

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

COTTON GUIDELINES

HOW TO GET INFORMATION ON MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COTTON APHID AND SILVERLEAF WHITEFLY – Sticky Cotton Prevention

(update – reprinted from: CA Cotton Review, June 2002)

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NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The 2001 growing season was recorded as one with some of the lightest insect pressure in years. The annual crop loss estimates recorded very little spider mite, lygus or worm pressure. Silverleaf whitefly and aphids were recorded as mid-season pests and carried into the late season. As the cotton worked its way into the commercial channels and into the spinning mills, many complaints were recorded from mills about sticky cotton problems from the San Joaquin Valley, in both Upland/Acala and Pima cotton.

It is not entirely clear what happened in the latter part of the growing season to cause such a widespread problem. However, it is perfectly clear that the SJV must demonstrate good faith in managing honeydew-causing insect pests and to prevent insect honeydew as a source of sticky cotton. Sticky cotton threatens the reputation for quality cotton that San Joaquin Valley growers and industry have tirelessly built over their long history. Developing a sticky cotton reputation has real economic consequences as seen with the experience of the Arizona cotton industry during the 1990's. A reputation, once compromised, is difficult to restore.

Honeydew-contaminated lint is preventable but it requires the resolve of the industry to take steps necessary to ensure the quality of the SJV cotton crop. The effort will require commitment from Pest Control Advisors, growers, ginners and merchants. A successful outcome will require cooperation between neighbors as well as all industry segments. We have the science and insect control products to manage the insect problems and we will need the focus and discipline to conduct IPM-based management programs to prevent sticky cotton created by insects.

The University of CA Cooperative Extension is committed to providing educational outreach in a variety of forms: meetings, publications, consultations, and field training. Before the cotton reaches first cracked boll, we will provide educational support on how to sample fields for silverleaf whitefly and aphids, and how to make treatment decisions and manage these pests to keep their populations below damaging levels. New control products are available this year to support this effort and more information on these products will be available within the next month.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER AND HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON COTTON APHID AND SILVERLEAF WHITEFLY MANAGEMENT

Some very basic, important points to remember:

- The primary insect pests that threaten lint quality are cotton aphid and silverleaf whitefly
- Both pests are found in cotton fields throughout the growing season and can reach levels that require treatment well before bolls crack open, exposing lint to honeydew
- Sampling procedures are well-established and are based on the number of insects on the 5th leaf below the plant terminal
- Sampling whiteflies takes some special knowledge to locate nymphs as well as adults. This has been discussed at the June Cotton Production meetings run by UCCE Farm Advisors in all San Joaquin Valley counties and will also be repeated at July and August meetings
- It is important to maintain insecticide resistance plans in order to extend the useful life of both older and newer control products

It is suggested that you attend informational meetings provided by University of CA Cooperative Extension and your Cotton Industry. The meetings have great value in **learning** about the most recent updates on the situation, **sharing** with other growers and PCA's your successful approaches to managing these pests, and **discussing** with crop protection experts how best to use available control products. Sampling plans and basic management approaches involving a resistance management strategy for these key pests (cotton aphids and silverleaf whitefly) are available at some of the web sites listed below and will also be reviewed in more detail at July and August UCCE Cotton Production meetings. Since sticky cotton prevention is an important industry issue, also look to the *CA Cotton Growers and Ginners Association* website for additional information.

WRITTEN SOURCES OF INFORMATION & INFORMATION ON THE WEB

For those of you wanting to start with a “refresher” on management guidelines and insecticide resistance management guidelines, you can start by looking at UC Publication # 8033 (*Insecticide and Miticide Resistance Management Guidelines for San Joaquin Valley Cotton—2001*). This publication has information on both cotton aphid and whitefly management. It is available at the following web site, but it should be noted that as a 2001 publication, it does not include some of the changes in registered insecticides, for 2002:

<http://www.uckac.edu/cottonipm/>

Other useful resources you might consider reviewing include:

- *[UC Pest Management Guidelines](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)* - www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)
- *[General whitefly information](http://www.uckac.edu/whitefly)* - www.uckac.edu/whitefly
- *[Silverleaf Whitefly Sampling plans in Cotton](http://www.uckac.edu/whitefly)* - www.uckac.edu/whitefly

Information available on the web (continued):

- Whiteflies in California—UC Statewide IPM Program, Publication 19 - contact Peter B. Goodell (Regional IPM Advisor) or your county UCCE Farm Advisor (phone numbers shown at the end of this article)
- Sticky Cotton: Sources and Solutions— <http://ag.arizona.edu/crops/cotton/insects/wf/stickycss.pdf>
- Management of Silverleaf Whitefly—A Comprehensive Manual on the Biology, Economic Impact and Control Tactics.— contact Peter B. Goodell or your county UCCE Farm Advisor
- Arizona Information on Managing Silverleaf Whitefly - <http://ag.arizona.edu/crops/cotton/insects>

NOTE: As mentioned in article, additional meetings will likely be added the summer of 2002 to address concerns and management strategies for pest management and sticky cotton prevention—watch future issues of the CA Cotton Review newsletter, check this web site or contact your UCCE Farm Advisor for updates on meeting dates

PHONE NUMBERS OF UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA FARM ADVISORS AND SPECIALISTS WORKING WITH COTTON
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Glenn	Doug Munier	(530) 865-1107
Kern	Brian Marsh	(661) 868-6210
Kings	Bruce Roberts	(559) 582-3211, Ext. 2735
Madera	Ron Vargas	(559) 675-7879, Ext. 212
Merced	Ron Vargas	(559) 675-7879, Ext. 212
Tulare	Steve Wright	(559) 685-3309

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