



CHOICE COTTON

Tailgate Talk

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Fatherhood is a very special institution full of joy, happiness, and pride. None of us would be where we are today without the guiding hand and unconditional love of our father. Whether teaching by example or lending valued advice, they were always there for us. Now I'm not saying there weren't times fraught with frustration, especially when tempering our so-called grand plans with their aged wisdom. However, if we had to admit they were probably right more times than not. Fathers deserve more than one day. So, let me encourage those who still have theirs near to treasure and soak in every minute you have with them, for its fleeting. Ask any of us who have lost ours and we'd tell you we would give anything for one more pickup ride across the farm with them. Happy Father's Day to you all.

Changing weather patterns have brought some much-needed relief across the Southeast, although planting delays continue in the Southwest. As a result, crop conditions have improved somewhat but still have a long way to go. If nothing else, we have a crop that spans a wide range of maturity. Anywhere from seed still in the bag waiting to be planted to plants in early bloom. This puts a premium on management. Rather than a blanket approach, cropping decisions must be made on a field by field basis. Although routine management of weeds and early season insects is ongoing in young cotton, special attention should shift to that which is older. These more mature plants will play host to a wide variety of insects over the coming weeks.

Plant Bug Control

Plant bugs should be our greatest concern, at present. Once deemed a sporadic pest in many areas, it has become more prevalent throughout the Cotton Belt. Previously considered an early season pest, we now must contend with plant bug pressure season long. In June, adult plant bugs migrate from wild host plants into the most attractive cotton where they feed on pinhead

squares and lay eggs. Usually this migration takes weeks, however, droughty conditions this year took out host plants triggering a more rapid movement to cotton. This could aid our control efforts wherein an extended migration might require multiple treatments, this year we may be able to get by with one. Plant bug control in June is critical for a couple of reasons. Obviously, with a late crop protecting early fruit is vital to enhancing yield and maturity. Just as important is the need to minimize egg lay. Effectively controlling adult plant bugs in June, will greatly lessen the pressure from this insect at hatch out in July when they're much more difficult to control.

There are two ways to scout for plant bugs. One is by observing damage or pinhead square loss. The other is monitoring the number of adults in the field by using sweep nets. The economic threshold for applying insecticide treatments is less than 80% square retention or 2 adults per 25 sweeps. Good options for plant bug control are Centric at 2 ounces per acre or Transform at 2 ounces, with the latter easier on beneficial insects. Also, Diamond is effective on immatures only thus offers a possible tank mix combination. Once cotton blooms and controls are needed on the second-generation other products are available such as Bidrin, Orthene or a pyrethroid/Diamond combination. I strongly recommend monitoring for this pest closely as younger cotton matures.

PGR Applications

Applying PGR's was the furthest thing from one's mind amid the drought. Now that conditions have improved PGRs will be needed to control plant growth and enhance maturity. The effectiveness of PGRs is directly related to the concentration of it in the plant. In other words, it's hard to play catch up with these materials once the plant begins growing rapidly. Don't be afraid to apply an ample rate, initially. After which, subsequent application rates can be adjusted to current growing conditions. This will provide you a good base concentration from which to work from. Also, the indeterminacy of our newer varieties and their tendency to grow more vegetative make PGR applications less risky than before.

Until next time,