

August 24, 2006

COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #10

COTTON SITUATION: The Georgia Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report for the week ending August 20th listed the crop as 16 percent with open bolls which is similar to the 5 year average of 13 percent. This crop continues to mature at a rapid pace in many areas. A few fields have been defoliated and we will likely see some irrigated fields defoliated this month.

INSECT SITUATION: Cotton insect conditions vary depending on location, but as a whole insect pest populations are not widespread. Sporadic infestations of corn earworm, fall armyworm, and tobacco budworm have been reported. Stink bugs continue to be erratic. Plant bugs, both adults and immatures, have increased in some fields. Spider mites continue to linger in some areas. As fields mature, they become less attractive to insect pests and we may anticipate insects to concentrate on late planted and green lush fields.

Plant Bugs: Plant bug numbers have increased in some areas during the past two weeks. Plant bugs are typically viewed as a pre-bloom pest feeding on small squares in the terminal of the plant. However, plant bugs may also be an economic pest in cotton that is setting bolls. Plant bugs can feed upon and damage developing bolls until bolls are about 15 days of age. Plant bug damage to developing bolls appears identical to that of stink bugs (callous growths or warts on the inner surface of the boll wall). Plant bugs may also feed on large squares. In many instances, large squares that are fed upon by plant bugs will be retained by the plant, bloom, and make a boll. Blooms originating from a large square that was damaged by a plant bug will be “dirty” or have discolored anthers or malformations on the petals. Severely damaged blooms will not pollinate efficiently and may result in misshapen bolls due to low seed counts in some locks. Although we do not have an official threshold based on dirty blooms, treatment should be considered if 15 percent dirty blooms are observed and adult and/or immature plant bugs are present.



Dirty bloom (left), immature tarnished plant bug (center), and adult tarnished plant bug (right).
Photos by Barry Freeman, Ron Smith, and Scott Bauer, ipmimages.org

Corn Earworm, Fall Armyworm, and Tobacco Budworm: Caterpillar infestations were moderate to heavy during July but have not materialized as we would have expected during August. However there are some areas that have economic infestations of the above-mentioned pests. In the coming weeks, we would anticipate most caterpillar activity to be in green lush fields.

Stink Bugs: In field trials we are conducting, stink bugs have been more common during the last week. However, populations remain low to moderate. Be sure all fields are scouted until bolls that will significantly contribute to yield reach about 25 days of age.

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,

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