



Cotton Insect Newsletter

Letter #15

Edisto Research & Education Center in Blackville, SC

10 August 2006

Newsletter Archives

Previous newsletters for 2006 are archived at <http://www.clemson.edu/edisto/cotton/cotton.htm>. Please distribute hard copies or electronic newsletter files to all interested, and please provide weekly input for the newsletter. Your observations and local knowledge are important – email or phone in your comments to me!

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Crop Situation

On 6 August 2006, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office reported our progress as 98% squared, just ahead of the 5-yr average of 97%. About 68% of the crop is setting bolls, just ahead of the 5-yr average of 65%. About 5% of the state's cotton crop was reported to be in excellent condition. The remainder was reported as 28% good (down from 39% last week), 40% fair, 25% poor, and 2% very poor. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

Most of the state's cotton crop is getting scattered thunderstorms only. We are not getting the "general" rains that put more seedcotton on the stalks. As you know, lack of water and high temperatures put added stress on the plants. With yield potential reduced because of these environmental factors, the last thing you want to hear about is biological factors trying to "eat what is left". However, that is part of my job, so see below!

News from Above the Lakes

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

News from Below the Lakes

Dr. Mike Sullivan reported that things are "calm" as far as insects in cotton he is checking. He found bollworm eggs in the "low teens to 50+ during the first part of week (they are down some now)". Cotton is growing again in the top in fields fortunate enough to get rain. Most of his cotton has been sprayed twice for bollworm and stink bugs. He is "waiting to spray for stink bugs again." He is seeing a lot of lady beetles behind his pyrethroid applications. Fire ants have been prevalent all year.

Tobacco Budworm & Bollworm

Trap captures at the Edisto Research & Education Center (EREC) near Blackville, SC, are shown below through 9 August 2006. We had a sustained flight of bollworm for most of July before it peaked near the end of

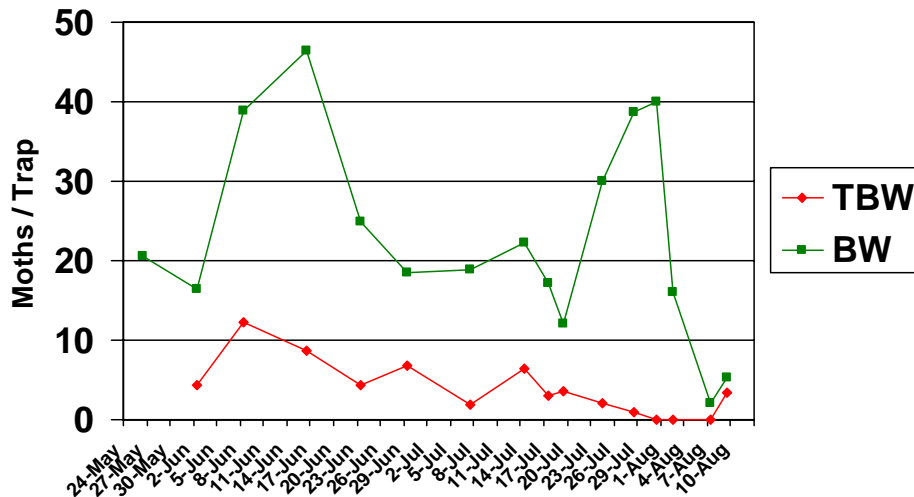
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July. Trap captures at EREC have gone down this month but are showing signs of a late-season rebound. Egg counts are down in many places but remain high in spots of lush growth, especially irrigated cotton.

Pheromone Trap Capture (EREC - 2006)



Sucking Bugs

Our current situation is one that includes multiple species of sucking bugs. There are plant bugs (tarnished plant bugs and cotton fleahoppers), stink bugs, and leaffooted bugs as the primary species. I observed numerous leaffooted bugs (*Leptoglossus phyllopus*) in cotton near Estill this morning. The field is just about “finished” as there are large bolls in the tops. I observed the leaffooted bugs feeding on bolls near the terminals. One of the best things about our boll-injury threshold for stink bugs is that it helps us manage other boll-feeding bugs like leaffooted bugs and plant bugs. See previous newsletters for descriptions of the 20% boll-injury threshold for bugs, if you are not very familiar with it.



Leaffooted bug adult
Leptoglossus phyllopus



Tarnished plant bug
Lygus lineolaris (adult on left, nymph on right)



Cotton fleahopper adult
Pseudatomoscelis seriatus

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Predaceous Insects

I have seen high populations of predaceous insects this season. Fire ants seem to be present in high numbers in just about every field I have visited recently. They are undoubtedly keeping numbers of pest species down. It seems like numbers of sucking bugs are directly related to numbers of fire ants. If you have fire ants, numbers of stink bugs, etc, seem to be down. I have made this observation before. Also, I think that numbers of caterpillars surviving from eggs have also been impacted by the predator population. On Bollgard cotton, some of the high egg counts are not developing into treatable numbers of bollworm. I think that bigeyed bugs, lacewings, lady beetles, etc, in addition to the fire ants, are reducing pest numbers. At least we have that going for us! Here are a few of the common, sometimes-difficult-to-identify predators “on the drop cloth” right now.



Adult of bigeyed bug, *Geocoris punctipes*, with bollworm as prey.



Nymph of bigeyed bug, *Geocoris punctipes*.



Adult of the minute pirate bug or insidious flower bug *Orius tristicolor* or *Orius insidiosus*, respectively, eating thrips.



Immature of lacewing, *Chrysoperla* spp., on square bract.



Immature lady beetle.



Ant attacking bollworm.

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.

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Sincerely,

Jeremy K. Greene, Ph.D.
Cotton Entomologist



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