

Mississippi Crop Situation

February 28, 2007

Editor: Angus Catchot

Number 1

<http://www.msucare.com/newsletters/pests/cis/index.html>

2007 Pest Outlook

As we move into 2007 there are lots of uncertainties and speculation about what to expect regarding insect pest. One thing we know for sure is the mix of crops will be much different than we have had in a long time in Mississippi. Wheat acres in MS have moved from 85K acres in 2006 to approximately 250K acres in 2007. Corn is expected to move from 330K acres in 2006 to 700K plus acres this year in MS assuming weather permits and seed supply is available to get it in the ground. With soybean prices beginning to surge we could likely see a decent run on soybeans and there is lots of talk about double cropping soybeans behind wheat on the irrigated ground. Cotton will take it the hardest, no doubt. Current estimates put MS somewhere around 900K acres of cotton this year but could be less.

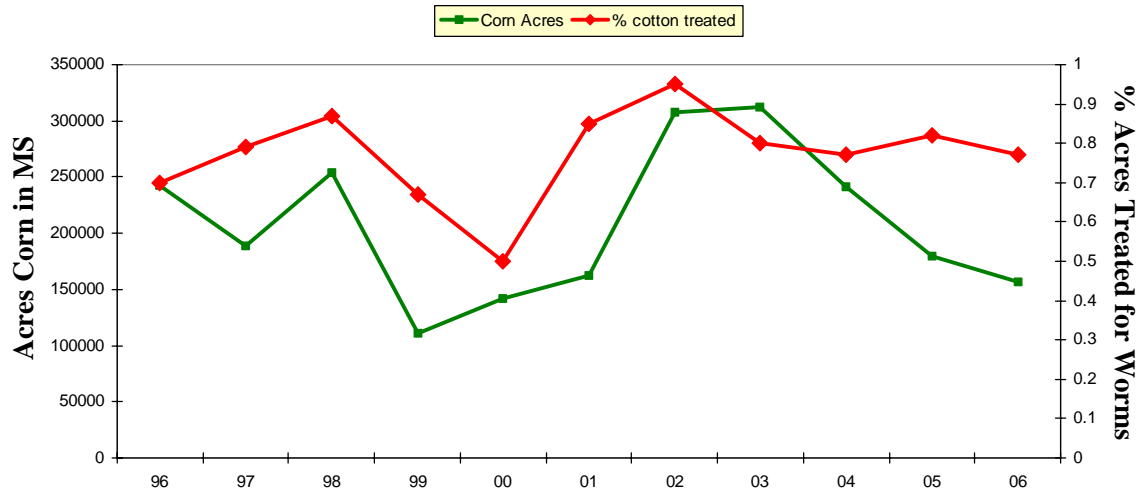
One of the questions I have been getting most often at meetings this year is, what's going to happen with insects this year given the scenario we are facing? The short answer is "I don't know" because weather plays such an important factor and you can't predict the weather. However, there are some things that we can logically put together given what we know about potential acres of various crops. Last year, according to agricultural statistic services in MS wheat was 61% heading by April 16. In the April 20, 2006 newsletter that week I reported numerous calls about large numbers of stinkbugs in wheat and this lasted for several weeks before they moved out. We know that wheat can harbor large numbers of stink bugs that will be looking for host when the wheat begins to move out of the dough stage. Consequently we treated more whorl stage corn for stink bugs in 2006 than we ever had. With the wheat acres we have in MS this year we can certainly assume the potential is there to have high numbers of stink bugs moving into corn. Fortunately, this is a pest we can monitor very easily in corn by simply scouting the fields. Another pest we frequently find coming off of wheat in very high numbers is thrips. Also, we often see very high thrips pressure in cotton fields adjacent or near wheat as it begins to dry down.

One of the biggest "concerns" I have been hearing about is the possibility of high plant bug numbers because of the corn. This is certainly a possibility and there is no doubt that we have tremendous plant bug numbers in cotton that is adjacent to corn. However, a wet spring that increases wild hosts for them to build on will increase numbers considerably as well.

One situation that will happen almost assuredly is that double crop soybeans will have high stink bug numbers. This is simply due to the fact that beans will be pushed later in the season when stink bug numbers will be the highest and early beans will begin to be harvested so stinkbugs will be searching out the last green beans in the area.

The one that I have thought the most about is, what effect will the corn acres have on bollworm numbers that will move into the cotton? (Also, the planting of Bt corn will have very little if any impact on bollworm numbers surviving in the ear.) Since bollworms pupate in the soil the weather conditions when they are emerging (wet) can have a huge effect on the numbers that actually can make it out successfully. But if you look at the graph I put together below where corn acres in the MS delta is plotted with percent of the acres we treated for worms it tracks fairly close.

Delta - Corn Acres vs. % Cotton Acres Treated for Worms in MS



These are just some thoughts concerning the 2007 pests outlook for MS. Again, this is not anything complex just some assumptions that one might anticipate giving what we know about the crops we are planning to grow and a little biology about the insects that attack them and it has certainly made for interesting hall talk around the state at various meetings this year. However, environmental conditions have to line up correctly for any of this to happen as outlined. However, when you put it on paper it allows you to proactively think about some things ahead of time, such as, do I know how to scout these various crops or have I made arrangements to have my crops scouted? Do I plant more WideStrike or Bollgard II? Are my sprayers set up with the right tips for insecticides? Etc..

I have heard about quite a few people already planting corn. Hope everyone has a prosperous year.

Cotton and Soybean Control Guides for 2007 are now in. See your local Ext. Agent to get one.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TAKEN OFF OF THE LIST, UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS, OR BE ADDED TO THE EMAIL DISTRIBUTION LIST PLEASE CONTACT SHERRY MCMULLIN AT (662) 325-2085 OR EMAIL HER AT: smcmullin@entomology.msstate.edu WITH **CIS NEWSLETTER** IN THE SUBJECT LINE TO BE ADDED TO THE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER LIST OR MAKE ANY CHANGES.

Angus Catchot
Extension Cotton & Soybean Entomologist

Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY
Extension
SERVICE