

## Issues in Agriculture

*The Newsletter about Integrated Pest Management for the El Paso Valley*

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## Announcements

- **Texas/New Mexico Sustainable Agriculture Workshop** on August 18 at the Texas AgriLife Research Center 1380 A&M Circle, El Paso, TX 79927 from 8:00 AM to noon. The program will continue at San Lorenzo Farm 14301 Alameda Ave. Clint, Texas 79836 from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. Lunch will be provided at San Lorenzo Farm. Five CEUs can be obtained by Pesticide Applicators and Certified Crop Advisers from Texas and New Mexico. Among other topics, attendees will learn about identification of soil quality indicators, factors that result in plant health stress, irrigation frequency, test analysis (plant tissue, soil, and water), reducing soil erosion and energy use. Sponsors: Texas AgriLife Extension Service, AgriLife Research, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service, Texas and New Mexico USDA-NRCS. For more information contact Dr. Jaime Iglesias (915-860-2515) or USDA-NRCS (915-855-0884, Ext. 107). This event is free of cost.
- **Western Pecan Production Short Course, in Las Cruces, NM.** September 8-10. Cost \$240 per person (it includes lectures, course materials, refreshments, 3 lunches, and field trip transportation). You need to register by August 6. Hotel Encanto de Las Cruces (on I-25 take the Lohman exit), 705 S. Telshor Blvd, Las Cruces, NM. For more information: <http://pecans.nmsu.edu> or contact Peggy Salopek at 575-646-2875 ([psalopek@nmsu.edu](mailto:psalopek@nmsu.edu)).

### GENERAL SITUATION:

Pecan and cotton crops look great. Relatively mild temperatures, partly cloudy weather, and recent rains, during the past week, have made life more comfortable in Far West Texas, but these environmental conditions have also increased some plant diseases. Southwestern cotton rust is starting to show up in fields that have received precipitation. I have not detected significant levels of Alternaria leaf spot in cotton fields yet. If this disease shows up later in the season, it will not reduce yield. The "hot" cotton pest right now is the bollworm, especially in pima fields. Insecticide applications against this pest are being made as we speak. The rain showers have also reduced the population of aphids in pecan orchards. However, aphid levels have the potential to change dramatically over a short period. Thus, we still need to monitor this pest closely. Apparently, the second generation of pecan nut casebearer (PNC) was managed properly because it has resulted in little, if any, nut damage. As it should be expected, there are fewer pecan nuts on the trees than in the beginning of the season, and nuts on the ground do not show PNC damage. We are expecting dryer and warmer weather for the first week of August.

### PECAN:

**Upper Surface Blotch Leaf Miner:** Bill Ree reports finding an area south of Pine, TX with pecan trees heavily affected by leaf miners (see attached photo). Up to 320 mines per compound leaf have been observed. Two insecticides were recently tested: Alticor of DuPont (chlorantraniliprole) and Delegate of Dow Agro Sciences (spinetoram). Bill Ree scouted the field three days after treatment and the results were not promising. He will evaluate leaf miner mortality seven days after treatment. If these insecticides are not effective, other control options will be tested.



Leaf miner damage in pecan

In the past, I have seen activity of other leaf miners in El Paso or Hudspeth Counties, but not this species. As a rule, it is advisable to keep informed about pest developments in surrounding areas, just in case we might see them here in the future.

### West Texas Pecan Association:

The association was founded in 1988, as a not-for-profit entity, by several key pecan growers who had the vision to organize themselves to promote the pecan industry. Art Ivey served as the first President and held that position for twenty years until Kevin Ivey took over the leadership.

A little background information on Kevin Ivey: he was born and raised in the El Paso farming community. He obtained a bachelor's degree in horticulture (Fruit and Vegetable Production) in 1996 from New Mexico State University and now manages approximately 400 acres of pecan (1/3 in full production), 1000 acres of cotton, and 300 acres of hay. Kevin became a member of the West Texas Pecan Association (WTPA) Executive Board in the year 2005 and has been the standing President since 2008.

WTPA has grown to incorporate 42 pecan growers in its ranks. In the past two years, WTPA has sponsored several AgriLife educational programs by bringing national pecan experts to share their knowledge with our community and by financing meals or coffee breaks and therefore, keeping these training opportunities completely free of cost. WTPA has also worked with Dr. Jaime Iglesias on the Pecan Weevil Monitoring Program in El Paso, Hudspeth, Pecos, and Culberson counties. Initially, the objective of this program was to certify these counties as pecan-weevil-free zones. Later, the monitoring program evolved into a tool for early detection of the possible eventual introduction of this pest into our area. Detecting this pest as early as possible would facilitate eradication efforts.

WTPA assigns pecan growers as delegates to the Western Pecan Growers Association Board. WTPA has worked with the Texas Department of Agriculture to make certain that the introduction of small pecan trees into our region, from quarantined areas, does not result in the importation of new pests. This role is extremely important considering that more pecan trees have been imported in the last five years than in the previous twenty.

Kevin believes that WTPA and AgriLife are natural partners and this relationship ultimately benefits local pecan production. Kevin's goals as WTPA President include promoting the association to increase its membership, gain strength to represent the pecan producers interests, and augment the importance of the pecan industry in the economy of this region. Approximately 25 percent of local pecan growers have not become members yet. Membership fees are minimal. If you want to support your industry by becoming a WTPA member, please contact Kevin Ivey, West Texas Pecan Association, 14501 Alameda Ave, Clint, TX 79836. Email:[kevin@ranchonogal.com](mailto:kevin@ranchonogal.com) Phone 915-820-4251.

**Aphids:** This was the pest that most growers reported and discussed during the last meeting of the Western Pecan Growers Association on July 21. Growers are concerned mainly with the black-margined aphid. Do not base your control decision on the presence of "goma" or honeydew, but on the actual presence and abundance of aphids. Insecticide applications against second generation of PNC has had an effect reducing aphid populations as well.

**PNC:** No more second PNC moths are being captured. There is very little PNC damage in most orchards. Usually, third generation PNC moths do not result in significant damage and no control is necessary.

#### **COTTON:**

There is low incidence of **Southwestern cotton rust** throughout our area, but some reports indicate a few fields with up to 10% of foliage with symptoms of this disease. If your fields fall in this group, consider applying Quadris to reduce or stop infections and to prevent further damage. **Lygus bugs** population levels have increased lately and need to be monitored, but this pest capacity to damage yield at this point is questionable. We are probably in the last week to consider insecticide applications against Lygus bugs. Many fields have reached or exceeded threshold levels of small **bollworms**. Insecticides are being applied against this pest in pima or non-Bt cotton fields. Do not base your decision on number of bollworm eggs because there could be significant mortality by beneficial insects and other factors. The recommended threshold for small bollworm larvae is 10,000 worms/acre or 5,000 worms/acre if the scout's eyesight is not great. The threshold for bollworms that have reached 3/8", or greater, is 5,000 worms/acre. **Alternaria leaf spot** has not been an issue during this season. This disease can be a yield robber only when present early enough in the season and at levels that cause severe defoliation. Otherwise, it is normal to have symptoms when leaves are senescing and no longer fulfilling their function.

Mr. Saul Cortes, Field Unit Manager of the **Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, Inc.** said that no boll weevils or pink boll worms have been trapped this year and no acres have been treated so far. He provided the following information for the week ending on July 25, 2010.

**El Paso/Trans-Pecos:** It includes 15 West Texas Counties: Brewster, Crane, Crockett, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Loving, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell, Val Verde, Ward, Winkler. Traps inspected for current week: 2,628. Total cotton acres in zone: 37,593

**El Paso and Hudspeth Counties:** Total cotton acres: 28,635. Bt fields 9,526.8 acres. Non Bt fields: 19,108.3 acres. A total of 2,102 traps for boll weevils and an identical number of traps for pink bollworms have been placed this season in 995 cotton fields.