in a critical period in all crops. Do not drop the ball now as we go deeper into the second half.

Cotton Irrigation Management

I mentioned irrigation at the very end of the first paragraph on page 1. I know many are wondering when they can start backing off and even shutting down irrigation water over the next few weeks. Again, the nodes above white flower (NAWF) measurement can be extremely helpful. This will let you know where your current top boll position is and how old previously set bolls are.

As an example, if we have a white bloom three nodes down from the top, I will say you have 2 NAWF. I am only referring to first position fruit. So just below this white flower should be a small boll which would be approximately 1-3 days old. The boll directly below it was formed 60 heat units before this small boll. Which on average is 3 days this year. So, if there are 5 first position bolls present below this top small boll, we can estimate that the oldest boll is somewhere around 15-18 days old right now. In other words, that oldest boll would have been a bloom around July 19. Now that you know how to judge the age of a boll you should consider which of the uppermost bolls you can realistically take to harvest.

Let us again be realistic and say that the bloom a week from now on August 13 is the last one we think we have time to mature out. This flower will then be a boll on August 14. This boll cannot be water stressed for about 20 days. So, this plant needs good available water through September 3. This moisture may come from irrigation or rain. After September 3, this boll can take moderate stress, meaning that the plant can wilt on a hot afternoon if it completely recovers by the next morning. Then when this last boll is 45 days old or in this example September 28, it can take severe water stress and it should not cause quality or yield loss. In fact, to continue to water any later could delay maturity, and cause harvest problems.

So, I throw these dates out only as an example. You will have to look at your fields, take into consideration your capacity to irrigate, and what is a realistic target for last boll to be set. I will be glad to help assess a field situation with you. Kerry

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