



## *Cotton Insect Newsletter*

Letter #3

Edisto Research & Education Center in Blackville, SC

18 May 2006

**\*\*\*REMINDER\*\*\***

*COTTON SCOUT SCHOOLS*

**5 JUNE** AT EDISTO RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER IN BLACKVILLE

**6 JUNE** AT PEE DEE RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER IN FLORENCE

*FREE PROGRAM, LUNCH, AND PRIZES*

### *Newsletter Update*

This is the third cotton insect newsletter of 2006. If you missed the first two, we have them archived on a webpage <http://www.clemson.edu/edisto/cotton/cotton.htm>. Please distribute copies to all interested, and please provide input for the newsletter.

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### *Crop Situation*

Rain! We have had some much-needed rain in places. It will not be long before we need some more. The NASS had us at about 53% planted at the end of the second week of May, just ahead of the 5-yr average of 49%. Hopefully, this crop will get a good start.

### *News from Above the Lakes*

David Gunter in Darlington County reported that "Folks have pulled out the old rotary hoes to run across these planted cotton fields, trying to help the cotton out of the ground. After weeks of really dry weather, now some rain and these fields are hard as concrete in conventionally planted fields. Some strip till cotton is fighting seedling disease, so need constant warm weather up this way and some gentle showers to get this cotton in high gear."

I have had several calls from above the lakes about insects threatening stands. At first, callers suspected it was the vegetable weevil that we have already seen this year in seedling cotton. As it turns out, it was false chinch bug. See *Miscellaneous Insects* below for more about this insect.

### *News from Below the Lakes*

No news to report this week. This is your turn for input – send your comments and observations to me.

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### Miscellaneous Insects:



False chinch bugs! The false chinch bug (FCB), *Nysius raphanus* Howard (Heteroptera: Lygaeidae), infests cotton typically when conditions are dry, especially in minimum tillage operations. Sound familiar? Many of our fields fit that description. **Identification:** The adults of FCB are small, gray/brown insects with narrow bodies, about 4 mm long. The nymphs of FCB are shorter (up to 3 mm long) and brown/gray in color. The immatures have small red markings. They are generally seen by the hundreds or thousands. They move into cotton from alternate wild hosts that have been “burned or dried” down. They have piercing/sucking mouthparts and use them to suck plant juices. This reduces turgor pressure in the plants, causing wilting and additional damage. Eggs of FCB are reportedly pink and crescent-shaped. They are deposited in or on plants and possibly in the soil as well. All life stages of FCB can survive winter temperatures. Adults deposit eggs in late winter, and FCB has multiple generations (ca. 4) per year. **Control:** The best



recommendations for control of FCB do not involve insecticides at all. First of all, we need to have clean fields in the spring before planting. Because these insects deposit eggs in winter weeds in late winter/early spring, depriving them of these hosts would be the best way to keep them out of cotton. A good fall burndown of winter weeds would likely prevent many problems when cotton emerges months later. Another way to get rid of them is to do a rain dance. Joking aside, a good rain on top of FCB can significantly reduce their numbers. If a hard rain has occurred in a field that was experiencing problems before the rain, reevaluate the situation. Apparently, these insects do not do very well in

a downpour, hence the intensified problems under dry conditions. If a good rain is on the way, you might want to hold off on treating for them. See what happens after the rain. Now, rains are hard to come by it seems, so what do you do if rain is not imminent and is not going to help the situation? According to a couple of my colleagues, the best materials for control of FCB (WHEN IT IS JUSTIFIED) are ultra-low-volume (ULV) malathion at 16 oz per acre or Bidrin at 6-8 oz per acre. The ULV malathion option will be more difficult because of the formulation and sprayer requirements. It is an oil-based product, formulated to be applied with equipment designed for ULV application. “Regular” malathion that you would mix with water as you do with most pesticides does not work without the oil base. The Bidrin option will almost a third of the seasonal maximum usage of that product (1.5 lb ai/a/season or 24 oz product/season), so **MAKE SURE THAT YOU ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING** before you treat for these insects. “Bug” season is still far away. Other sources of information on false chinch bugs:

<http://extension.usu.edu/files/factsheets/falsechi.pdf>

<http://www.ocvcd.org/bulletins/False%20Chinch%20Bugs.pdf>

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### **Thrips**

Thrips are still out there and will be a problem for the next few weeks. As mentioned in the last newsletter, keep your eye on them, and use a threshold of 2-5 thrips (keying on immatures) per plant with visible injury to the developing leaves. **DO NOT SPRAY FOR INJURY SYMPTOMS ONLY.** Make sure you check for active populations of thrips before treating. You do not want to waste money treating old damage, but, more importantly, if you are in the field looking for the cause of the injury, you might discover that your injury is not being caused by thrips alone, right? It might be something odd like vegetable weevil or false chinch bug. The same insecticide treatment for thrips might not be enough to control some of these miscellaneous pests that are seemingly becoming more frequent every year. However, chances are that you will be looking at thrips injury, but make sure you find the causal organism!

### **Need More Information?**

Log on to the following webpage to view important cotton management recommendations, data, and historical cotton insect newsletters: <http://www.clemson.edu/scg/ipm/cotton.html>

To see cotton insect newsletters for this year, go to the following webpage to view the cotton page at the Edisto Research & Education Center. <http://www.clemson.edu/edisto/cotton/cotton.htm>

We will continue to update this webpage in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Jeremy K. Greene, Ph.D.  
Cotton Entomologist



Visit our website at:  
<http://www.clemson.edu>

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