

June 5, 2003

COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #3

COTTON SITUATION: The Georgia Weekly Weather and Crops Report for the week ending June 1st listed the crop as 86 percent planted. April and early May planted cotton is actively squaring and to date, retention looks good. Recent rains were welcomed in most areas of the state.

INSECT SITUATION: Tobacco budworm eggs and small larvae have been reported on squaring cotton in southwest and central Georgia. A few reports of grasshoppers continue to be received in strip-tillage fields. Thrips numbers have declined somewhat. A few aphids and plant bugs have been observed.

Tobacco Budworm: Light to moderate populations of TBW have been reported this week. Hopefully beneficials will suppress TBW numbers below threshold levels in non-Bt cotton. Bt cotton should provide excellent control of TBW. It is important, especially on non-Bt cotton, that we conserve natural enemies at this time.

Thrips: Thrips injury appears to be reduced due to rapid seedling growth and somewhat lower thrips populations. However, we would continue to recommend a preventive thrips insecticide at planting on the remainder of acreage to be planted.

Grasshoppers: Grasshopper problems, although not widespread, have been reported more this year than in previous years. Perhaps this correlates with the increase in strip-tillage acreage, as most problems occur in reduced tillage systems or producers may be monitoring stands more closely. Treatment is recommended when plant damage is occurring and the stand is threatened. Immature or wingless grasshoppers are easily controlled with several insecticides. Winged or adult grasshoppers can be more of a challenge. Several insecticides are labeled but we have little experience with insecticide efficacy on this sporadic pest. Pyrethroids or Lorsban have performed well in commercial fields. Higher labeled rates should be used when adults are the primary target.

Tarnished Plant Bugs: Scouts should be observant for plant bugs and monitoring retention in squaring fields. Plant bug numbers are low in most fields and retention is good. Treatment for plant bugs is recommended if plants are retaining less than 75 percent of small squares and numerous plant bugs are observed. Treatment of plant bugs will disrupt beneficial insect populations and we all know the importance of natural enemies in non-Bt cotton.

Whitefringed Beetle: Stand reduction due to whitefringed beetle (WFB) larvae feeding on taproots has been reported from a few fields. In years past we generally receive 1-2 calls concerning this problem. Larvae are yellowish-white, legless grubs with brownish heads approaching a half inch in length. Larvae will feed on the taproot and underground portion of the stem causing plants to yellow,

wilt, and die. Since larvae are below ground there are no insecticidal controls. Fortunately, damage from this pest should be subsiding. WFB larvae feed on a variety of plants and overwinter in the larval stage. Pupation generally begins to occur during late May and there is only one generation per year. Thus populations should be "cycling out" and additional damage should be declining. Adults may be observed during May and June and will feed on foliage but are not considered a pest of cotton. Adults are dark gray beetles, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length with a broad short snout. The margins of the wing covers are banded with white. The wing covers are grown together so they cannot fly.

Whitefringed beetle larva (left) and adult (right). Images obtained from <http://www.ipmimages.org/>. Photographers: Larva, Edward L. Barnard and adult, Clemson University-USDA Cooperative Extension slide series.



Scout Schools: A few more opportunities to attend a cotton scout school remain. The dates, location, and contact for each are listed below:

June 11, 2003	SE GA Branch Exp. Station, Midville- <i>Richard McDaniel</i> (229)995-2165
June 12, 2003	Evans Co. Ext. Office, Claxton- <i>Mike Dollar</i> (912)739-1292
June 16, 2003	Jeff Davis Co. Ext. Office, Hazelhurst- <i>Tim Varnedore</i> (912)375-6648

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 Internet at:
<http://www.griffin.peachnet.edu/caes/cotton/>

Sincerely,

Phillip Roberts
Extension Entomologist