Cotton/Soybean Insect Newsletter
Volume 17, Issue #3    Edisto Research & Education Center in Blackville, SC    19 May 2022

Pest Patrol Alerts
Some of the information contained herein each issue is available via text alerts that direct users to online recordings. I will update the short message often for at least as long as the newsletter runs. After a new message is posted, a text message is sent to alert users that I have recorded a new update. Users can subscribe for text message alerts for my updates in two easy steps. Step one: register by texting pestpat7 to 97063. Step two: reply to the confirmation text you receive by texting the letter "y" to complete your registration. Pest Patrol Alerts are sponsored by Syngenta.

Updates on Twitter
When noteworthy events happen in the field, I will be sending them out quickly via Twitter. If you want to follow those quick updates, follow me at @bugdocisin on Twitter.

News from Around the State
Jonathan Croft, county agent in Orangeburg County, reported, “Most areas need a rain to continue planting. Some sprays have gone out for grasshoppers in cotton.” Jay Crouch, county agent in Newberry County, reported, “We stopped planting cotton end of last week due to moisture concerns. Had a cutworm outbreak in the York/Chester area early this week. Mainly in areas where burndown interval was short; an application of a pyrethroid took care of the issue.”

Cotton Situation
As of 15 May 2022, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office estimated that about 48% of the crop has been planted by this week, compared with 22% planted the previous week, 56% at this time last year, and 47% for the 5-year average. The conditions of the crop [have yet to be reported] were --% excellent, - -% good, --% fair, --% poor, and --% very poor. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

Cotton Insects
Most of my early planted cotton is up to 4 or 5 true leaves in the southern portion of South Carolina, and it is continuing to sustain feeding injury from thrips. So far this season, the Thrips Infestation Predictor for Cotton at https://products.climate.ncsu.edu/ag/cottontip has been good at predicting risk from thrips based on field location and planting date. If you have yet to plant, or, if you would like to see what risk your fields are predicted to have, check it out at the link.

Where we have had rainfall or irrigation on cotton with at-plant insecticides for thrips, control of thrips looks good. Where we have missed rainfall and do not have the capacity to irrigate, some of the at-plant

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treatments were not systemically optimal, and some injury pushed past the visible threshold. Where we planted cotton without any insecticide and attempted to spray to compare foliar sprays for thrips, control has been unable to reduce most injury to below ‘3’ on the chart here. In that same trial, I included aldicarb (AgLogic) as a comparison at-plant treatment, and the results are night and day. The plant shown below was in a plot treated with AgLogic at the rate of 5 lb/acre, and the plant shown next to it was untreated at planting and not sprayed with any insecticide. Both of these plants are at the 4-5-leaf stage. Other at-plant treatments (seed treatments and other in-furrow materials) in additional trials are providing protection from thrips also but not as good as aldicarb.

The photos on the next page show another couple of untreated plants with significant injury from thrips. These plants are also
supposed to have 4 to 5 true leaves, but the significant injury prevents proper counting of leaves. In addition to the pressure from thrips, aphids have also started to colonize these unprotected seedlings. On the right, notice the aphids and the white lady beetle immatures from the genus *Scymnus* that crawl around and eat aphids. So, some of the “good guys” are already in the game, and we need to encourage that by not spraying unless it is absolutely necessary.

Grasshoppers continue to be an issue in some locations and can be addressed with acephate (Orthene at ~8 oz/acre), with the option of including the IGR Dimilin at 2 fl oz/acre in the tank to help keep the immature grasshopper nymphs from molting into adults.

I received at least one question this week about the insect shown on the right. This is the white margined burrower bug, *Sehirus cinctus*, and we see it every year on cotton seedlings. Most of the at-plant insecticides will provide control of this insect on cotton, and it is rarely an economic issue in the crop. So, you might see many of the adults and some immatures (similar but have red color on the dorsum), but don’t worry about them – there are exceptions but the white margined burrower bug is rarely (like never) a problem.
The biggest problems we have in cotton right now are related to the dry weather. It has been said many times before that we are never more than a week away from a drought! With all of the sandy soil around here, that is the truth. The dry weather affects planting, and that can impact insect pressure. For example, later planting might reduce the risk from thrips, but it can put you more at risk for injury from bollworm and stink bugs. The later you plant, the more important those pests can be. So, it is tricky business – the logistics of planting a large farm and trying to factor in various items that can be impacted by planting date. Also, as I mentioned last week, grasshoppers prosper under dry conditions, and the injury that they and thrips cause is magnified by drought, as the plants are not growing out of the injury. Hopefully, the rains come this weekend and next week, and we get some relief.

**Soybean Situation**

As of 15 May 2022, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office estimated that about 29% of the crop has been planted this week, compared with 10% planted the previous week, 42% at this time last year, and 22% for the 5-year average. About 2% of the crop has emerged, compared with 0% the previous week, 20% at this time last year, and 9% for the 5-year average. The conditions of the crop (have yet to be reported) were --% excellent, --% good, --% fair, --% poor, and --% very poor. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

**From the SC Soybean Specialist (Dr. Michael Plumblee)**

“Soybean planting progressed well over the last week; we are 7 percent ahead of our 5-year average. Dry conditions are plaguing much of the state pausing planting in places where moisture has run out. As we continue through planting season, a few things to think about, first, make sure to plant soybean seed into the moisture so that you get a uniform stand, this may warrant checking seeding depth multiple times per day. Second, adjust seed rates to ensure you get at least 80,000+ plants per acre emerged. Hard, dry, and compact soils will likely result in fewer plants emerging and could reduce seed to soil contact. Lastly, once the furrow has closed options for controlling nematodes is over. If you have nematode issues or think you may, a nematode sample prior planting is not a bad idea to help place resistant varieties or make nematicide decisions. A link to a quick video I put together on soybean emergence is here: [https://youtu.be/MpdokEECT5M](https://youtu.be/MpdokEECT5M).”
**Soybean Insects**

Again this week, most of the soybeans are just coming up or still in the bag to be planted. We do not have broad issues with insects in soybeans just yet, but that will change soon. Problems with grasshoppers and deer will be the first issues to deal with regarding herbivores in soybeans. Deer can be repelled with some of the soap-based repellents and aldicarb used at planting. Also, permits to remove them lethally also work to some degree. As for grasshoppers, I mentioned last week that a heavy rate of a pyrethroid mixed with Dimilin (2 fl oz/acre) is the best treatment for them.

The figure below is for much later in the season, but it stays here as a reminder to learn how to identify larvae and adults (moths).

As moth activity increases, deposited eggs will yield caterpillar pests on soybeans. It is good skill to be able to identify adult moths flying around in fields. Use this chart to study moth and caterpillar identification.

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**Public Service Activities**

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Bollworm & Tobacco Budworm

Captures of bollworm (BW) and tobacco budworm (TBW) moths in pheromone traps at EREC this season are shown below, as are the captures from 2007-2020 for reference. Tobacco budworm continues to be important for our soybean acres and for any acres of non-Bt cotton. I provide these data as a measure of moth presence and activity in our local area near my research plots. The numbers are not necessarily representative of the species throughout the state but are useful for general trends.

Trap data from 2007-2020 are shown below for reference to other years of trapping data from EREC:
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Pest Management Handbook – 2022
Insect control recommendations are available online in the 2022 South Carolina Pest Management Handbook at:
https://www.clemson.edu/extension/agronomy/pestmanagment2022/2022pmhmaster.pdf

South Carolina Crops Blog
The SC Crops Blog contains content about production of major row crops at the following link, if you want more information: https://blogs.clemson.edu/sccrops/
Archived issues of the Cotton/Soybean Insect Newsletter can be viewed at a convenient link on the SCCrops page. Contact Dr. Michael Plumblee, if you have any questions about the blog.

Free Mobile Apps: “Calibrate My Sprayer” and “Mix My Sprayer”
Download our free mobile apps called “Calibrate My Sprayer” and “Mix My Sprayer” that help check for proper calibration of spraying equipment and help you with mixing user-defined pesticides, respectively, in custom units (available in both iOS and Android formats):
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/mobile-apps/

Need More Information?
For more Clemson University Extension information: http://www.clemson.edu/extension/

For historical cotton/soybean insect newsletters:
https://www.clemson.edu//extension/agronomy/cotton1/newsletters.html

Sincerely,

Jeremy K. Greene, Ph.D.
Professor of Entomology

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