

COTTON CHAT

Autauga Quality Cotton Association

E-Newsletter

By: Jeff Thompson, Manager

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Even though the 2008 crop is off to a better start than last year, it hasn't been an easy one. Cool wet weather slowed planting and plant development in the Mid-South, Tennessee Valley, and Carolinas. Cotton in these areas is 2 to 3 weeks behind schedule. In contrast, the Southeast has fought drought conditions, once again. In this region it is difficult to generalize rainfall totals while in the old summertime pattern of isolated thundershowers. If fortunate enough to be under a cloud you've gotten a good soaking. Even so, there still remain some extremely dry locations in Alabama and Georgia. Despite all of this, cotton is holding up surprisingly well. Stands are adequate with little replanting having to be done. The dry weather is preventing some cotton from following wheat. In Texas, getting the crop off to good start has been trying, as well. After months with little or no rain, enough moisture was received to plant the crop. Planting should be completed this week. Hundred plus degree temperatures and 40 to 50 mile an hour winds are greeting these cotton seedlings, however.

TURNROW

Conventional Cotton Variety Trials – As part of my newsletter during the remainder of the season, I will keep you abreast on the progress of our conventional varieties, especially the Bronco varieties. I will be posting pictures of these varieties on our website for your benefit throughout the season. Four different conventional varieties were planted in adjacent 80 acre blocks. These include Bronco 7139, Bronco 141, Bronco 655M, and DP 491. The plots were planted on April 25th with seed treated with Cruiser. The herbicide program has consisted of a pint each of a Cotoran/Caparol tank mix banded behind the planter. At cracking, a pint each of MSMA and Cotoran were applied broadcast. Since dry weather slowed plant growth, a tenth of Envoke was applied over the top of the cotton to by some time until a directed application could be made safely. The Envoke was applied a few days prior to these pictures being taken. The final step in the herbicide program is a directed application of one pound of Suprend plus a quart of MSMA. This is currently being applied. Also, Select was used to spot spray for grass. The cost of this entire herbicide program is approximately 35 dollars per acre.

Cotton Management Practices – Enhancing crop maturity should always be your focus when making management decisions. The exorbitant cost of fertilizers has all but eliminated problems associated with over fertilization; such as excessive vegetative growth. However, plant growth regulators are still necessary in promoting fruit retention while enhancing plant maturity. If adequate moisture is available, don't be hesitant in making PGR applications. The effectiveness of these products is dependent on their

concentrations levels within the plant. Build these concentrations levels up early with multiple dose applications. PGR's applied late are usually not very cost effective.

Insect control can greatly influence crop maturity. The increase in acres planted to grain crops has led to shifts in the population dynamics of cotton pests. Stinkbugs and plant bugs have been most affected. Since grain crops receive little in the way of insect controls, huge numbers of these insect species will migrate into cotton over a much longer period of time. Further complicating matters is the fact these insects are hard to detect with normal scouting techniques. Checking for signs of feeding damage is a much more accurate way in which to determine their presence. Be quick to apply controls if excessive damage is noted. Yield losses, reduction in fiber quality, and delayed maturity are all results of damage from stinkbugs and plant bugs.

After 13 years of Bt technology bollworms are often overlooked. Corn is an excellent host for worms. Early season corn may harbor bollworms thus reducing their populations in cotton. However, later in the season worm pressure can be magnified as adult moths are more attracted to cotton. Bollgard varieties are less effective on bollworms and can be over whelmed by heavy populations. In such cases, a supplemental control with an inexpensive pyrethroid is recommended. Bollgard II provides a little added protection but it still remains a numbers game. Scout fields closely for worms and eggs throughout the season.

Fencepost

Farm Bill Meetings- The National Cotton Council is conducting a series of informational meetings on the provisions of the new Farm Bill. The meetings are open to everyone and will be held throughout the cotton belt. Attached is a list of all the dates, locations, and times of these meetings.

AQCA Market Report – A report detailing AQCA market activity for both old crop and new crop has been e-mailed to you.

Farm Verification Forms – The forms whereby you indicate the farm numbers and acreage from which cotton will be delivered are due in our office. If you have not returned these to us, please do so as soon as possible. Doing so promptly will prevent any delay in cotton payments this Fall. If you have misplaced your original form, contact our office for another.

Cargill Grain Marketing Program – For some months now, we have been in discussions with Cargill Grain about marketing alternatives that could be made available to AQCA members. As a result, several ideas have surfaced. Before further pursuit, I need to know if there is interest among our membership in providing some type of grain marketing program. If you currently grow grain crops (corn, wheat, soybeans, and/or milo) or plan to in the future and would be interested in participating, please complete the short form below. Send it back to us by return E-mail, as soon as possible. The Board of Directors will consider a pilot program for 2009 if there is adequate interest.

AQCA Grain Marketing Program

Name:

City:

State:

Zip:

Acres planted to:

Corn:

Wheat:

Soybeans:

Milo:

