

August 11, 2005

***COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #11***

**COTTON SITUATION:** The Georgia Weekly Weather and Crops Report for the week ending August 7<sup>th</sup> listed the crop as 85 percent setting bolls. This crop is later than normal, however blooms are visible in the tops of plants in some early-planted fields.

**INSECT SITUATION:** Insect pest populations and severity vary by location. However, many different pests have been observed and reported from various locations. Caterpillar pests include corn earworm, tobacco budworm, fall armyworm, soybean looper, beet armyworm, and southern armyworm. Bugs include brown and southern green stink bugs, tarnished plant bugs, and a few clouded plant bugs. Aphids and whiteflies have also been observed.

**Southern Armyworm:** Isolated and sporadic infestations of southern armyworms (SAW) have been reported in southwest Georgia. Southern armyworms are primarily foliage feeders, however we have observed SAW feeding on squares and blooms during recent years. No specific thresholds are established for SAW. Decision to treat SAW should be based on defoliation levels and/or square damage. Pyrethroids should provide good control of SAW. Southern armyworms lay egg masses that resemble other armyworm egg masses but are much larger (the size of a nickel). SAW feed gregariously on the underside of leaves for several days after hatching. Initial damage resembles a beet armyworm hit in that larvae feed on the lower surface of the leaf leaving the upper cuticle intact. This creates a “window pane” effect. In time, SAW larvae disperse to neighboring plants. In some fields very high populations of SAW occur in isolated areas. Larvae are easily identified by the presence of several black dots on the first abdominal segment (just behind the back pair of true legs) which give the appearance of a black band or ring. The head capsule of SAW is often orange in color. Do not confuse SAW with beet armyworm. Beet armyworm has a black dot directly above the second pair of true legs. Bt cottons have little effect on southern armyworms and most infestations occur in fields which have not been treated with a pyrethroid recently.



Southern armyworms often have orange head capsules and several black dots on the first abdominal segment which gives the appearance of a black band.

**Boll Feeding Bugs:** Stink bugs and other boll feeding bugs continue to be reported at treatable levels in several parts of the state. Bolls are susceptible to yield loss from stink bugs up to 25 days of age. Recent studies have indicated that excessive stink bug damage has a detrimental effect on fiber quality. Continue to scout and treat as needed.

**Soybean Loopers:** Soybean loopers have been reported in several areas. Most infestations are below economic levels but this is a pest we should watch closely. Soybean loopers initially feed in the lower canopy of the plant. In time they will move to new foliage in the mid and upper canopies. In rank growing fields, some soybean looper may be beneficial in that the lower canopy is “opened up”. However treatment is recommended if loopers threaten to defoliate cotton with immature bolls. When loopers number 8 per row foot it is likely that excessive defoliation will occur.



Soybean looper initially feed in the lower canopy (left). Soybean looper larvae are easily identified by two abdominal prolegs (right).

**Aphids:** Aphids have been reported from several areas. Normally, the naturally occurring fungus which causes aphid populations to crash during late June and early July will also cause late season aphid infestations to crash.

**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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