



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

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COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #3

COTTON SITUATION: The Georgia Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report for the week ending June 17th listed the crop as 95 percent planted and 11 percent squaring which is significantly below the five year average of 99 percent planted and 39 percent squaring.

INSECT SITUATION: Insects are relatively quiet at this time. Thrips populations have declined in recent weeks on seedling cotton which is still susceptible to thrips damage. A few reports of aphids have been received (we would anticipate aphid numbers to increase in the next two weeks). Isolated reports of spotty spider mite infestations have also been received. As cotton begins to square, scouts should begin to monitor square retention.

Thrips: Thrips numbers have declined in most areas. However, we should continue to monitor late emerging cotton closely for damage and the presence of thrips. Excessive thrips damage will delay maturity which could be problematic this fall on late emerging stands. Seedlings are most susceptible to thrips during early stages of development (cotyledon to 2-leaf) and become more tolerant to injury as seedlings develop. Treatment is rarely necessary after plants have 5 true leaves and are growing vigorously. The recommended threshold for thrips is 2-3 thrips per plant.

Aphids: Spotty infestations of cotton aphids can be observed in some fields at this time. In time these localized aphid populations will spread and eventually infest the entire field. Aphids give birth to living young and populations can increase significantly in a short amount of time. Initially a winged adult will infest a plant and give birth to aphids which will not grow wings. As the infested host plant becomes crowded adults will begin giving birth to aphids which will grow wings allowing for dispersal. 2006 was a difficult aphid year and many producers were glad they treated aphids. Although we should not forget 2006, we must remember that historically we have only treated a small percentage of acres for aphids. In most situations we endure aphids until the naturally occurring fungus causes populations to crash (hopefully this fungal crash will occur earlier than during 2006). Spread of the fungus is dependent upon high relative humidities and a large number of aphids.

We have insecticides which will provide good control of aphids, but research has demonstrated a consistent yield response to aphid control. Aphids feed on plant sap and may be considered an additional stress factor on developing plants. Decision to treat must be made on a field by field basis considering aphid numbers and general plant health.

Historically we receive the first reports of the naturally occurring fungus in late June or early July. As aphid numbers build scouts should be observant for gray fuzzy aphid cadavers which is indicative of the fungus. Once the fungus is observed in fields we would expect aphid populations to crash in about a week.



Leaves of plants infested with aphids typically cup downward (left). Leaf heavily infested with aphids (right), *Scymnus* lady beetle larva (larvae covered with white waxy protrusions) and lady beetle adult (orange) feeding on aphids.



The presence of gray fuzzy aphid cadavers is indicative of the naturally occurring fungus which causes aphid populations to crash. Once the fungus is observed in a field we would expect the aphid populations to crash in about a week.

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

Putting knowledge to work

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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