

WEST
PLAINS
IPM
UPDATE

News about
Integrated Pest
Management in
Hockley, Cochran,
and Lamb Counties
from
Kerry Siders

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Current Crop and Pest Situation

Cotton ranges from just beginning to bloom with as many as 8 nodes above white flower (NAWF) to past physiological cutout with 2 NAWF. Looking at the IPM scouting program fields as a representation of the area cotton crop, we see that 40% of the fields have reached physiological cutout (5 or fewer NAWF) this week. The remaining 60% of the cotton acreage has such a wide range of maturity levels. We say that August 15-20th is the historical last effective bloom date, or that date which a boll can be formed, have time to mature, and contribute to yield. Now that is not to say that a boll cannot be formed after the 15-20th of August but the odds of it contributing to yield and especially quality are low. So, cotton at 5 NAWF today is a great place to be in order to hit the target of August 15-20 literally blooming out the top. This also gives us some confidence that it should have enough time to mature out, be safe from insects at a reasonable time, and make managing irrigation more straight-forward.



Continued from Page 1.

Insect activity has been low the past several days. Yet, do not let this lull you into complacency. The scouts and I are currently finding solitary cotton aphids, but I feel certain that there are possibly larger colonies around. I am not overly concerned about this, but it does cause me to warn you on these fields where late or excessive nitrogen has gone out to keep close watch for aphids to increase. In most cases though as the plant matures and its physiology change, aphids have a more difficult time in maintaining populations. Also, beneficial insects such as crab spiders, assassin bugs, minute pirate bugs, and big-eyed bugs are very numerous and welcome the aphids as a food source. It is very important that you or someone is scouting for bollworms, worms in general, in all cotton not just conventional varieties. To-date, we are not picking up worms or damage. I also anticipate that over the next several days we will start seeing fruit being shed from the cotton plant. So be certain when and if you see squares or small bolls on the ground that you know what the cause was. Natural or insect damage? A natural adjustment in the fruit load on fields that have achieved good retention since squaring began is to be expected. The plant is unable to retain more than approximately 65% of fruit. So hopefully any fruit coming off is either second or third position small squares and from the upper portions of the plant.



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