

May 23, 2006

***COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #1***

**COTTON SITUATION:** The Georgia Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report for the week ending May 21<sup>st</sup> listed the crop as 73 percent planted which is slightly ahead of the five-year average of 67 percent. The Boll Weevil Eradication Program estimated intended cotton acreage for Georgia in 2006 at 1.49 million acres as of May 19, 2006.

**INSECT SITUATION:** Thrips are the primary insect pests observed in fields at this time. Thrips populations range from moderate to heavy depending on location. Thrips injury is significant in some areas due in large part to slow seedling growth. Sand blasting has also caused significant plant injury in some conventional tillage fields. A few reports of grasshoppers and false chinch bugs have also been received.

**Scout Schools:** The annual cotton scout school will be held in Tifton on Thursday June 8, 2006. As in years prior, pre-registration and a \$7.00 registration fee is required. Additional cotton scout schools are also planned at other locations. The dates, location, and contact for each are listed below.

Tifton	June 8, 2006	Contact Debbie Rutland	(229) 386-3424
Jeff Davis Co.	June 12, 2006	Contact Tim Varnedore	(912) 375-6648
Midville	June 15, 2006	Contact Will Duffie	(706) 554-2119
Macon Co.	June 16, 2006	Contact Jeremy Kichler	(478) 472-7588

**Thrips:** Thrips populations have been moderate to high. However, plant injury associated with thrips populations is more severe than normal. This is due in large part to slow seedling development. Thrips will feed on unfurled leaves in the terminal bud. Adult thrips continually migrate into fields from other plant hosts. These adult thrips must feed on plants to ingest a toxic dose of the preventive insecticide used at planting. If the plant is not growing or growing slowly, cumulative damage from adults feeding on the same unfurled leaves ultimately leads to more plant injury symptoms. The slow development of cotton has also extended the window of susceptibility to thrips. Once cotton reaches the 5-leaf stage and is growing rapidly, thrips rarely require treatment. In some situations, it is likely that our preventive treatments have been exhausted in some early-planted fields. The seed treatments typically provide thrips control for about three weeks; Temik typically will provide control for about four or more weeks depending on rate. The presence of immature or wingless thrips is a good indication that the preventive treatment is failing. It is tempting to automatically add a thrips insecticide with your glyphosate sprays; however the insecticide could flare other pests such as spider mites or aphids. In fields where excessive damage is occurring and thrips are present, sprays should be

made. If no thrips are present, why spray? When foliar sprays are made it is likely that the next 1-2 true leaves will show injury.

The following pictures were made four weeks after planting from a thrips control trial in Tifton (2006).



The first two rows were treated with a preventive thrips insecticide at planting, whereas rows in back of the image are untreated (four weeks after planting).



No preventive insecticide used.



Preventive insecticide used at planting.

**“Henbit” Burrower Bug:** During recent weeks, we have received a few calls regarding small black and red bugs in strip tillage fields which resemble stink bug nymphs fields (see image below). The nymphs were reared to adults and identified as the burrower bug *Sehirus cinctus*. Nymphs of this species are often congregated. Dr. Jay Chapin, Clemson Entomologist who has done much research on burrower bugs, offered the following comments about *Sehirus cinctus*: "I have collected the adults from 13 Feb to 24 June; and the nymphs from 8 April to 24 June in strip-till fields. The more henbit that was in the field during winter, the more *Sehirus*. The first 2 instars require henbit seeds for survival but the adults and nymphs hang around after the henbit is cooked by hot weather or burndown herbicides. It's an unusual burrower bug because adults and late instar nymphs spend most of their time above ground." We do not believe these burrower bugs are an economic pest of cotton, however fields infested with high numbers should be monitored closely for any plant injury. *Sehirus cinctus* is not the same burrower bug, which is a pest of peanuts.



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

Sincerely,

Phillip Roberts  
Extension Entomologist