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## **Newsletter – August, 2010**

### **Upcoming Production Meetings:**

**Cotton Field Day:** We will focus on Conventional Cotton Varieties, Weed and Insect Control.

**Date:** Thursday, September 2, 2010

**Time:** 10:30 a.m. through lunch

**Location:** Wesley Ray and Scott Saucer Farm in Megargel. We will meet at the Saucer Farm Irrigated Cotton Field. Directions are take highway 21 South from Frisco City. Go for about five miles. Take a left in Megargel at the old gas station. Go about 200 yards and then take Turkey Hollow Road South. Go for about 2 miles and the irrigated cotton field will be on the left.

**Speakers:** Dr. Ron Smith, AU Cotton Entomologist, Dr. Mike Patterson, AU Weed Scientist and Al Wright with Phytogen Seed.

### **Marianna Florida Peanut Field Day**

**Date:** Thursday, August 19, 2010

**Time:** Registration begins at 8 a.m. and continues through lunch.

**Location:** North Florida Research & Education Center-Marianna Florida

Topics include new varieties, tillage, crop rotation, weed control, and control of leaf spot, white mold, spotted wilt and root knot nematode. Call 850-394-9124

### **Florida Extension Farm Field Day**

**Date:** Thursday, August 26, 2010

**Time:** Registration begins at 8 a.m.

**Location:** West Florida Research and Education Center – Jay, FL.

Topics include new peanut and cotton varieties, disease management, insect management, weed management and rowing peanuts for biodiesel. Call 850-983-5216

## Mississippi Peanut Field Day

Date: Thursday, August 26, 2010

Time: Begins at 9 a.m. and concludes at noon. Contact Malcolm Broome at 601-606-3547 or [misspga1@yahoo.com](mailto:misspga1@yahoo.com)

## Corn Growers Harvesting a Bumper Crop

Corn harvest has just begun in South Alabama and growers are harvesting one of the best crops of corn they have ever made. Growers every year do the very best job they can. The rainfall this year has made the bumper crop. Stink bug numbers were very high in many fields. This area also had Southern Rust. Most growers sprayed for both.

### Corn Harvest and Storage

Dr. Kathy Flanders, AU Grain Crop Entomologist

**A goal for our growers is to not rely on fumigants to control insects in stored grain. This is possible as growers take the right steps in storing their grain.**

A few very important steps to successful Grain Storage are:

Clean and treat empty grain bins with a residual insecticide. Treat the bins inside and outside and treat the pad for a five foot area around the bin. It is important to spray the entire surface of the bin, as far up as can be reached with the spray. There are many residual insecticides to choose from. Tempo 20 WF and **Tempo SC Ultra** are a good choice to start with. The Tempo SC Ultra is a little easier to handle than the Tempo 20 WP.

Treat the entire grain mass as it is loaded into the bin. For wheat a good treatment is Storicide II. Another good choice is Pyronyl Crop Spray in combo with Diacon II. **For corn Actellic 5 EC alone, or Pyronyl Crop Spray in combo with Diacon II is a good choice. Storicide II is not labeled for corn.**

### Tips for Successfully Storing Corn on the Farm

Dr. Kathy Flanders, AU Grain Entomologist

The Southeast's warm, moist climate makes southern grain bins especially vulnerable to insects and molds. This is because insects and molds grow faster in warm weather than in cool weather. Stored grains can fall victim to a variety of insect pests. There are primary pests, which attack healthy, intact kernels; and secondary pests, which feed on particles and grain dust thus reducing the stored grain's quality.

Grain quality does not improve during storage. The best that can happen is that the grain is the same quality coming out of the bin as when it goes in. A good insect pest management program will also minimize mold problems, since insects and molds have similar growing requirements.

Grain bins are designed for easy loading and unloading of grain as well as for protecting it from rain, birds and rodents. They are not well equipped to keep out small insect pests. There are a lot of holes, by design

or otherwise, that are going to let in bugs. Seal unnecessary openings with caulk or expandable foam. Duct tape and plastic may also be used.

The first line of defense is to eliminate any insects that are left over from the previous batch of grain. While some of these insect species may be brought in with the grain at harvest, most have been in and around the bin for a long time. Some insects that attack stored grain live as long as 3 years.

Therefore, before you start harvesting your corn, take the time to clean the bins thoroughly to eliminate starter colonies of insects or molds that could threaten the stored corn. This includes a thorough vacuuming or sweeping to remove insect debris and remaining grain. Crop residue and dust will reduce the efficacy of empty bin insecticide treatments, another reason to do a thorough cleaning.

Next, apply an EPA-approved insecticide to treat the grain bin floor, inside and outside walls and the concrete pad around the grain bin. This empty bin treatment will kill insects that remain in the bin, even after cleaning. It will provide some protection against future invasion. See "Stored Grains Insect Control for 2009" (<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0500-A/VOL1-2009/stgrain.pdf>).

Corn should be loaded into the bins at the correct moisture content. For aerated grain bins, the recommended moisture content is 14% if the corn will be stored for 6 months or less, 13% if corn is stored for 6-12 months, and 12% if the corn will be stored for more than 1 year.

If the corn will be stored for longer than a month, it should be treated with an EPA-approved insecticide as it is loaded into the bin. If the corn is at the correct moisture content when it comes from the field, the sprayer nozzle can be positioned down by the auger pit. It is important to know that heat breaks down the protectant insecticide. Therefore, if corn is dried at the storage site care should be taken to apply the insecticide when the grain is cool, or at the point where the grain going into the bin is at its coolest point.

Grain should not be loaded above the vertical sides of the bin. The pitched head space is needed to allow access to the grain, to allow effective aeration and, if the need arises, to conduct an effective fumigation. If the bin is not equipped with a grain spreader, the peak of corn remaining after loading should be flattened out. A grain peak harbors moisture, which encourages insects and molds to grow.

As autumn approaches, night temperatures will be low enough to make aeration effective. Running the aeration fans long enough to cool down the grain can pay big dividends. This is because stored grain insects do not grow below 60 degrees Fahrenheit. It is not necessary to wait until night temperatures dip below 60 degrees before aerating. For example, insects will grow much more slowly at 70 degrees than at 80 degrees. The grain can be cooled down in steps, until the temperature is below 60 degrees. Deciding how long to run the aeration fans can be tricky. If a grain thermometer is available, you can measure the temperature of the grain directly. Otherwise, estimates of the number of cooling hours required can be made based on the power of the aeration fans. It will take at least 12 hours and sometimes several days, to move the cooling front of air through the bin. For more information on aerating grain bins, see the publication "Grain Storage Guidelines for the Southeast"

(<http://www.aces.edu/dept/grain/documents/aerationmanual.pdf>).

Stored grain should be checked at least once a month to see if insects are present. It is not enough to look in the top hatch to see if anything is crawling around. If you can see an insect infestation using this

method, you have a serious insect problem. Push a long brass grain trier down into the corn in order to get a sample of the corn (see Figure 10 in the publication "IPM Tactics for Stored Grain," (<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1126/>) for a picture of a grain trier). Sift this into a shallow pan through a strainer with holes just small enough to keep the corn from falling through. Vegetable colanders from the discount store work well for this purpose. Look in the sifted material for insects. If more than two weevils (look for the long snouts) are present, or more than 10 other live insects are found, the corn quality is downgraded to "infested" status. Inexpensive pitfall traps can be purchased and used to detect insects in stored grain (see Figure 11 of "IPM Tactics for Stored Grain"). Push the traps down into the grain. Then come back in a couple of days to see what insects have fallen into the traps.

If weevils are found in the stored corn, and you are using it for on-farm feed for animals, try to use up the infested corn as soon as possible. If you plan on selling the corn, you will need to eliminate the insect infestation if the population exceeds the tolerance of the buyer. Unfortunately, the only way to get rid of insects once they are in a grain bin is to fumigate. More information about fumigating grain bins can be found in the publication "Fumigating Agricultural Commodities with Phosphine" (<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1154/>).

An alternative strategy, if you have extra storage capacity, is to move the grain from the infested bin to a clean bin, and spray a grain protectant on the grain as it is moved. Be aware that physical damage to corn kernels occurs each time grain is loaded and unloaded.

Grain bins, like many locations on the farm, are dangerous places. Use caution in and around grain bins. See the publication "Grain Bin Hazards and Safety Considerations" (<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1332/ANR-1332.pdf>).

## Soybean Crop is also looking very good.

Soybean Asian Rust is already in Southwest Alabama. Dr. Ed Sikora, AU Soybean Plant Pathologist found soybean rust on soybeans in two sentinel plots in Southwest Al on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. These plots were in Fairhope and in Brewton. This indicates that rust has the potential to be a more significant problem this year depending on how weather conditions develop over the next few months. Growers in Washington, Mobile, Baldwin, Escambia, Conecuh and Monroe counties with soybeans at the R3 to R4 growth stage or later should consider the use of a fungicide at this time if a fungicide has not been applied previously. Since it is likely these fields have been exposed to SBR, a tank mix combination of a strobilurin and a triazole fungicide, or a prepackaged tank-mix of the two products, would be most beneficial.

**Fungicides used before bloom are not considered economical.** Though symptoms of soybean rust can occur on soybeans before bloom, this has not yet been observed in Alabama. Soybeans that have reached the full pod-R6 growth stage should not be sprayed as there appears to be little benefit from a fungicide application after this growth period has been reached. There have been several changes this past year to the fungicides that will be and are now labeled for management of soybean rust. These are now posted on the soybean rust fungicide manual website: <http://oardc.osu.edu/soyrustr/> in Appendix B. Soybean Rust Hot Line: 800-446-0388.

**Soybean Insect Control** is very important. A once or maybe twice a week scouting is necessary. Foliage and pod feeders and stink bugs have robbed many farmers of their crop.

**Cotton Production: Up until the third week of July the cotton crop was looking very promising. The recent drought and heat has taken a tremendous toll on our crop.**

**Dr. Ron Smith**, AU Cotton Entomologist has initiated (with special help from several others) an Alabama Insect Blog. (<http://alabama-insects.blogspot.com/>). The Georgia Insect Hotline and the Cotton Pest Management Newsletter, is helpful as well.

Check the **Cotton Insect Hotline (1-800-851-2847)** for updates on current insect conditions. The Cotton Pest Management Newsletter and additional cotton production information is also posted on the UGA Cotton Homepage at: <http://www.ugacotton.com>

## **Statewide Cotton Insect Situation**

Dr. Ron Smith on Tuesday July 27, 2010

We have reached the point in the season that it is difficult to generalize about the cotton insect situation statewide. Some fields have been sprayed while some have not. Some of those sprayed have received a pyrethroid while others have received a phosphate such as Bidrin for bugs only. Scouts are reporting that behind pyrethroid sprays they are finding escape worms in some fields and escape bugs (both plant bugs and brown stink bugs) in others. More escape worms are being reported in DP555 (sirge gene) than the Bollgard II varieties. As each day passes more field people are reporting Fall armyworms in blooms. It is suspected that the extreme heat has reduced the effectiveness of the pyrethroid chemistry. This happened in the early 1980's, with the earlier generation pyrethroids, when the temperatures approached 100° F.

My suggestion would be to target the insect that is potentially the most damaging. If the problem is escape bollworms I would continue to select a pyrethroid. Use a high labeled rate, add some crop oil to the spray mix, and add a phosphate if high levels of bugs are present. If the problem is primarily bugs, then just go with a phosphate such as Bidrin at 1 gallon to 21-24 acres. If Fall armyworms are in the mix the pyrethroids will not give acceptable suppression. Under this condition, I would go with Diamond (9 oz) Steward (11 oz), Belt (3 oz) or Tracer (2.5 oz).

Soybeans- A few green clover worms and soybean loopers can be found in many fields at non damaging levels. The greatest insect threat statewide is likely stink bugs. The stink bug population has been primarily brown's up to this point. However, yesterday at the Gulf Coast Research Station, the southern green stink bugs were out numbering the browns. Also, at this site the recently discovered red banded stink bug was present and had done heavy damage to beans at the R-5/6 pod filling stage.

## **Red Banded Stink Bug in Alabama Feeding on Soybeans**

Dr. Ron Smith

Another significant insect event during the third week of July was the discovery of the Red Banded Stink Bug (*Piezodorus* sp.) feeding on soybeans in Baldwin County. This species had previously been reported

from most other Southern states, except Alabama. They have been reported to be very damaging to soybeans in Louisiana and other mid-South states. This species has the ability to be more damaging to beans than the other more common stink bugs (Brown and Southern Green). Most reports indicate the red banded may be more difficult to control with insecticides. All entomologists agree that populations can rebound greatly within 7-12 days after a spray. Basically it is a smaller green stink bug with a dark red stripe or band across the shoulders.

## Peanut Production

Alabama Growers planted an estimated 185,000 acres of peanuts this season. Our crop looks very good at present. **Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus is extremely light** so far this year. Growers must control their weeds and insects. However, controlling the peanut diseases for the rest of the season is the primary road to profits. This year there are an overwhelming number of fungicides for use on peanuts. The main thing is to be timely on your fungicide application. **White mold** is flaring up, especially in the earlier planted peanuts. Most growers are on their forth spray, but second spray to control white mold and limb rot. At present I do not know of any growers in Southwest Alabama applying the white mold sprays at night. Conditions are becoming very favorable for the spread of soil borne disease and leaf spot.

### Do Not Lose Sleep over the Three-Cornered Alfalfa Hopper

Dr. John Beasley, UGA Peanut Agronomist.

In regards to three-cornered alfalfa hopper (3CAH), there is no economically damaging threshold that has been established based upon research data. Our best recommendation until research data proves otherwise is that when you walk through a field that is less than 90 days after planting, find fresh damage (girdling of the stems), and in almost every step you take you “flush” adult 3CAH, then the field should receive an insecticide treatment (check Pest Control Handbook, peanut insect control section for specific insecticides and rates).

### The Charles Dean “Deer and Hog Mega Fence”

Richard Petcher, Regional Extension Agronomist in Southwest Alabama

Mr. Charles Dean, Cotton Producer in Baldwin County

There are now approximately 16 of these fences up in Southeast Al. Not every fence was built according to specific recommendations. However, as of July 30, 2010 every grower is well pleased with their “Deer and Hog Mega Fence”. The precise design for this fence was printed in earlier newsletters that can be found at the Baldwin County ACES web site.

**Learning together:** I have appreciated the work that each grower is doing and the information we are learning together. This tip passed on from John Bitto in Baldwin County. Bitto fenced in a 150 acre wheat field to keep the deer out. The fence worked perfectly until he discovered that he had fenced a small herd of hogs inside of the wheat field. The hogs were right at home with a water hole, wheat and then peanuts to eat. The hogs did not want to go back out through the fence. Bitto was able in time to relocate these hogs. Once the herd of hogs was outside of the fence they found the **missing link**. The hogs would not go

through the fence. However, they discovered they could go under the insulated gate handles. Once Bitto discovered this he added a short stretch of wire to remedy the hogs from going under at this point. If you have hogs, predictions are they will attempt to come under your fence at the same location. Are hogs smarter than people?

If you need assistance through your county office, contact:

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Again, I hope this information has been helpful to you.

Sincerely,



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