Cotton Pests

Thrips continue to be an issue in cotton. Seed treatments provide protection from 14 to 21 days from post emergence. By now the seed treatment insecticides should be losing their effectiveness and immature thrips could be found on the underside of leaves and in the terminal hiding between the leaf veins and where the leaves curl. The immature thrips are white to straw colored, very small and do not have wings.

Crop consultants, John Quillin and Gary Gray, and a call from a producer are reporting heavy thrips pressure from Dumas north even though some fields have been sprayed multiple times. The application of acephate has been providing quick knockdown of thrips, but the short residual activity of approximately 5 days is allowing thrips to re-infest plants. We have a limited arsenal of foliar applied insecticides that can be used to control thrips. Research by Dr. David Kerns, former cotton entomologist at Lubbock, has shown that acephate is slightly better than dimethoate at 7 days after treatment. But the residual activity of acephate is still not very long.

A new product, Radiant®, by Dow AgroSciences provided good control of thrips in a trial last year. However, thrips densities in the test were not very heavy. The Dow chemical rep says that the residual activity of Radiant® should last from 7 to 9 days when applied at a rate between 4.0 to 4.5 fl oz per acre.

As cotton reaches the 5 true leaf stage the thrips generally do not cause economic injury. For cotton with fewer than 5 true leaves the threshold is one thrips per true leaf. If cotton had been previously treated with a soil insecticide, seed treatment, or a foliar insecticide for thrips then immature thrips should be present along with 1 thrips per true leaf for any additional spray applications.

Beet armyworms were found in a cotton field last week by Gary Gray, local crop consultant from Sunray. There also was a report in Manda Anderson’s, IPM Extension Agent – Gaines County, newsletter of beet armyworms infesting some non-Bt cotton fields. Beet armyworm moths may lay a mass of eggs on either side of a leaf. The eggs will be covered with a white hairy substance. As larvae hatch they will feed together for a short while before dispersing throughout the plant. These early infestations can destroy the terminal area which causes lateral branching of the plant and

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delayed maturity. Other distinct visible damage symptoms early are that larvae skeletonize the leaf instead of chewing large holes in them. We do not have an established threshold for making application decisions for these early Beet armyworm infestations.

**Moth Trapping**
The moth trapping project for monitoring activity of southwestern corn borer, fall armyworm, and western bean cutworm is underway. Each of the moth species is being monitored across the Texas High Plains and reported weekly at [http://amarillo.tamu.edu/facultystaff/ed-bynum/insects/](http://amarillo.tamu.edu/facultystaff/ed-bynum/insects/). There are 15 Texas AgriLife County Extension Agents and Dr. Pat Porter, Extension Entomologist – Lubbock, monitoring these moths in 17 counties. The counties represented are Castro (Chance Crossland), Deaf Smith (Rick Auckerman), Gray (Brandon McGinty), Hartley/Dallam (Mike Bragg), Hale (Gary Cross), Hutchinson/Hanson (Kristy Synatschk), Lipscomb (J. R. Sprague), Lubbock (Dr. Pat Porter), Moore (Marcel Fischbacher), Ochiltree (Scott Strawn), Parmer (Benji Henderson), Potter (Brandon Boughen), Randall (J. D. Ragland), Sherman (Brad Easterling), and Swisher (David Graf). Current trap catches will also be reported in future editions of this Panhandle Pest Update Newsletter and the Focus on South Plains Agriculture, and by reports and newsletters from each of the County Extension Agents.

This first week trap catches were monitored for all counties except Castro, Deaf Smith, Moore and Parmer. All three species were active in most of the counties monitored.

For specific questions or information about a specific county contact your local County Extension Agent or contact me (Ed Bynum) at (806) 677-5600 or ebynum@ag.tamu.edu.