



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

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COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #7

COTTON SITUATION: The Georgia Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report for the week ending July 26th listed the crop as 54 percent setting bolls which is behind the 5 year average of 69 percent. Crop conditions were rated as 9% excellent, 44% good, 35% fair, 10% poor, and 2% very poor. Some areas have been fortunate to receive scattered showers in recent days. Many areas could use a good general rain; blooms are nearing the top in some dryland fields. Cotton continues to develop nicely where adequate moisture is available.

INSECT SITUATION: Insect infestations have been high in the southwest corner of the state and are being reported at treatable levels in many areas. Be sure scouts are monitoring all cottons (single-gene and two-gene Bt cottons) for corn earworm and fall armyworms. We also continue to receive limited reports from various areas of beet armyworm feeding on pigweeds and moving to cotton. Stink bugs are being observed at treatable levels in cotton which is setting bolls. Scattered reports of spider mites have been received; watch spider mite populations closely in infested fields as numbers can build rapidly.

Corn Earworm: CEW numbers have been high in southwest Georgia for about 2-3 weeks. Numbers appear to be moderating somewhat in southernmost counties, but treatable levels continue to be observed in some fields. Be sure to monitor all cottons for CEW. The two-gene Bt cottons (Bollgard II and WideStrike) offer improved CEW control compared with single-gene Bollgard, but may need to be treated in some situations. Treatment of CEW in Bt cottons should be considered when 8 larvae 1/4 inch in length are found per 100 plants. When treating stink bugs, consider including a pyrethroid in the application if high numbers of CEW eggs or small larvae are present.

Fall Armyworm: FAW numbers have also been reported at moderate to high levels in some areas. The threshold for FAW is about 2 times that which is used for CEW. Be sure scouts are monitoring all cottons for FAW. The two-gene Bt cottons (Bollgard II and WideStrike) offer improved FAW control compared with single-gene Bollgard, but may need to be treated in some situations. Pyrethroids applied for stink bugs or CEWs will provide good suppression of small FAW (< 1/8 inch in length).

Beet Armyworm (movement from pigweed): Beet armyworms continue to be reported feeding on pigweed in some fields. When the pigweed is defoliated or killed by plowing or pulling, large BAW larvae are moving to surrounding plants and causing considerable injury in some fields. Beets are not being observed in all areas yet, but you need to be aware of this potential problem. We have observed multiple BAW egg masses on a single pigweed plant; that is a lot of larvae which may move to cotton. When large larvae move to Bt cottons, they are

more tolerant to the Bt toxin compared with just hatched larvae and may not be controlled. Our current threshold for BAW is 10 active “hits” or hatchouts per 300 row feet. In situations where BAW are moving from pigweed to cotton, this threshold does not work well; i.e. we cannot count “hits”. We need a more workable threshold for these situations. In Bt cottons we have observed BAW larvae feeding on squares, blooms, and foliage. As a starting point in fields where BAW are infesting pigweed, treatment should be considered if 10 percent damaged squares or 10 percent BAW infested or damaged open blooms are found. BAW may potentially feed on bolls, but most feeding we have observed has been in/on squares and blooms. The amount of foliage feeding should also be considered in addition to square and bloom damage.



Note the flared squares resulting from BAW feeding.



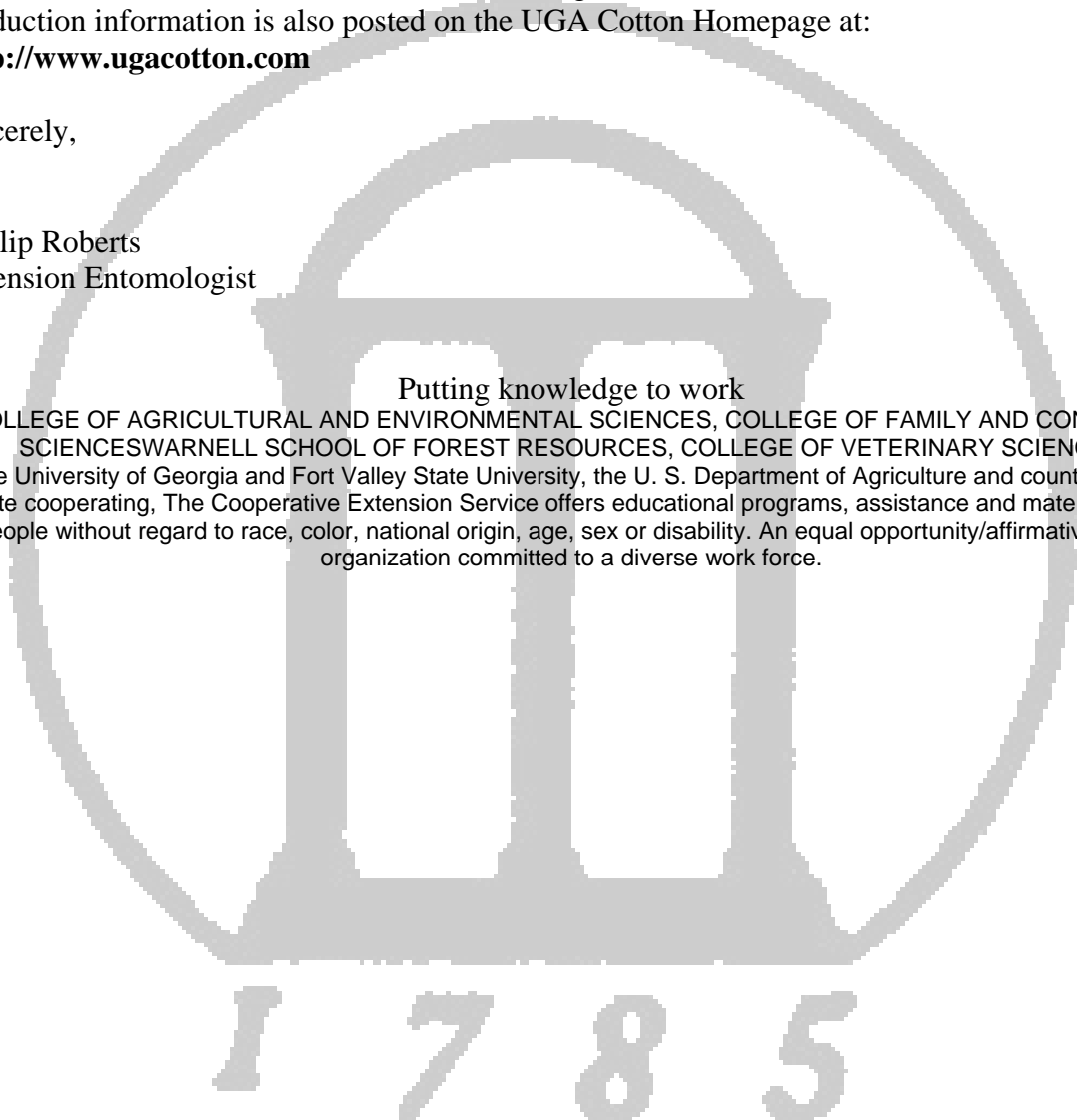
Foliage feeding injury from BAW.

Stink Bugs and other Boll Feeding Bugs: Bugs are being treated in many areas. Scout fields and treat accordingly. In addition to stink bugs, we are also receiving reports of moderate levels of tarnished plant bugs in some fields. The OP insecticides Bidrin and methyl parathion have little to no activity on caterpillar pests. If numerous CEW eggs or small larvae are observed and an OP insecticide is needed, consider tank mixing with a pyrethroid.

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



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