



Arkansas Cotton Update



June 27, 2008

Tom Barber - Editor

Number 11

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Cotton Status (Tom Barber - Cotton Specialist)

The crop progress report released on June 23 by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Service reported that Arkansas cotton was 61% good to excellent, 35% fair with only 4% being reported in poor or very poor condition. As of last Monday, approximately 56% of the crop was squaring.

Yellow Spots

Last week, Frank Groves noticed yellow spots in a verification field in Lincoln County (pictures on right). After visiting with the consultant, we found that these spots were prevalent on much of the cotton that he scouted. This week, we have been able to find these yellow spots in many fields from Louisiana to the Missouri state line. Through further discussions with growers, county agents, and consultants, we discovered that the spots were not only on cotton but could be found on soybean, broadleaf weeds, and vegetables in the garden. Speculation was made that glyphosate or a possible nutrient deficiency may be the cause of the phenomenon. Glyphosate was applied to all of these fields; however, the spots are showing up on weeds and gardens where no glyphosate was applied; the spots, according to Ken Smith and others are not consistent with symptomology associated with glyphosate on Roundup Ready crops or non-Roundup Ready plants such as weeds and vegetables. Several samples were sent to the University of Arkansas fertility lab, and a leaf analysis was conducted. According to the results, nutrient levels were adequate in the leaf for all macro and micro nutrients.

This spotting is showing up across many soil types, varieties, and species of plants. I doubt very seriously that we have a nutrient deficiency across the state, including garden spots.



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We are not sure why the spots are showing up, but we are certain that it is not a nutrient deficiency or glyphosate damage. Speculation has been made that it could be the result of ash from wheat fields that were burned off for soybean planting, but this is purely a guess. I feel confident that though we may not figure out what this problem is, it should not cause any yield loss or detrimental effects to the crop. The pictures on the previous page are a more extreme case; most of the time it is difficult to find the symptoms in the field. This is not a problem that needs to be attacked by every foliar nutrient spray on the market. The new growth should come out fine, and this will go down in the books as one of those “weird” occurrences.

Market Update (Scott Stiles – Extension Economist)

Cotton, Fuel and Fertilizer Markets



Cotton: As a reminder, the USDA-NASS *Planted Acreage* report will be released on Monday, June 30 (7:30 a.m. CST). It's anticipated that the June 30 cotton acreage number will be lower than the March *Planting Intentions* estimate of 9.38 million acres. Tough call.



There were some showers (from a trace to 1 inch) in the Texas High Plains early last week. There were also reports that these rains included damaging wind and hail. It's too early to say, but the recent rains may have come too late in the season to make a difference. Current estimates for West Texas acreage losses range from 500,000 to 1 million acres. For the week ending June 22, 38% of the Texas crop is rated “poor” or “very poor.” NASS releases an updated *Crop Progress* report each Monday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. CST.

After trading up to 84.04 on June 17, December cotton has worked lower and currently trades near 80 cents (Tuesday 24th a.m.). There is good chart support at the 78.50 level and resistance above 82 cents.



Fuel: Over the past week, crude oil and heating oil futures have moved in a sideways pattern. Energy traders can easily find both bullish and bearish news it seems. Saudi Arabia recently announced plans to increase oil production to 9.7 million barrels a day (+200,000 barrels a day). There are also plans for a further increase in production to 12.5 million barrels per day within 18 months.

This good news was offset by more production problems in Nigeria last week. Rebel attacks on one of Shell's platforms and a Chevron pipeline last week stopped 300,000 barrels a day of output.

Tension between Israel and Iran was also in the news. There is some speculation that a recent military exercise by Israel might be a rehearsal for bombing Iran's nuclear facilities. Matt Drudge had a link to this story on his website [U.S. says exercise by Israel seemed directed at Iran](#).

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China's decision to raise domestic fuel prices by 18% last week was initially viewed as bearish by the oil market. But, there have been widespread fuel shortages in China. Analysts now believe that higher fuel prices may encourage more refining to meet demand. Chinese crude oil imports were up by 25% in May versus the same month last year. China also became a net importer of gasoline for the first time last month.

Energy Quote of the Week: "OPEC has already done what OPEC can do and prices will not come down."
OPEC president, Chakib Khelil (6/24/2008)



Fertilizer: The Midwest floods have set the stage for continued firmness in the nitrogen market for the remainder of the year—and likely into spring 2009. First off, the heavy rains created the need for nitrogen applications later this summer and into the fall (for spring '09 planting). Secondly, the loss in corn acreage (possibly 3 to 5 million) sent corn prices sharply higher (up about 20% since June 2). As of Tuesday a.m., September '09 corn futures were trading at \$7.23 and December '09 corn futures were trading at \$6.62. Private forecasts already indicate that 2009 corn plantings will be in the range of 95 to 100 million acres. There hasn't been 100 million acres of corn planted in the U.S. since 1936 (101.96 million). If corn futures prices remain high, there will be record breaking demand for nitrogen in fall 2008 and spring 2009. The release of CRP acres and tinkering with ethanol policies would change this outlook.

Insect Situation - Part 1 (Gus Lorenz – Extension Entomologist)

Actually, things are pretty slow right now in the cotton insect world. Just the way we like it. Maintain vigilance and be thankful for the “down time.”

Plant Bugs: Like my colleague Scott indicated, it appears plant bug numbers are not as bad as last year's, but we are seeing a few fields with high numbers. Plant bugs appear to be really spotty right now, often with no rhyme or reason for why a few fields are hot and most are not. This is why you have to scout each and every field. Some growers in the South have treated some fields 3 times for plant bugs in pre-blooming cotton. In our test plots next to corn we counted as high as 10 per 25 sweeps with most counts around 2 – 4 per 25. There has been a lot of discussion on threshold with a sweep net. This is the work Scott, Glenn and I, as well as colleagues in Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Missouri, are currently involved. With two years of data, we currently have a low threshold of 8 per 100 sweeps and a high of 12 per 100 sweeps. So if you are running 8 per 100 and square retention is dropping below 80%, you may want to consider a plant bug application. Otherwise, you may want to stick to 10 or 12 per 100 sweeps. We are working to refine this application for pre-blooming cotton after the accumulation of 3 years of data from all locations at the end of this season. After bloom we are going to the black shake sheets and maintaining the threshold developed in our regional study of 3 per 5 row feet or 1 per 3 row feet on problem fields and maintaining square retention at 80% or above. Although plant bug numbers are down right now, when the cotton begins to bloom we will most likely see a jump in plant bug numbers.

Bollworm. Trap counts peaked last week in most areas, and this week numbers are down in most areas. Count your lucky stars, worms will pick up. We just hope they don't pick up too much.

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Insect Situation - Part 2 (Scott Akin – Extension Entomologist)

Plant bugs. Getting more phone calls on plant bugs this week, but still nothing like last year at this point of the season. Several fields have been treated with Vydate® for plant bug control, a fairly common practice in our area at this time of the season due to trying to suppress nematodes in the process of controlling plant bugs. Remember to try to use a “softer” chemistry (e.g., Centric®, Carbine®, TriMax Pro®) when choosing an insecticide for tarnished plant bugs this early. Diamond® could also be a consideration, but it is effective only against nymphs. In most cases, adults are making up a large percentage of the plant bugs we are seeing in the field at this point. Using the aforementioned insecticides will avoid flaring aphids and spider mites, and we should really save acephate (e.g., Orthene®) and pyrethroids for later in the season. Remember again that Bidrin® is no longer allowed to be used until bloom (except for a thrips application before 1st square). I am hearing mixed reports on plant bug populations in cotton next to corn—my crew ran sixty 25-sweep samples in squaring cotton next to corn near Rohwer (Steve Stevens’ farm) this morning and found less than one TPB per 25 sweeps on average. Several consultants in SE Arkansas have reported variable numbers next to corn—some fairly high, others not much different from the rest of the field. I still recommend keeping an eye on these areas as the season progresses. I am also not finding as many plant bugs in wild hosts such as Queen Anne’s lace or coreopsis as I was last year at this time. Like a consultant said to me earlier this week—“I hate to jinx it, but it is not as bad of a plant bug year so far.”

Bollworms. *H. zea* moths are picking up in several areas—whether caught in traps or flushed in the field. Moth numbers have increased in my Desha Co. bollworm traps we use for pyrethroid resistance monitoring. Below are trap data from Don Plunkett in Jefferson County last week, the highest numbers caught thus far at the time of this writing (to my knowledge). Also, an increasing number of county agents and consultants are reporting flushing bollworm moths in the field. Regardless of what county you are in, it would be a good idea to keep an eye out for heliothine eggs as you scout from here forward.



Bollworm (H. zea) moth counts, Jefferson County (Plunkett/Phillips)

Location	6/12	6/16	6/19
Bonds Brothers	103	180	445
Cottondale	9	96	93
Lambert	114	343	---
UAP	67	102	610
Ellis Place	356	500	1007
Donnie Pipkin	6	13	16

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Cotton Verification Program (Frank Groves – Area Cotton Agronomist)

The primary concern this week has been on how long before another irrigation event is needed. The answer depends largely on crop growth stage and temperature but is easily attained with the University of Arkansas Irrigation Scheduling Program. The program projects irrigation dates for up to 10 days. The Jefferson County field (11-leaf stage) was irrigated June 25 and, based upon a high temperature of 93 degrees, it should not reach a 2-inch soil moisture within the next ten days. However, by extrapolating these data it appears a 2-inch deficit would occur July 8 (Fig 1.). So how much water is needed this time of year? For the next few days, the predicted rate of evapotranspiration would be 0.15 inches per day. The rate increases to 0.18 inches per day at the end of the 10 day prediction.

Figure 1. Jefferson County CRVP irrigation projection

Irrig. File:	KEE08	Temp. File:	KEE08	Prev	Next	Cancel/Exit					
Daily deficits are PREDICTED below using 93 ° for temperatures and no rainfall.											
Field	Max. Def.	06/28	06/29	06/30	07/01	07/02	07/03	07/04	07/05	07/06	07/07
CRVP	2.00	0.40	0.55	0.70	0.85	1.01	1.17	1.34	1.51	1.68	1.86

Judging from highway observations and café conversations, the combination of young cotton, diesel price, time management issues and the lack of visual moisture stress has some growers reluctant to irrigate. This field was planted into optimal planting conditions, received 0.8 inches of rainfall on June 9, and was irrigated June 25. As of June 27, the soil moisture deficit was calculated at 0.26 inches. Had the field not been irrigated, the June 27 deficit would have been 2.54 inches. With no rainfall or irrigation the June 27 deficit would have been 3.16 inches (Fig 2.)

Figure 2. Jefferson County CRVP deficit without rainfall or irrigation

Irrig. File:	KEE08	Temp. File:	KEE08	Prev	Next	Cancel/Exit							
The last data entry was Jun 27 .Below is irrigation, rain, and calculated deficit data.													
		Jun 24	Jun 25	Jun 26	Jun 27								
Field	Max Def.	Irr.	Rain	Deficit	Irr.	Rain	Deficit	Irr.	Rain	Deficit	Irr.	Rain	Deficit
CRVP	2.00	0	0	2.78	0	0	2.90	0	0	3.03	0	0	3.16

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