July 10, 2015

To: Those Involved in Corn and Grain Sorghum Production

**Feed Grains Pest Alert**

With all the rainfall we have received this year it’s hard to distinguish non-irrigated crops from irrigated. I don’t think I’ve seen such a good looking grain sorghum crop in years especially since we have several thousand acres in the county this year. To have had such a late start on everything we sure do have a good looking crop all around. We do have several topics of importance that we need to discuss in feed grains so I will begin with grain sorghum.

**Sorghum Midge** - Our earliest grain sorghum is heading now and in the bloom stage. So far I haven’t found any midge yet. Remember flowering is the time that grain sorghum is susceptible to midge and only then. Blanket applications of insecticides for midge are a bad idea and should be avoided. I’ve seen more harm done by doing this than not treating if there aren’t any midge. Over the years in our area very seldom has grain sorghum needed treated for midge. Does that mean we don’t need to worry about it? Absolutely not. Scout the fields and if you find one midge per head then treat. Treating unnecessarily will kill beneficial insects and can set you up for headworms to come in and infest the heads. Scout by either observing the small gnat like insect flying around the head or landing on the head to lay eggs in the glumes. Another scouting method is to quickly put a sandwich bag over the heads of the grain sorghum hoping to catch the midge. The midge will be a brick orange color. The head will have yellow pollen sacs while it is blooming. These will eventually turn orange also much the same color as the midge. Once this occurs the head is safe from midge. A evenly maturing field will bloom in 4 to 5 days but this can sometimes go on as long as ten days. Once the heads have flowered the threat of midge is over. After the heads begin to fill with grain is when we watch for head worms.

**Head Worms** - Treat with an insecticide when one corn ear worm or army worm one half inch in size or larger is found per head. Treat when 5 to 6 sorghum webworm are found per head. These are generally smaller and fuzzy striped worm.

**Sorghum Disease Control** - Grain sorghum will have a slightly better chance of responding to blanket applications of fungicides than corn but we still recommend treating only if disease is present. So far the main thing I have found has been bacterial spot which does not require treatment. Anthracnose is the most common disease that we need to treat for. Check the hybrid you have for its resistance to anthracnose. It may not even need to be sprayed. If you do apply a fungicide then it should be applied by late flowering. It can be applied with insecticide if one is needed. Again don’t do it just because you are going over the field. Refer to our MP 154 for grain sorghum disease control options.
Corn Borer - We have yet to catch any corn borer and other areas are about the same. I doubt that we will need to treat conventional corn for corn borers and if this changes we will let you know.

Stink Bugs - Stink bugs have been found in sweet corn patches and in some field corn. They usually are found on the edge of the fields. Treat when 25% of the plants at early ear formation are infested with stink bugs. Often only a border spray is needed.

Corn Disease Control and Update - Most of our corn has remained free of major diseases and only minor diseases like common rust are present, however, south Arkansas, and as far north as Craighead County, have reported southern rust in the fields. If you are already at brown silk you may out run this disease. We recommend treating unless you are beginning to dent or at least 25% starch line. If you have later planted corn you may want to consider applying a preventative fungicide. If southern rust is present in low levels in your field when you find it then both a preventative and a curative fungicide should be used. Refer to our MP 154 for recommendations for corn disease control options.

For more information, visit our web site at www.uaex.edu/clay or call 857-6875. Find us on facebook.com/uaex.claycorning

Sincerely,

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