



The University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

May 10, 2011

COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #2

COTTON SITUATION: The Georgia Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report for the week ending May 8th listed the crop as 20 percent planted with is slightly behind the five year average of 25 percent. Lack of acceptable soil moisture has stopped planting activities in dryland fields in many areas.

INSECT SITUATION: Thrips infestations are high in most fields which have emerged. Scout fields closely for thrips infestations and injury and treat accordingly. We continue to receive sporadic reports of grasshoppers in reduced tillage fields. We have also received a report of false chinch bugs; which is historically considered a dry weather pests.

Thrips: Thrips infestations are high on cotton which has emerged to date. Historically cotton planted in April and early May experience higher thrips infestations compared with later plantings. However, thrips infestations are higher than normal this year, even for early planted cotton. Dry conditions we are experiencing in most areas have thrips on the move looking for something green to feed upon. Monitor emerging stands closely for thrips and injury. Treatments should be applied when 2-3 thrips per plant are counted and immatures are present. Immatures are wingless and crème colored whereas adults will have wings and will generally be black or brownish in color. Remember that 1-2 leaf cotton is much more sensitive to thrips injury than 4-5 leaf cotton. The first 14 days of a seedlings life are extremely important in terms of thrips control. Recommended foliar insecticides for thrips include Orthene, Bidrin, and dimethoate. These systemic insecticides will provide improved control of thrips which are feeding down in the terminal bud compared with a contact insecticide. In fields with heavy thrips damage, the next 1-2 leaves may exhibit some injury even if thrips are effectively controlled with an insecticide since they were feeding on unfurled leaves in the terminal bud. Hopefully thrips numbers will subside on our later plantings.



Grasshoppers: We have received sporadic reports of grasshoppers in some reduced tillage fields. Grasshoppers overwinter as eggs deposited in the soil; the lack of tillage allows greater survival of the eggs. Dry winters also favor overwintering survival of grasshoppers. Grasshoppers may feed on foliage, but more serious damage occurs when they feed on the main

stem of seedlings. In some situations grasshoppers may completely cut the main stem (this type damage looks like cutworm damage) whereas in others they may partially chew through the stem which weakens the plant which may eventually tip over. Treatment should be applied if the stand is threatened. Immature grasshoppers (wingless) are easily controlled with insecticides however adults (winged) are more difficult to control and high rates of labeled insecticides should be used. The insect growth regulator Dimilin provides good residual control of immature grasshoppers but has no activity on adults. When monitoring fields for grasshoppers, be sure to walk the entire field. In some situations grasshoppers may be migrating into the field from turn rows, fences, ditches, etc. and be present at much higher populations near the margins than the interior portions of the field.



Grasshopper damaged plants on left. Picture on right shows a damaged main stem which has been partially chewed by a grasshopper.

False Chinch Bugs: False chinch bugs are a sporadic and uncommon pest of cotton. Historically we have been more likely to observe this pest during dry periods. False chinch bugs also tend to be more common in conservation tillage fields where winter weeds such as primrose and wild radish were not terminated in a timely manner. False chinch bugs have needle like mouthparts and feed on plant juices. Extremely high populations can weaken and stunt small seedlings and in severe situations kill some plants. Once plants reach the 4-5 leaf stage and are growing rapidly, we would not expect treatment to be necessary; however infested fields should be monitored closely.



Cotton Scout Schools: Cotton insect scouting schools are annually held at various locations in Georgia. These programs offer basic information on cotton insects and scouting procedures and will serve as a review for experienced scouts and producers and as an introduction to cotton insect monitoring for new scouts.

Location	City	Date	Time	Contact for additional information
Tifton Campus Conference Center	Tifton GA	June 13, 2011	9:00 am -12:30pm	Debbie Rutland (229) 386-3424
Southeast Research and Education Center	Midville GA	June 21, 2011	9:00 am -12:30pm	Peyton Sapp (706) 554-2119

INSECT UPDATES: Check the **Cotton Insect Hotline (1-800-851-2847)** for updates on current insect conditions. The Cotton Pest Management Newsletter and additional cotton production information is also posted on the UGA Cotton Homepage at: <http://www.ugacotton.com>

Sincerely,

Phillip Roberts
Extension Entomologist

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COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, COLLEGE OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES, WARNELL SCHOOL OF FOREST RESOURCES, COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SCIENCES

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