



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

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COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #8

COTTON SITUATION: The Georgia Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report for the week ending July 26th listed the crop as 66 percent setting bolls which is behind the 5 year average of 81 percent. Crop conditions were rated as 9% excellent, 40% good, 39% fair, 10% poor, and 2% very poor. Many areas received scattered rainfall during the past week; some could use some more.

INSECT SITUATION: Fall armyworms and corn earworms continue to be the two pests we are receiving the most calls about. We should not forget about stink bugs as threshold numbers are present in many areas. Based on the number of calls received, spider mites appear to be more widespread than during previous weeks. Beet armyworms continue to be reported from scattered areas.

Fall Armyworm: FAW have been reported at treatable populations from several areas (especially SW Georgia). FAW larvae are generally found feeding in blooms and or bolls in the mid to lower plant canopy. Small FAW and corn earworm (CEW) larvae are very similar in appearance. One clue to identifying small FAW larvae is the presence of etching on the inner surface of boll bracts. Small FAW larvae will often etch the inner surface of boll bracts until large enough to feed on developing bolls. Larger FAW larvae will typically chew into the basal or lower portion of bolls. FAW can damage larger and more mature bolls compared with CEW. Due to propensity of FAW to feed in the mid and lower canopy, coverage and penetration of the plant canopy with insecticides is extremely important. Control of FAW is difficult due in part to coverage issues and we should not expect or attempt to “zero out” an established FAW population. The threshold for FAW is about 2 times that of corn earworm. High rates of pyrethroids provide good suppression when small FAW (<1/8 inch in length) are treated. When we see control of small FAWs with pyrethroids, the application often targeted other pest such as corn earworm or stink bugs. Pyrethroids will not control large FAWs, and higher rates of non-pyrethroid insecticides will be needed. Several insecticides are suggested for control of FAW in the Pest Control Handbook; Diamond at 9 ozs. per acre has performed well in several areas. Diamond and Intrepid have limited activity on CEW and a pyrethroid should be tank-mixed with those insecticides when both CEW and FAW are being treated. Several non-pyrethroid insecticides have activity on both FAW and CEW. When targeting FAW, every effort should be made to maximize penetration and coverage of the plant canopy.

Corn Earworm: CEW activity varies by location. It takes about a month for CEW to develop from egg to adult. In southernmost Georgia it has been about 4 weeks since we first observed CEW infestations. We have received several reports this week from southernmost Georgia that moth activity and egg lay is increasing, Chapter 2. Sustained egg lay occurred for 2+ weeks

during the July generation in many areas so there was not much of a lag in pressure. Be sure to monitor all cottons for CEW and FAW. The two gene Bt cottons WideStrike and Bollgard II have provided improved control of CEW and FAW compared with single gene Bollgard, but have required supplemental foliar sprays in some fields.

Stink Bugs and other Boll Feeding Bugs: Be sure scouts are monitoring bolls for stink bug damage. With the increased CEW and FAW activity, bug sprays should only be made on an as needed basis. If you exceed the boll damage threshold for bugs, treat the bugs. However, be aware of potential CEW and FAW infestations. When treating stink bugs consider including a pyrethroid in the application if numerous small larvae are observed.

Spider Mites: Spider mites appear to have become more widespread in the past week. Watch fields closely for plant damage and mites, populations can build quickly. Recent rains have slowed mites down, but will likely not eliminate them as a potential pest.

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

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