Entomology 12-PMR (1-3)

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

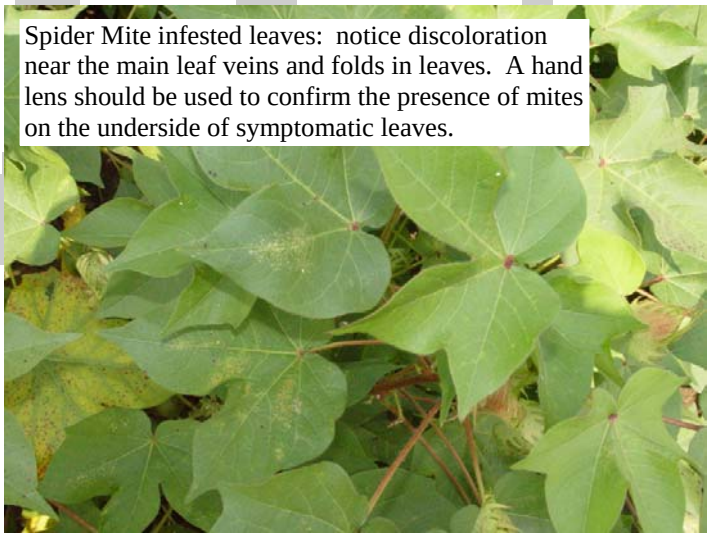
July 12, 2012

COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #3

COTTON SITUATION: The weekly Georgia Crop Progress & Condition Report for the week ending July 8th listed the crop as 85 percent squaring and 45 percent setting bolls which are ahead of the 5-year averages of 65 and 20 percent. Crop conditions were rated 38 percent fair, 45 percent good, and 13 percent excellent. Drought stress has become apparent in some dryland fields as plant water demand has increased.

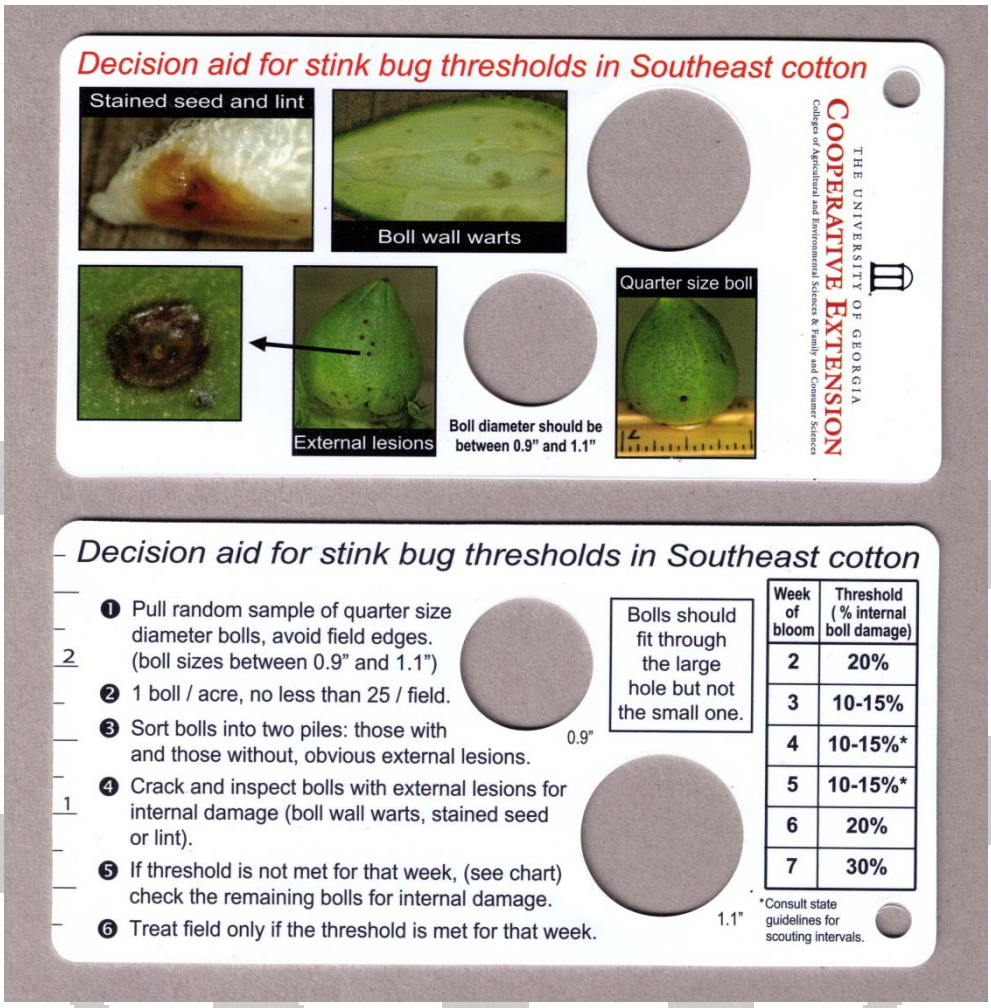
INSECT SITUATION: Aphids have crashed in most areas where populations were high; in other areas low numbers of aphids are still present. Tobacco budworm moth activity has increased in parts of south Georgia (Bt cotton should provide excellent control of tobacco budworms). Corn earworm activity has also increased but is somewhat localized. Some cotton planted in April is being treated for stink bugs.

Insecticide Selection: Thresholds for common insect pests of cotton can be found in the 2012 Georgia Pest Management Handbook (http://www.ent.uga.edu/pmh/) and the 2012 Cotton Production Guide (http://ugacotton.com/). Thorough scouting of fields on a regular basis will allow us to properly time needed insecticide applications when thresholds are exceeded. The more we know about pests and their populations in a field the better decisions we can make. When selecting an insecticide the primary factor is efficacy of the insecticide treatment on the target pest(s). However one should also consider the impact of the insecticide application on other pests in the field if they are present. For example we have observed spider mites with increasing frequency during recent years. Although only a small percentage of fields have been treated for spider mites during this time, their presence in the field should influence decisions we make for other pests. During recent years we have easily flared economic infestations of spider mites in field trials. Insecticides which are known to encourage or "flare" spider mite populations should be avoided when spider mites are present in a field. The same could be said if silverleaf whiteflies or corn earworms are present. Target pests must be controlled when thresholds are exceeded but we also must manage the insect complex season long.



Spider Mite infested leaves: notice discoloration near the main leaf veins and folds in leaves. A hand lens should be used to confirm the presence of mites on the underside of symptomatic leaves.

Stink Bugs: Stink bug numbers are up compared with the last couple of years when stink bug populations were generally low. It is still too early to know how widespread and consistent stink bug damage will be, but some fields planted in April have exceeded our recommended threshold. Once cotton begins setting bolls stink bug scouting and management should be a priority.



The two most common species of stink bugs infesting cotton are brown and southern green stink bugs. Both species cause similar damage to cotton, however it is important that we know the species makeup of stink bugs in the field. Pyrethroid insecticides provide good control of southern green stink bug but only fair control of brown stink bugs whereas the OP insecticides Bidrin and methyl parathion provide good control of both brown and southern green stink bugs. Species makeup can vary from field to field and during the year so scouts must be observant for bugs when walking fields.

Aphids: A strange aphid year; aphid populations remain low in parts of Georgia while in others aphid numbers built quickly and lingered before finally crashing due to the naturally occurring fungus. If you still have aphids, be on the lookout for gray fuzzy aphid cadavers which are indicative of the fungus. Once you observe the fungus in a field, aphid populations will generally crash within a week.

Corn Earworm (and Tobacco Budworm): Tobacco budworm activity has increased during the past week; Bt cottons should provide excellent control of tobacco budworm. Corn earworm activity has also increased but tends to be on a more localized basis. TBW and CEW larvae appear identical during early stages of development and have similar feeding habits. As larvae approach ½ inch in length, species can be determined relatively easily with the aid of a hand lens or microscope. See the following website for additional information on identifying TBW and CEW larvae: http://www.gaipm.org/cotton/larvaid.html. Adults can be easily identified and the ratio of moths observed is generally a good indicator of the species makeup of eggs and small larvae. The threshold for corn earworm in Bt cotton is when 8 larvae (1/4 inch or greater in length) are found per 100 plants. Larvae must feed on the plant to ingest a toxic dose of the Bt.

PEST PATROL HOTLINE: Check the Pest Patrol Hotline **(1-877-285-8525)** for updates on current insect conditions. Select #1 for updates from the Southern Region, then #3 for the Southeast, and then #4 to hear the Georgia update. More information, including sign up for text message alerts when new updates are posted, can be found at www.SyngentaPestPatrol.com. 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