AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

TEXAS IPM

Issues in Agriculture

The Newsletter about Integrated Pest Management for the El Paso Valley

Volume: 35
Issue: 5
Date: June 7, 2010

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Announcements

- The **Cotton Scout School** will be held on June 24, 2010 at the Texas AgriLife Research Center (1380 A&M Circle, El Paso, TX 79927) from 9:00 AM to noon. Speakers: Mark Muegge, Jaime Iglesias, and Salvador Vitanza. Emphasis will be placed on pest identification, biology, action thresholds, and sampling techniques. This training will also include a discussion of agronomic practices and fertilization. Cotton scouts would benefit greatly from this training, but anybody who is interested in cotton production is welcome to attend. Pesticide applicators will receive three Continuing Education Units. Participation in this event is free.

- A **pesticide pick up** is being organized by Mario Saavedra, TDA Senior Inspector, in conjunction with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture - Pesticide Disposal Program. Tentatively, it is planned for late September in Las Cruces. The need to conduct this program will be determined by the attached survey. Please fill and mail the attached form as soon as possible.

USEFUL WEBSITES:

- **Southwest Yard & Garden**: How-to videos (http://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/yard/howtovideo/). This site, by NMSU Extension Plant Sciences Department, has approximately 385 videos that provide practical advice on growing ornamental plants, vegetable gardens, herbs, lawns, fruit/shade trees, cacti, etc. Topics include pest management, plant selection, irrigation techniques, landscaping, pruning, plant propagation, and many more. This site offers valuable advice for both beginner and experienced gardeners.

- **Pesticide Safety Education Program** (http://web.extension.illinois.edu/psep/facts/). This site contains great information on safe use of pesticides including a downloadable Excel file that works as a calibration calculator.

PECAN:

So far, extremely low levels of pecan nut casebearer damaged nutlets have been detected in treated orchards. After the PNC moths had peaked and their abundance was in marked decline, a second flight of first generation moths was detected in the past two weeks. When we thought we had weathered the storm and we were getting ready to congratulate ourselves for an outstanding work controlling PNC, significant levels of PNC eggs were detected early last week. Many pecan orchards exceeded action thresholds again. By the middle of last week, many growers started spraying their crops once more. Pecan growers who aim to kill the moths have made the greatest numbers of pesticide applications. By the end of last week, moth levels were almost non existent.
I am currently in the process of scouting pecan orchards for nut damage to compare efficacy of different treatment options, but preliminary data suggest that one application of Intrepid has been as effective in protecting the nutlets as two applications of Mustang Max plus Intrepid or applications of Lorsban. These findings suggest that we can save money, efforts, and preserve beneficial insects by choosing an insecticide that controls PNC larvae and is less harmful to natural enemies. I will post new findings in the next issues of this newsletter.

COTTON:

Most fields are in 8-9 true leaf stage and cotton is growing well. In the following days, the weather will be scorching hot with temperatures above 100°F and fields will require adequate soil moisture. Thrips population levels have been low and no applications are expected to be needed against this pest in the near future. We will need to be on the lookout for cotton fleahopper because as soon as the crop develops pinhead to matchhead squares this pest will start feeding on those structures.

On the May 12, 2010 issue of Southeast Farm Press, Paul L. Hollis wrote an article titled: **"Technology reducing cotton insecticide use"**. In a nutshell, Hollis reports that in Georgia, Alabama, and other southeastern states, insecticide applications in cotton went from an average of 15.8 per acre in 1986 to an average of 1.3 to 3 per acre in 2008; mainly due to the great job done by the Boll Weevil Eradication Program and Bt cotton technology (Bollgard I or II and WideStrike). After the boll weevil no longer threatens cotton production in many cotton-producing areas and insecticide applications against major lepidopteran pests (tobacco budworms, cotton bollworms, or pink bollworms) are seldom needed, insect pests such as stink bugs and fall armyworm have become more important.

PEST ALERT: The cotton seed bug (*Oxycarenus hyalinipennis*) is native to Africa and has become established in Asia, Europe, Middle East, South America, Central America, and the Caribbean Basin. It has a great potential to become a new pest in the US. It feeds on plants in the Malvaceae family, okra, kenaf, and Hibiscus. The bugs are 4-5 mm long. Nymphs can be reddish. The wings of the adults are transparent while the rest of the body is dark, giving it a contrasting black and white appearance. Keep an eye open as you inspect your crops and report it if you suspect seeing it. The Cottonseed bug was found in Puerto Rico, and it was recently located in the Florida Keys in a trailer park in Stock Island, Monroe County on 23 March 2010 by William A. Thiel, USDA/APHIS/PPQ. This infestation was limited to one plant (100 adults and 100 nymphs) which was immediately destroyed and no other insect specimen has been collected yet. The cotton seed bug could reduce cotton seed weight by 10-15% and it may cause slight fiber staining (when bugs are crushed in the ginning process). In other countries the damage is mostly confined to late harvested cotton (Taken from Pest Alert DACS-P-01726 by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry).

Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, Inc. (TBWEF):
During a visit with the TBWEF in Tornillo, Mr. Saul Cortez, Field Unit Manager, informed me that they have finished deploying their traps and they are ready for a new field season. He also mentioned that they were caught by surprise in October and November last year when a total of 2,626 "native" pink bollworm moths were captured in cotton fields near Clint and San Elizario, TX. Later, they found out that at the Arizona laboratories, where male pink bollworm moths are sterilized, two boxes inadvertently did not receive the proper radiation treatment. This was an unfortunate incident but the Texas Boll Weevil Foundation and USDA/APHIS have developed extensive remediation plans to deal with any possible surviving pink bollworms. Additionally, USDA is providing funding to pay all costs associated with this problem, insuring that no grower funds will be required. The great news is that so far no pink bollworms have been detected reproducing in the field this year. We need to keep our fingers crossed hoping that this will be the case for the rest of the season.

Historically, the pink bollworm and the boll weevil used to be key cotton pests that resulted in heavy yield losses and high costs of control. Due to the great job that TBWEF has done in our region, only 21 boll weevil specimens were found in 2003 near Acala and Fabens. In 2004, there were no captures. In 2005, only two boll weevils were captured (one at the I-10/Loop 375 intersection and another in Esperanza). Since then, no boll weevils have ever been found. Although the boll weevil status is considered "suppressed", for practical purposes, it has been eradicated in our area. The monitoring efforts should continue because this pest is a known hitchhiker and it could be accidentally reintroduced.

In the meantime, we should keep observing the cotton stalk destruction deadline, to reduce the abundance of pink bollworms, and continue supporting the efforts in behalf of cotton growers by the TBWEF.