Blacklands IPM Update

GENERAL:

Finally, our temperatures are more normal and conducive for cotton boll development, and some area cotton fields could use a rain to help retain some late blooming fruit. There is a lot of physiological fruit shed occurring right now as the plant is adjusting to the fruit load and its available resources. Insect issues ae low right now, but I am starting to find aphids in some area fields as well as stinkbugs both of which are well below the economic thresholds. Some fields in the western portions of Hill County are starting to open and the warm temperatures will cause bolls in area fields to open quickly. Corn harvest is full steam ahead, and yield reports are all over the board ranging from as low as 60 bushels/acre to as high as almost 200 bushels/acre. Test weights in these fields have been good thanks to late season rains and cooler than average temperatures during the grain fill process, I have heard of test weight as high as 61 lbs/bushel.

https://agrilife.org/mid-coast-ipm/2021/08/16/fall-armyworms-in-bermudagrass-hay-fields/

COTTON:

The cotton crop is progressing nicely, and doing some boll counts during the week it is looking like we are going to have another good cotton crop thanks to timely summer rains and the mild temperatures. Cotton fields are starting to shed fruit, which is a common occurrence at this point in the growing season. The fruit is caused by the plant adjusting to the current boll load and the available water and nutrients it has so it can fill out all the bolls it keeps on the plant. If we could catch a rain this weekend like it is forecasted, we could see some of these late season bolls stay on the plant but waiting on these bolls to fill may cause harvest issues with fall rains.

Our cotton is at the point in the growing season where insects are not a major issue. Most cotton fields have accumulated enough heat units past cutout where they are no longer susceptible to economical bollworm damage. I am starting to find stinkbugs in area cotton fields again, but they will likely no need to be treated because of two reasons. The first reason is the economic threshold for stinkbugs a this point in the growing season is high at 50% damage bolls, and the second reason is we are so late in the season that there are very few bolls tender enough for stinkbugs to feed on. Aphids (**Figure 1**) are also being found in area cotton fields but are well below the economic threshold. Currently in fields where I am finding aphids there is a decent beneficial insect population that is keep the aphid numbers from exploding. As our cotton starts to open, we need to keep a close eye on these fields with aphids, as they can cause sticky cotton from the honey dew the aphids produce. Because of the issues that evolve around aphids and sticky cotton, once bolls start opening the economic threshold for aphids drop to only 10 aphids per leaf. If for some reason aphid numbers reach the economic threshold there are a few insecticides that are recommended for aphid management in cotton, including, Sivanto (flupyradifurone), Intruder Max (acetamiprid), and Bidrin (dicrotophos). Neonicotinoids like imidacloprid and Centric have labels for aphid management in cotton, but there are known issues with the efficacy of these insecticides on cotton aphids.

Figure 1. Cotton aphids found in a Cotton field in Hill County, TX. Photo credit: D. Tyler Mays.

SORGHUM:

I have not seen many sugarcane aphids in the few unharvested sorghum field I am seeing, but we need to keep an eye on these as we progress closer to harvest. If we do run into sugarcane aphids when killing sorghum for harvest preparation to avoid gumming the combine from the honeydew produced by the aphids. Mixing your kill shot with an insecticide like Sivanto or Transform will control the aphids and keep them from moving into the head and producing honeydew that would cause harvest issues. These insecticide however carry a preharvest interval of 14 days.

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