

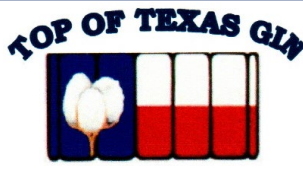


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Crop Update – 2020 Challenges

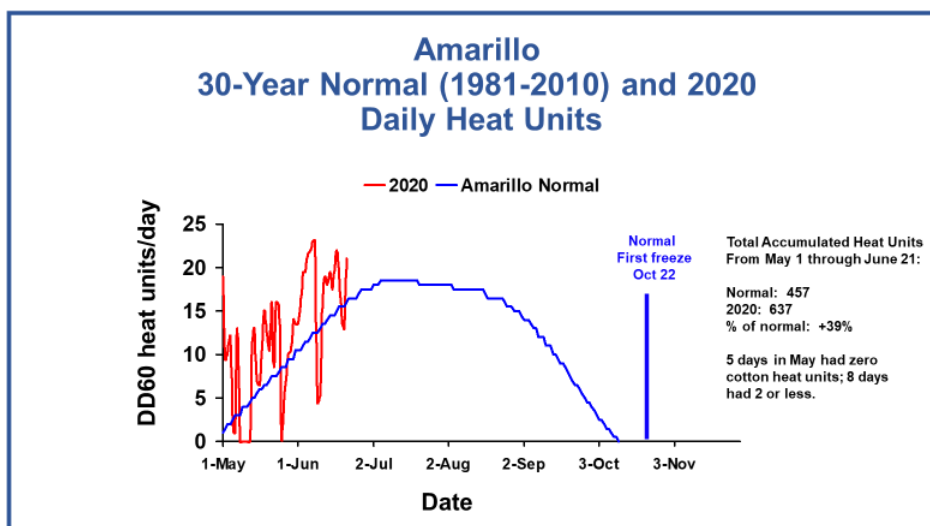
The 2020 crop year is off to a rocky start in many fields. The regional situation is such that our dryland crop is almost non-existent, and those fields that were fortunate enough to have some earlier rainfall to assist with stand establishment are now badly needing a “drink of water.” Many dryland fields are undergoing insurance adjustment at this time.

The irrigated crop was essentially planted in two waves, with the first wave beginning in late April/early May due to the great planting window that occurred. These fields had some challenges with respect to the cool temperatures that were encountered beginning May 5 and extending through May 12. Cotton planted after mid-May generally popped up out of the ground and really hasn’t looked back. The earlier planted fields are now squaring and the later planted fields are moving closely behind.

- An extremely high wind storm event arising from a June 9th cold front from the north wreaked havoc on many fields, especially those with low cover. North and east of Amarillo, winds howled with gusts in excess of 60 mph for several hours. This same high wind event was encountered well into the South Plains and in western OK. Rows planted in a northwest to southeast orientation appeared to take the brunt of this damage. The overall effect was that plant terminals were badly damaged or lost. Some of these plants will likely recover, but development will be delayed. Many plants were cut off below the cotyledons and these will eventually die. There was considerable “frosting” of tissue on the windward facing sides of the plants. Some growers decided to go back into affected fields and “spot plant” with “fast” varieties. Unfortunately, a lot of pivots north of a line from Dumas over to Sunray probably had around 50-75% of the acreage affected with this type of extreme wind damage. Other fields, particularly those with excellent small grains cover remained relatively undamaged. It’s now obvious that we will need a hot fall to get good yield and quality from many of these fields.

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- In other news, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco has vacated several dicamba herbicide labels (Xtendimax, Engenia, and Fexapan) from our XtendFlex cotton technology tool chest. Growers fortunate to have possession of these products by June 3 are able to spray these herbicides through July 31. This shortage will result in growers needing alternate chemistries such as glufosinate (Liberty) and glyphosate to help fill the gap. Under conditions where weeds, especially Palmer amaranth, are drought stressed, Liberty is many times less efficacious. We have enough resistance to glyphosate in our Palmer amaranth that glyphosate application is less likely to result in good control of these weeds. Therefore, it will be important to ensure that good residual products (such as Outlook, Dual Magnum, and Warrant) are properly applied to prevent emergence of Palmer amaranth.
- Heat units for May and thus far into June are well above normal in spite of the extremely cool spell that occurred around May 6-12. By my count, when using Amarillo weather data, May had 5 days with zero cotton heat units, and 8 days with 2 heat units or less (see graph below).



Cotton Fleahoppers – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Entomology Publication

Earlier planted fields are well into squaring but some late environmentally damaged fields are lagging behind. Cotton fleahoppers can build up in alternate hosts and move into cotton and feed on developing squares. Fields should be scouted and initial fruit should be protected from these insects.

There is an excellent comprehensive publication available entitled “Managing Cotton Insects in Texas” (ENTO-075, 4/19). This 38-page guide has photographs of nearly all of the insects found in Texas cotton throughout the growing season. It was generated by several Texas A&M AgriLife Extension entomologists including Dr. David Kerns (College Station), and Dr. Suhas Vyavhare (Lubbock). Thanks to all of the team members who assembled this outstanding publication.

It discusses IPM strategies, sampling techniques, labeled insecticides and rates, as well as other important information on numerous pest species. Many beneficial arthropods (good guys) are also included. If unknown insects are encountered in cotton fields, this is a great reference to aid in identification. Every Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas cotton producer should have a color hard copy of this publication available as a handy reference.

To obtain a PDF copy of this publication, click on the link below:

<https://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2019/04/ENTO-075-2019.pdf>

Fleahopper photographs and discussion can be found beginning on page 10.

Extremely important comments from this great publication are reproduced below.

- The cotton fleahopper adult is about 1/8 inch long, with piercing-sucking mouthparts and a flattened body. Adults are active flyers; they readily flit within the cotton canopy when disturbed, which makes insect sampling a challenge.
- Their eggs are not visible because the adult inserts them into the cotton plant stem. Adults are pale green to gray-green; nymphs are lighter-colored with reddish eyes.
- In both the adult and nymphal stages, cotton fleahoppers suck sap from the tender portions of the cotton plant, including small squares. Pinhead size and smaller squares are the most susceptible to cotton fleahopper damage.
- Fleahopper feeding causes squares to die and turn dark brown. These “blasted” squares dry up and fall from the plant, leaving a characteristic scar on the fruiting site.
- When fleahoppers are abundant, heavy square loss can cause poor boll set and reduce yield. The first 3 weeks of squaring are the most sensitive to cotton fleahopper feeding, particularly in dryland cotton production.
- The yield-cotton fleahopper relationship shifts with plant stage, water stress, weather, and cultivar sensitivity. Early squares are at high risk when large populations migrate into cotton from healthy stands of wild hosts that survived mild winter conditions.
- Yield reduction and development delays tend to be more pronounced in water-stressed cotton. Cotton fleahoppers can be more plentiful in vigorously growing cotton under good rainfall and irrigation, but their damage is less severe.

Scouting and Decision Making

- The table on the following page provides action thresholds for terminal inspection.
- As the first squares appear (approximately four- to six-leaf stage), examine the main stem terminal (about 3 to 4 inches of the plant top) of 25 plants in at least four locations across the field. Sample more sites in fields larger than 80 acres.
- Scout fields for cotton fleahoppers weekly. Cotton fleahoppers move into cotton in early summer as non-crop host plants mature and become dry.
- Under wet spring conditions conducive to the rapid buildup of cotton fleahoppers in alternate hosts (such as cutleaf evening primrose, horsemint, silverleaf nightshade, and woolly croton), shorten the scouting intervals to every 3 to 4 days, especially as the alternate host plants begin maturing or undergo drought stress.
- When approaching a plant to sample, watch for adults that might fly from it. Cotton fleahoppers move quickly. Adults may fly away and immatures often hide within the plant canopy when disturbed.

Fleahopper Action Threshold for Panhandle, South Plains, Permian Basin, Rolling Plains, and Trans Pecos:

Fleahoppers	Week of squaring	Square set
25-30 per 100 terminals (terminal inspection method)	1 st week	<90%
	2 nd week	<85%
	3 rd week	<75%
	After 1 st bloom, treatment is rarely justified	

Additional Reference Publication: 2019 Insect and Mite Pest Control Suggestions for Cotton

Another cotton insect management guide from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension personnel is also available. This guide provides quick reference tables which includes several foliar insecticide options for various pests. Fleahopper information is found on page 4 of the guide. To download this guide, click on the link below:

https://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2019/08/2019-Cotton-Insect-Control-Suggestions_ENTO090.pdf

I have fully reproduced text concerning cotton fleahoppers below:

“When fleahoppers are abundant early in squaring stages, a heavy square loss can cause poor boll set and reduce yield. The first 3 weeks of squaring are the most sensitive to cotton fleahopper feeding, particularly in dryland cotton production.

Insecticides applied during early bloom can result in outbreaks of aphids, bollworm, and tobacco budworm because of the destruction of predaceous insects and spiders. Avoid using broad-spectrum insecticides after the second week of squaring.”

Products labeled for foliar application to control cotton fleahopper include*:

Product name/ trade name	Insecticide active ingredient/s	Formulated rate (fl oz or oz/acre)	lb active ingredient/acre	Acres treated per gallon/lb
Vydate	Oxamyl	8–32	0.125–0.5	16–4
Orthene 97	Acephate*	4	0.244	4
Acephate 90	Acephate	4.4	0.248	3.64
Intruder Max 70/Strafer Max	Acetamiprid	0.6–1.1	0.025–0.05	26.67–14.55
Carbine 50	Flonicamid	1.7–2.8	0.053–0.089	9.41–5.71
Centric 40	Thiamethoxam	1.25–2.5	0.0313–0.0625	12.8–6.4
Admire Pro	Imidacloprid*	0.9–1.7	0.032–0.061	142.2–75.3
Alias 4	Imidacloprid	1–2	0.0313–0.0625	128–64
Dimethoate 400	Dimethoate*	8	0.25	16
Bidrin 8 / Dicromax 8	Dicrctophos*	4.0–8.0	0.25–0.5	32–16

*Various generics/brands available

*Table is reproduced from the publication: 2019 Insect and Mite Pest Control Suggestions for Cotton (Table 5, page 4), and is available here:

https://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2019/08/2019-Cotton-Insect-Control-Suggestions_ENTO090.pdf



Wind event damage in field near Sunray.



Relatively undamaged Davis XtendFlex variety trial by Lonestar Gin near Pampa.