

July 7, 2005

COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #6

COTTON SITUATION: The Georgia Weekly Weather and Crops Report for the week ending July 3rd listed the crop as 64 percent squaring and 17 percent setting bolls which are slightly behind the five year averages of 74 and 27 percent. USDA recently released intended cotton acres for Georgia at 1.2 million acres. Cotton continues to develop at a rapid pace.

INSECT SITUATION: Aphids continue to linger in some areas but have crashed in others. Retention of small squares has improved during the last week. Corn earworm and tobacco budworm infestations are light to date. We have received several comments regarding stink bugs in pre-bloom cotton. Spider mites are present at low levels in some areas.

Aphids: Cotton aphids continue to linger in some fields. However, the fungus which causes aphids to crash has also been reported from various areas. Be sure to monitor for gray fuzzy aphids, which is indicative of the fungus, prior to making a spray decision. Once the fungus is detected, populations usually crash within a week. We rarely see significant yield increases in replicated trials when aphids are treated.

Stink Bugs: We have received several reports of stink bugs in squaring cotton and cotton which is in early bloom. It is too early to know how heavy stink bug pressure will be this season, but we would expect most fields in the state to require some level of treatment based on current information. In pre-bloom cotton, stink bugs rarely cause economic damage. However if high numbers of stink bugs are observed in pre-bloom cotton, be sure to monitor square set and retention closely. Also begin monitoring bolls for internal damage shortly after bloom. The largest bolls present on plants should be sampled until bolls the diameter of a quarter are present. Once bolls the diameter of a quarter are present, that age class of bolls should be sampled. During 2003, we observed some fields in early bloom which were heavily damaged by stink bugs, i.e. small bolls were shedding due to damage. Bolls less than 10 days of age which are damaged by stink bugs may be aborted. Typically bolls which have attained 10 days of age will remain on the plant even if fed upon by stink bugs. Tarnished plant bugs will also feed on small bolls less than 10 days of age.

Corn Earworm: To date we have not observed high numbers of corn earworm (CEW). However, we typically expect to see increases in CEW during the second week of July. Although Bt cotton provides good control of CEW in many situations, a supplemental insecticide is sometimes needed. If CEW become established in Bt cotton, they are usually found near the uppermost bloom. Be sure scouts are monitoring blooms, bloom tagged bolls, and bolls for CEW. If corn earworms obtain a length of ¼ inch in Bt cotton, they are likely to survive the Bt toxin. Pyrethroids provide excellent control of CEW and will also control southern green stink bug and suppress brown stink bugs.

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
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