WEST PLAINS IPM UPDATE

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

July 3, 2025

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CROP AND PEST SITUATION

Who would have imagined that we would be going into July with a full profile of soil moisture in most locations. I have used my 6' soil probe quite a bit this week while out attempting to scout fields. I can probe at a minimum 50" at all locations and 72" at half of them.

Cotton ranges from 3 leaf stage to 12 true leaves, internode lengths range from near 0.5" to 0.8", first square can be found at node 5 through 8, square set ranges from 100% down to 60%. I anticipate seeing first blooms in fields around July 15th. I am basing this on the fact that our most mature field in the scouting program has 5 first position squares. We typical go into bloom with 8 nodes above white flower. To do this, we need to form 4 additional squares. It should only take 3 days per square to form; this equates to ~12 days. This places first bloom on about July 15th on these more developed fields. I estimate most fields will see first bloom around July 25.

Cotton insect pests have become more active this week. In the IPM Scouting Program I have noted some very active fleahoppers (see page 3 for more on fleahoppers), consistent solitary or small colonies of cotton aphids in terminals, and very little Lygus presence. I can also find grasshoppers on field margins near rangeland. Beneficial insect and arachnid numbers are surprisingly good in most fields.

Weeds continue to be a challenge to control with this moisture situation. Of course, Palmer amaranth is at the top of the list. If you need help identifying a weed and coming up with a control plan give me a call. Remember, these weeds serve as host to many of our cotton pests.

Priorities for the next several days:

1. Continue making progress on weed control.
2. Get your fertilizer out before the end of this month! Match your fertility up to this moisture, being realistic with time. Do not forget that dryland has potential to yield if you give it some fertilizer as well.
3. Scout for square robbing insects in cotton, particularly fleahoppers right now.
4. Scout for Sugarcane aphid in milo.
5. Protect developing peanut pods from disease 60 days from planting.
6. Corn leafhoppers are here, and the risk is high for the development of Red Stunt disease in all corn fields that are not at R2 (blister stage kernels). See the next page for more information.

Corn Leafhopper Update

Here is the latest audio report (July 2) from Dr. Kerns on the corn leafhopper in Texas: https://on.soundcloud.com/wjFVEuNAvScl95SW5t
Points from Dr. Kerns update – the corn leafhopper is here on the Texas High Plains now, it is about risk mitigation, the threshold is the hoppers presence, the window of opportunity to protect corn from the CLH transmitting the red stunt disease is from emergence through R2 stage (blister stage kernels), Sivanto at 7 oz is recommended or Steward.

For more information on the corn leafhopper and the subsequent red stunt disease it causes go to one of these links: https://cdn-de.agrilife.org/extension/departments/ento/ento-pu-229/publications/files/corn-leafhopper-and-the-red-stunt-disease-complex.pdf

https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/corn-leafhopper-and-the-red-stunt-disease-complex/01t4x000008VcS6AAK

UPDATE: BARKER RESEARCH FARM – Morton

Here are some of the projects going on at the Barker Research Farm this summer.

1. The permanent farming systems plots under the pivot – cotton and wheat rotation, cotton grain sorghum rotation, continuous cotton with and without winter cover.
2. A TTU graduate student project on cotton spacing, emergence etc., study.
3. RACE cotton variety trial (7 varieties replicated 3X high water spans) with Dr. Lege, and a Bayer FACT cotton variety trial (14 varieties under low water spans); both under the pivot in the research block.
4. A Phytogen Innovation cotton variety trial (6 varieties replicated 3X) on east drip field.
5. Thirteen cotton nematode and disease trials being conducted by Drs. Wheeler and Rondon, and me on the west drip field.
6. Dr. Pat Porter also has a corn earworm resistance monitoring project under the pivot in the research block.

If you are interested in receiving the High Plains Pest Management Audio Updates on a weekly basis click on this link and sign-up to receive notifications of the reports:

https://www.texasinsects.org/signup-high-plains--south-plains.html

For those of you using an Android phone you may not be receiving the weekly notification that a new report has been released due to a setting on your text messaging system. I am troubleshooting the issue currently as I am having an issue with my cell phone as well. Stay tuned for a fix.

FOCUS on Entomology, July 2, 2025

South Plains Cotton Pest Update: Product Choices for Fleahoppers and Aphids

Dr. Suhas Vyavhare, Associate Professor and Extension Entomologist

With some of the early-planted cotton already in the second or third week of squaring, we are starting to pick up quite a few cotton fleahoppers and isolated colonies of cotton aphids across the region. One of the common questions I've been getting is about product choices for managing these pests.

For cotton aphids, I would keep a close eye before pulling the trigger. With all the rain we've had over the past few days, there's a good chance it may wash off some of the aphids. So, I would let the weather and beneficial insects work their magic before making a treatment decision.

Most of the products recommended for cotton fleahopper also have some activity against cotton aphids. For instance, Transform WG, Centric 40WG, and Carbine 50WG—all commonly used for cotton fleahopper control—also offer decent efficacy on aphids. Of these three, Transform has the best activity on cotton aphids and is also very effective against fleahoppers.

Some of the cheaper options include acephate and Bidrin 8. Acephate is the least expensive but also the least rainfast, with shorter residual activity. Bidrin offers slightly better rainfastness and longer residual control on both cotton fleahoppers and aphids; however, it is much harsher on beneficial insects compared to Transform, Centric, or Carbine.

Here is an audio recording from Dr. Suhas Vyavhare with more thoughts on cotton aphids and cotton fleahoppers:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NjvC2mF6SIIiLqdqK_DE00Y0CK2Alry8/view?usp=drive_link

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