May 28, 2015

Clay County Cotton Production Newsletter

It seems like every time I write my first cotton production newsletter of the season anymore, I have to mention all the adversity we’ve been faced with so far. Once we got a chance to plant everyone worked diligently to get the crop planted and you planted 90+ per cent of the crop in four or five days. Most of the cotton came up rather quickly before we experienced the very cool nights. While the cool temperatures brought cotton growth to a minimum at best, I would rather have the cotton up than still in the ground. Cool temperatures and rain will chill the seed and usually means replanting. We are now starting to get warmer temperatures and hopefully the cotton will begin to turn around. We need warm sunshine!! As I write this many of you are trying to spray cotton for weeds. As sure as I tell you not to do something, someone will do it and it turn out fine without injury, but I still will give you my best recommendations and you can do as you please. First if the cotton is extremely sick try to hold off on metalachlor(Dual), products for a while. If you think your pigweeds are going to break soon then use glyphosate(Roundup)products and metalachlor. If pigweeds are already up and it is Liberty Link cotton then I would use Liberty or Liberty plus Roundup and come back with metalachlor in a few days. I would wait until cotton is growing and looking better to put Liberty and metalachlor together. These tend to burn a little more. As weather improves these combinations are safer to use. You will have to be your own judge on how much injury you are willing to accept. Do not add any additives like surfactants or AMS to Liberty and metalachlor mixtures unless you are willing to accept severe burn or possible some stand loss. When weather improves and cotton gets healthy you may be able to mix metalachlor, Liberty and glyphosate with little or no injury at all. Also when spraying thrips in cotton do not add metalachlor or Liberty with organophosphates like Bidrin or Orthene(acephate) unless you want some possible severe burn. Once again these are only recommendations to help keep the cotton from being delayed any further than it already is. You have to make up your own mind as to whether an extra trip will pay off.

Cutworms: We have had to treat some fields for cutworms already this year. Most have been fields that did not receive a preventive treatment at planting and were usually no till fields that had a lot of vegetation that was burned down prior to planting. Some fields that received a preventive treatment still have some cutworms in them. Treatment for the cutworms is only recommended if your stand is threatened. Don’t spray unless it is necessary so you won’t flare other pests. Cutworms are easy to kill with pyrethroid insecticides. Refer to our MP 144 for cutworm materials.
Thrips: So far our seed treatments have been holding up very well and haven’t had any problems yet. However as time goes on, wheat matures and thrips start moving out of it, we will most likely start seeing infestations in the cotton. Treat when 3 to 5 thrips per plant are present in healthy cotton or thrips are beginning to increase in numbers in unhealthy cotton. Sometimes one per plant is too many. When the yellowish orange colored thrips are found in the field, these are immature and that means the thrips are breeding and remaining in the field. Black or adult thrips may be back in the field in only a day after treating a field as they move in and out of the field. Once the immature thrips are present it usually means the seed treatments have lost their effectiveness.

Nitrogen: I know many of you are behind and have soybeans to plant etc. Don’t get too worried about getting nitrogen on your cotton just yet. Many have put out some pre plant nitrogen already and that is fine but it is not necessary. For the last ten or fifteen years some of our highest yielding fields have not had nitrogen on them until the fifth or sixth leaf stage or right as the cotton begins to square. I would like to see it on by then though. Generally 100lbs of actual nitrogen or units as some like to refer to it is all you need for a good yielding crop. On sandy soils don’t forget to use at least 100lbs. of ammonium sulfate to help with sulfur deficiencies. This will give you 21 units of nitrogen and 24 units of sulfur per acre. Deduct this nitrogen from your total nitrogen needs. Often on heavy sands it will be necessary to come back with another 100lbs of ammonium sulfate if rains continue. You may also consider splitting nitrogen application on these sandy soils to help avoid leaching losses. My hope and prayer is that the weather shapes up and you all get to get in the field and get caught up. I hope this season will be a better one for everyone from here on out.

If you have any questions don’t hesitate to give me a call.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Person with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (large print, audiotapes, etc.) should notify the County Extension Office as soon as possible prior to the activity.

Sincerely,

Andy Vangilder
Clay County Extension Agent – Staff Chair
AV/pds