July 14, 2016

To: Those Involved in Cotton Production

As your new Clay County Extension Agent, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Allison Howell and I grew up here in Piggott, Arkansas. I received my Bachelor’s Degree in Plant and Soil Science with an emphasis in Agronomy in December of 2015. I earned my Master’s Degree in Plant and Soil Science in May of 2016. Soon after graduating I applied for this job and started working on June 16, 2016. I am excited to begin my career with Extension and I look forward to working with all of you.

**Crop Progress**

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Crop Progress and Condition Report for Arkansas the week ending July 10, 2016 reported cotton flowering or setting bolls at 66% which was ahead of the five year average of 37%. They also reported that 48% of the cotton was in good condition, and that 25% was excellent.

According to Bill Robertson, the node above white flower (NAWF) value at first flower gives a good indication of the horsepower of the plant or its ability to supply the nodes of a fruit load. In Arkansas, we strive for 9 to 10 NAWF at first flower and define cutout as NAWF=5. There is quite a bit of variability in NAWF throughout Arkansas. The dominant factor for this range is related to available moisture. There are around 25 days from squaring to first flower. The first indication of stress in squaring cotton can be seen in the rate at which new nodes are developed. Since new main stem nodes of cotton are added every 2.7 days on average, the NAWF value at first flower should be slightly over 9. Fields with NAWF values of 6 or 7 at first flower still have the potential to meet our yield goals. However, timing of inputs is very critical to meet plant demands to avoid an earlier than desired cutout. Our goal at first flower is to have 80% fruit retention. As long as the temperatures remain 90 degrees or more for the highs, and around the 70’s for the lows, the crop will progress. We have experienced some small boll shed and that is normal. If we experience overcast, cloudy days, and rainfall we will likely see more bolls shed. This is customary to our environment and other than making sure we have adequate water and fertilizer, there’s just not much we can do about it in our environment in Arkansas.

**Plant Bugs**

It is important to continue scouting for plant bugs. The treatment threshold for tarnished plant bugs in cotton is when 3 plant bugs are found per 5 row feet. Growers should also strive to maintain their small square set at 80% or above. If small square set drops below this level, the field should be treated for tarnished plant bugs if they are present even at low levels. Many farmers are treating for plant bugs right now. Rotating asophate and Bidrin to combat these pests is a good idea. Please remember when applying Bidrin that you can only use two shots of it after bloom. Adding
Diamond to the mix can battle the nymphs. Some people are also applying Transform to help decrease plant bug populations.

**Bollworm/Budworms**

Trap counts of bollworms and tobacco budworm moths have been pretty high here lately. When scouting, be on the lookout for the worms because they do the damage instead of the moths. Before bloom, one would need to treat when 40% defoliation occurs. After bloom, use the threshold table on page 107 in the MP144 to decide when to treat.

If a grower wants to use an insecticide when there is a chance of rain, they should add a surfactant to help improve efficiency, keep the insecticide from washing off, becoming diluted, or floating downstream.

**Disease**

We have found Ascochyta Blight here in Northeast Arkansas. Usually it is not a huge problem. Ascochyta Blight is commonly mistaken for Target Spot. Target Spot has been spotted on soybeans, and now on some cotton in the area. Yield loss because of Ascochyta Blight is rare, but is possible under conditions such as prolonged cloudy weather with cooler temperatures and rainfall. Target Spot can be a problem, but it normally isn’t around here. Some growers feel that they have lost yield from it, so if you are concerned that you might have Target Spot or Ascochyta, feel free to bring in a sample to one of the County Extension Offices or give us a call to check it out.

For more information, visit our web site at www.uaex.edu/clay or call 870-598-2246.

**Field Day**

I would like to invite you to the East Clay County Field Day on August 12, 2016 in Piggott, Arkansas. We will have a cotton, soybean, and corn stop. I will soon be sending out more information regarding this field day. I hope to see you there and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Allison Howell
Clay County Extension Agent - Agriculture