

AG HAPPENINGS

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Farley's Thoughts

My thoughts cover a wide range of emotions as we approach the end of May. As I get older, I make the mistake of thinking I have seen everything. Mother Nature has proved me wrong once again. I have witnessed bigger rains but I have never seen it this wet for such an extended period of time in the spring.

Farley Farm Supply had the biggest sales month in our history in April. The good rains in March set us up for a fantastic month of April. We received rain on approximately 8 of the 30 days in April.

May started out much the same way until the rains started May 7th. We are having one of the slowest Mays on record for our business. We went almost two weeks without starting a sprayer or a spreader truck.

Last Friday, we had 5 "floaters" stuck at one time. The word "floater" is a misnomer. They don't float when it's too wet. They just make bigger holes because of the big tires.

(Continued on next page)

Sugarcane Aphid

I mentioned the Sugarcane Aphid in a newsletter last year and the insect did not go away over the winter. This aphid is unique in that it has moved from sugarcane in the Rio Grande Valley up into the northern parts of Texas to sorghum. I am getting weekly reports about the aphid movement and so far the rains and cool temperatures have kept them in low numbers but they are

Adult Sugarcane Aphid



Immature Sugarcane Aphid



Winged Adults



TEXAS A&M
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Scouting Sugarcane Aphids

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Timing effective treatment to control sugarcane aphids (SCA) in sorghum depends on the size of the SCA population. To estimate the number of SCA in a field, follow these steps for scouting the field and use the **Sampling Protocol** (below) and the **Quick Aphid Checker** (on back) to make treatment decisions.

First Detection: Is the Field at Risk?

- Once a week, walk 25 feet into the field and examine plants along 50 feet of row.
- If honeydew is present, look for SCA on the underside of a leaf above the honeydew.
- Inspect the underside of leaves from the upper and lower canopy from 15–20 plants per location.
- Sample each side of the field as well as sites near Johnsongrass and tall mutant plants.
- Check at least 4 locations per field for a total of 60–80 plants.

If no SCA are present, or only a few wingless/winged aphids are on upper leaves, continue once-a-week scouting.

If SCA are found on lower or mid-canopy leaves, begin twice-a-week scouting. Use the Sampling Protocol and the Quick Aphid Checker to determine if aphid densities exceed the economic threshold.

Sampling Protocol: Making Treatment Decisions

Examine the underside of one completely green leaf from the lower canopy and the uppermost leaf (or the leaf below the flag leaf at boot to heading) and estimate the number of SCA per leaf, using the Quick Aphid Checker. Examine 2 leaves from each of 5 random plants per location. Repeat at 4 locations, for a total of 40 leaves. Use the Quick Aphid Checker to calculate the mean number of aphids per leaf.

- If the field average SCA infestation is **50–125 aphids or more per leaf**, apply an insecticide within 4 days and evaluate control after 3–4 days. Consider treatment at 50 aphids per leaf if limited to once-a-week scouting.
- If the SCA infestation is less than the threshold level, continue scouting twice a week.

around. At this point they did overwinter as far north as Hillsboro on Johnsonsgrass, something not expected. Our challenge will be to keep scouting and treat any sorghum plants when aphid populations are low. If you read the chart above you can see that treatments need to be made when insect numbers are between 50 and 125 per leaf. This insect can blow through those numbers in a week so scouting is important.

There are two insecticides for this insect that have shown to

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Farley's Thoughts cont.

Now, let's talk about the good news that has come with the rains. The grass is green and growing. Cattle are as slick and fat as I have ever seen them. Calf prices are holding at historic high levels. The question is "How long will they last?" A good hay crop seems to be ready to bale when the open weather comes. I very seldom pray for sunshine but we sure need a couple of weeks or so of sun. It is time to plant cotton and peanuts. It is also time to harvest wheat and oats for grain. A lot of sorghum-sudan needs to be planted. Hay needs to be cut and baled.

There is a lot of work to be done. Hang on, stay safe, and let's see what happens in the weeks ahead.

Jim



DeLeon

Pampa



Farley's

work well and keep populations low for weeks. Transform and Sivanto both need to be sprayed when populations are low.

Pecan Nut Casebearer

One of the primary insect pests of pecan nuts is the pecan nut casebearer (PNC). Pecan growers spend lots of time and dollars trying to control this insect primarily in the first few months of the pecan season. PNC actually emerges as pecan buds do in early spring. The first PNC larva will feed on pecan buds causing very little damage till they pupate and emerge as adult moths. These moths are referred to as the first generation and will lay eggs on the pecan nutlets. These eggs hatch into larvae that will burrow into pecan nuts feeding and pupating to emerge later as adults for a second generation, 6 weeks later.

First generation PNC has been known to destroy over 50% of the pecan crop before growers ever get to June. Because this insect can be so destructive growers spend a lot of time and effort scouting for eggs to time effective insect control sprays. An insecticide has to be applied between egg lay and when the larvae enters the nutlet or about 7 days. With all the wet weather this year it has been a huge challenge to even drive through the orchard much less pull a 1000 gallon sprayer. Needless to say the PNC may have the upper hand this year.

Johnsongrass Control



There are plenty of weedy grasses that can invade coastal or Tifton 85 bermudagrass. Grassburrs, White Triden, common bermudagrass, nutgrass and more, but one that seems to drive people crazy is Johnsongrass!

Fortunately we do have a chemical control that is very effective. Outrider or what was known as Maverick, contain the chemical

Planting Sesame



All most people know about sesame is that it is the little seeds on top of hamburger buns!

Of course, that is true, but sesame has lots of uses and is becoming a more important crop to the US than ever before. And with the low commodity prices and glut in cotton, peanut, and even guar markets, growers are looking at opportunities not tried before.

This year several area growers will be planting sesame in June with hopes of harvesting a bumper crop. Sesame is a small seed and will require some care in planting but with warm temperatures and the abundance of moisture we should have no problems.

Why sesame? As I mentioned program crops have unusually low prices and an overabundance of warehouse storage. Sesame has steadily increased in price and the demand has been excellent. Growers in this area are working with Sesaco who early on offered some good contracts to both irrigated and dryland growers. Sesame is fairly easy to grow and has lower input costs and this means there is not much risk. Bankers and growers like this a lot!

sulfosulfuran. It is very effective on Johnsongrass and it should be sprayed when the Johnsongrass is 18-24 inches tall up to the heading stage. Basically you need to spray it when the grass is growing good but certainly before you cut it for hay. We have not seen Outrider hurt bermudagrass or slow it down. The rate is 1 to 1.25 ounces per acre either with fertilizer or a surfactant. A bonus is that it does control nutsedge, both purple and yellow. This may help to keep feral hogs out since they do love nutgrass!

Bermudagrass Stem Maggot

Unfortunately the Bermudagrass Stem Maggot has not gone away in all the rain this year. I started reporting on this alien invader back in 2013 and it was a real problem for growers in 2014. Already in 2015 we are seeing some early damage from the overwintering generation.

Here is a list of things that can help you manage for BSM:

- The larva causes the damage by feeding inside the stem. Since the maggot is inside the stem, conventional insecticides will not touch them.
- The adult fly does not move far, in fact they only move about 10 feet in any single flight. The flies stay deep in the canopy unless disturbed so chemical control has to penetrate the canopy to be effective.
- If you see damage and are even within 10 days of harvest then harvest! When you harvest you will remove the maggot and help lower fly numbers.
- If you do make a harvest and have maggots again then treatment is an option. Silencer insecticide does not have a label for BSM but it is labeled for most insects in bermudagrass including armyworm and grasshoppers. Apply a pyrethroid when the grass is growing 7-10 days after harvest and then again 7-10 days later. The cost of the two treatments is easily



Grasshoppers

About the time we think that grasshopper are not going to be a problem this year someone says they have them by the thousands! Overall though, grasshoppers are not the problem they were in the past few years. The fall, winter and now spring rains help by spreading bacteria and protozoans around that kill nymphs. Also, the weather has been good for insects that prey on eggs and nymphs. If you do want to spray then Dimilin at 1-2 ounces per acre is very effective on small nymphs but remember if you harvest the grass it is gone.

Prickly Pear Control

By far the best prickly pear control chemical is Surmount made by Dow. Surmount is a mixture of fluroxypur and picloram and the mix of both kills prickly pear quickly. Unfortunately picloram is a Restricted Use Herbicide and you must have an applicator license to purchase it. But, PastureGard HL contains fluroxypyr and triclopyr (Remedy) and is not a Restricted Use Herbicide. 1% PastureGard HL with a surfactant has shown great results on many weeds, brush and prickly pear.

justified by the forage yield saved!

- Alicia, Coastal and Tifton 44 are the most susceptible since they are finer textured bermudagrasses. Tifton 85, which is a coarser grass, has shown to have fewer tillers damaged and so less yield loss.

Alion Herbicide

Alion is a new class of preemergence herbicide, Indaziflam, labeled by Bayer for fruit and nut crops, in particular pecans. I have tested the product in several pecan orchards in the past using up to 5 ounces per acre. The control of annual weeds and grasses was nearly 16 months as you can see from the photo. We are testing Alion in some coastal bermudagrass areas with a history of horrible grassburr infestations. We are testing lower rates to determine if the

grassburrs are controlled, how long they are controlled and if it affects grass production in any way. So far the grassburr plants did germinate from seed on the soil surface but the plants sprouted, grew a couple of inches and then began to die. As the grassburr roots picked up the Alion from the soil they stopped growing and became stunted.



At this time Alion is not labeled for grassburr control in coastal bermudagrass hay or pastures. Through this type of testing here and in many other places, Bayer can continue to pursue a label for Alion's use in pastures and hay fields.

