

Plentiful Rains Slow Planting Progress As Final Planting Dates Come and Go

Friday, June 3, 2016

By Shawn Wade

Planting progress across the Texas High Plains has been brisk over the past two weeks as cotton producers have managed to dodge rainfall events and get an estimated 70 percent of the region's expected cotton acres planted as of June 3.

Their progress hasn't always been easy and many have found themselves switching from initial planting activity to replanting operations depending on moisture conditions and crop conditions. Industry officials still expect the region to plant approximately 3.5 million acres of cotton this year, up from 2014's 3.1 million total.

For now, producers with unplanted acres are working hard to get into their remaining fields as they get dry enough to plant.

This year Memorial Day signaled the start of the latest round of weather related delays that kept growers, predominantly in the region's central tier, from finishing up. It seems the latest rainfall events will prove most problematic for growers with a June 5 Final Planting Date.

With a favorable weather forecast into the weekend and through the region's last crop insurance mandated Final Planting Date of June 10, it seems that much of the area will manage to get crops planted into favorable to excellent moisture conditions.

Producers in the region's northern tier with a May 31 Final Planting Date appear to have mostly completed planting, but many are now be wondering how newly planted fields will fair due to the cool temperatures, sometimes heavy rainfall and spotty hail events that occurred after planting and emergence in various locations. The fate of some fields will not be clear for several days and some acreage could ultimately shift to alternative crops.

Like last year, producers in the southernmost counties of the High Plains have the potential to be least impacted since they have a June 10 Final Planting Date, sandier soils and generally received their rainfall early enough to provide them an adequate window to plant.

Federal crop insurance provisions provide producers multiple ways to deal with the issues they face due to the recent weather pattern. Growers who want to plant cotton and fully insure it have until the Final Planting Dates mentioned above to get seed planted.

Should they be delayed due to weather, but still want to stick with insured cotton in 2016, growers do have an opportunity to continue to plant cotton during a 7-day Late Planting Period as well.

Cotton acres planted during the Late Planting Period will be insured, but will have the insurance coverage amount reduced by one percent for each day of the Late Planting Period that passes before planting occurs. Timely and late-planted acreage guarantees would be combined to determine the overall coverage level for the applicable insurance unit.

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Southern Plains of Texas: Scout for Thrips

Thursday, June 2, 2016

By Suhas Vyavhare & Blayne Reed

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension FOCUS on Entomology

It has been a very stop and go spring planting season for cotton in the Southern High Plains of Texas. Here we are again, waiting for rain to end so we can resume cotton planting. From Plainview north, an area consisting of our usually more calendar date conscientious producers, about 70% of the cotton has been planted while only about 50% South of Plainview. Rainfall this week has added much needed topsoil moisture helping dryland fields greatly and planting conditions in general. Cotton planting should continue through early June as fields dry out on many dryland acres from Lubbock south.

For these "late" planted cotton fields we can generally state that early planted cotton can receive higher thrips pressure than later planted cotton. This is usually due to timing, or should we say the timing of area wheat drying down and becoming an unfavorable host for thrips as compared to the availability of favorable host plants to choose from. Many early and mid-May planted fields often find themselves as an only acceptable host plant for these hungry thrips moving from the drying wheat. Meanwhile, later planted fields generally have more acceptable host plants for the thrips to choose from, if they are still moving from wheat by the time the young plants would be at risk to thrips damage. This year, having quite a bit of later planted cotton could affect thrips field pressure and so the strategies to control thrips.

Insect pressure can vary by year and by the field, so insecticide application should be based on scouting observations made in each field, and not by a pre-determined schedule or even spray convenience. Cotton that has emerged is now at risk for thrips damage. We should now be checking fields regularly, prepared to apply foliar insecticide at first leaf as needed. Adult thrips take flight on breezes and winds from drying wheat and move onto young plants as soon as they spot the tender and vigorously growing young plants. They feed on the lower surface of cotyledons first or any exposed true leaves before moving to the very tender terminal bud or growing point of developing seedlings. When feeding, thrips unleash their unique piercing-sucking (once referred to as rasping-sucking) mouth parts stab and rasp away at plant surfaces causing sever scarring while they suck up the sweet plant juices as the plant "bleeds."

("COTTON NEWS" continued on Page 2)

Controlling thrips at an early stage is very important as we try to protect these young and rapidly developing plants from damage. Excessive amounts of damage to these first leaves or growing point can have a huge impact on how the plant develops later and ultimately performs. Preventive insecticidal seed treatments or some of the still available seed box treatments provide control up to 3 weeks after planting. However, this can vary. Cooler temperature can also slow down plant growth and expose plants to severe thrips injury for longer periods of time. Environmental conditions can also affect the uptake of systemic insecticide applied on seed. Fields should be scouted on a regular basis even during any suspected residual period from preventive insecticidal thrips treatment. One sure sign that seed treatments are losing residual and performance is the presence of immature thrips on young cotton plants.

Once the plant reaches the 3 to 4 true leaf stage, with a healthy growing point and true leaves, growth accelerates rapidly and the risk of thrips damage can start to decrease. However, the plants will need to reach pinhead-square stage before they are truly past economic thrips damage. During the plant's early growth stages, growers should apply foliar insecticide at a threshold level of 1thrips per true leaf stage. When scouting for thrips, there is truly no substitute for whole plant inspections from a representative sample from across the whole field. For these inspections, we recommend looking both the upper and lower surfaces of the leaves over and then opening the tender folds of the growing and developing tissue of the terminal with a small knife of pen and looking for thrips adults and larvae there. While scouting we will need to keep a careful count of number of thrips total, plants counted, and average true leaf stage of the field to calculate the actual thrips pressure and population in that field in terms of thrips per true leaf stage.

Mixing insecticidal treatments for thrips control with herbicide applications has proven highly effective however; we should not wait to tank mix if the field is experiencing economic loss due to thrips damage. The importance of field scouting for thrips cannot be overstated. We strongly feel that the best thing growers can put on their crop is their shadow. We recommend scouting thoroughly across the field at least weekly with representative samples and more often if the emerged field is adjacent to wheat in the process of drying down and to make prompt thrips applications as economically needed.

Cotton Day Festivities Sweep Asia

Friday, May 20, 2016 From Cotton Council International
 COTTON USA's Cotton Days in Asia united consumers who love cotton with the media and local textile industries in in four key consumer markets—Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand. Cotton Days annually celebrate the start of the cotton planting season in the U.S. and feature celebrity spokespeople, fashion shows, music and cotton-centric innovation.

Cotton Council International President Keith Lucas shared three important messages about U.S. cotton at each Cotton Day event: its high quality, responsible production, and the U.S. cotton industry's full support to the supply chain.

JAPAN – Cotton Day kicked off in Japan with a fashion event with innovative Japanese designer Kunihiko Morinaga and “Momentum Factory Orii,” a company that uses traditional techniques in an innovative way to process copper. The actors Norika Fujiwara, Junpei Mizobara and Fuka Koshiba received COTTON USA awards. COTTON USA also announced the winners of the annual “Cotton Day T-Shirt Design Contest,” from chosen from more than 1,400 entries, in cooperation with the Japan Spinners' Association and Japan Cotton Promotion Institute. Some 400 industry and media representatives celebrated Cotton Day in Japan.

KOREA – Cotton Day celebrations continued in Korea with a fashion event directed by the young and trendy Korean fashion designer Munsoo Kwon. He translated seersucker and other cotton fabrics into hip and modern men's and womenswear during a dynamic fashion show. The Korean actress Choi Jiwoo attended Cotton Day as this year's Cotton Ambassador, and explained why she likes to wear cotton every day. Young Korean designers showcased their creativity through the “Cotton T-Shirt Design Contest,” made possible through a COTTON USA partnership with the Spinners and Weavers Association of Korea. Consumers selected the most popular cotton T-shirt designs by voting on social media.

TAIWAN – To celebrate Cotton Day in Taiwan, COTTON USA sponsored Kevin Kern's 2016 World Tour at the Taipei International Convention Center, which marks the 20th anniversary of his first album in 1996. Kern is an American pianist, composer and recording artist of new-age music who was born legally blind. The 2016 COTTON USA spokespeople in Taiwan, Cindy Yen and William Wei, performed their new COTTON USA theme songs as special guests at the concert. Consumers had the chance to receive concert tickets in exchange for purchasing COTTON USA clothing.

THAILAND – This year's Cotton Days concluded in Thailand with the launch of COTTON USA collections from two COTTON USA licensees, Blue Corner and Khaki Bros, during a high profile fashion show. Famous Thai models and actors modeled the COTTON USA clothes, including Boy Pakorn Chatborirak, Mew Nittha Jirayungyern and Margie Rasri Balenciaga. These distinctive women's and men's apparel collections reaffirm that cotton is an ideal fiber for fashion apparel. Both collections will be available to consumers in retail shops in Thailand until the end of August.

SAVE THE DATE

5th Annual
 Celebrate Cotton Game
 Saturday, Sept. 17
 6 p.m.
 Texas Tech Red Raiders
 Louisiana Tech Bulldogs



Editor's Note:

“Cotton News”, a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to us all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email editor@plainscotton.org