

Mississippi Crop Situation

April 30, 2008

Mississippi State University Extension Service

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This Weeks Planting Report

National Agriculture Statistics Services (Mississippi) Crop Progress for Week Ending 4/27/08

Crop	This Week % Planted	Last Week % Planted	Last Year % Planted	5- Year Average % Planted
Corn Planted	96	87	99	96
Corn Emerged	85	69	96	87
Cotton Planted	7	1	11	29
Rice Planted	58	32	56	64
Rice Emerged	30	4	28	35
Sorghum Planted	40	19	32	54
Sorghum Emerged	19	5	18	31
Soybeans Planted	46	24	47	58
Soybeans Emerged	22	7	31	39
Winter Wheat Heading	87	69	96	85

2008 Insect Control Guides

The 2008 Insect Control Guides are now available. To get a copy see your local extension agent or you may view the document online at msucare.com. The direct link to the guide is: <http://msucare.com/pubs/publications/p2471.pdf>

Rust

Dr. Tom Allen

Over the past few weeks I have received several calls concerning rust in wheat fields that border newly planted corn. This is not a cause for alarm. Almost all of the rusts, and I say almost all because soybean rust is an exception, only occur on a single host. There are differences in the overall life cycle of the fungus that will cause it to have alternate hosts to complete a particular stage of the life cycle. Stem rust of wheat is a notable example and there are many others that include fusiform rust of pines, and cedar apple rust. All three of these examples have alternate hosts, for example the stem rust fungus completes its life cycle on barberry as an alternate host. In the case of wheat and corn rusts the fungus that causes the particular rust, whether it be a wheat rust (leaf, stem, or stripe rust) or a corn rust (common or southern) is species specific. That fungus will only survive on either corn or wheat and cause one specific disease. Soybean rust is a notable exception because it can occur on soybeans, kudzu, coral bean (a new host in Florida), Florida beggarweed, and many other hosts in greenhouse studies that are too numerous to list.

2009 Soybean Rust Funding Situation

Dr. Tom Allen

The soybean rust funding situation was recently outlined in the Delta Farm Press (April 11, http://deltafarmpress.com/mag/farming_beyond_funding_shaky/index.html). This year, 2008, may ultimately be the last year of the federally funded soybean rust sentinel monitoring program. As of this date there are no plans to renew this funding for the 2009 season. Annually, the monitoring website (www.sbrusa.net), state soybean rust sentinel planting, monitoring/scouting, predictive model building, and the coordination, infrastructure and information technology support cost \$3 million. The scouting and monitoring for soybean rust accounts for approximately \$1.6 million. Essentially 38 states receive money for this coordinated effort on an annual basis. The current plans at the federal level are to reduce annual funding by as much as 75% (see below). Those of us within extension that make up the soybean rust scouting team (myself, three retired extension employees who are gracious enough to help scout for rust each year, Alan Henn who led the effort in 2007, and Lee Taylor who filled in for Malcolm Broome) believe that the funds we used in 2007 allowed us to quickly gather and distribute information to our MS soybean producers and ultimately saved producers an estimated \$24 million. This figure is based on approximately 1.36 million acres of soybeans that we believe were not treated for the sole purpose of controlling soybean rust (this does not account for the R3-R4 fungicide application that has become a part of our production system). Estimated savings were calculated based on 1.6 million acres of total soybeans in MS and figuring an \$18/acre cost of fungicide and application was applied to approximately 240,000 acres of soybeans. Since the sentinel network was adopted in 2005 we have relied on other individuals, including university personnel (specifically S.M.A.R.T. program personnel) and consultants that offered us their time to aid in rust scouting. In 2007 we scouted over 725 unique locations in MS for soybean rust. I say unique because these locations were observed at least a single time. In most cases the location was observed throughout the season for rust and could have been observed on a weekly basis. Keep in mind MS has approximately 250,000 acres of kudzu.

There are several alternative plans in the works at the federal level that could include drastically cutting the sentinel system funding for the southern states. I will not provide you with an exact figure for the MS rust scouting efforts, but suffice to say that we will potentially get 1/3 of our 2008 monies in 2009. To put this situation into perspective we could barely cover travel for half of the scouting year and would have to drastically limit the amount of time that we put into scouting for the disease. Our current scouting strategy splits the state into four regions and within each region we have one person scouting sentinel plots as well as kudzu and production soybean fields on a weekly basis. Then, roughly every other week several of us get together to make a larger trip to scout some of the “nooks and crannies” where we think the disease might occur first. It was on one of those trips last year that we were able to positively identify rust in MS in a kudzu patch in Wilkinson County.

We have begun to extensively scout MS for soybean rust in 2008. Sentinel plots have been planted in key locations again this year and we have added at least two locations, with a possible third planned depending on the flooding situation in Wilkinson County. I wanted to take the time to share the funding situation with each of you because in each of the years that we have had a sentinel system in MS (2008 marks the 4th year) we have positively identified soybean rust on soybeans (not including kudzu) in a sentinel plot prior to finding the disease in a production soybean field. The sentinel network has worked for MS soybean producers. Those of us actively involved are doing everything we can to spread the word on the funding situation.

Depending upon how disease progression occurs in 2008 we will likely not have heard the last of this situation.

Corn Insects

Dr. Chris Daves

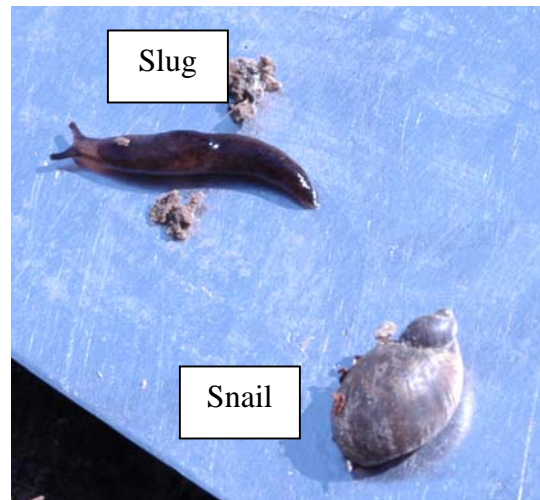
Chinch Bugs: Watch for chinch bugs in seedling corn. Chinch bugs overwinter on wild grasses and will move into seedling corn fields to feed on the young plants. Adults and nymphs can be found feeding on seedling corn by examining the base of the plants and by pulling the lower leaves away from the plant. Damaged plants may be wilted or yellowish in appearance. Chinch bugs are often associated with hot dry conditions because they flourish under these conditions. However, heavy rainfall events can severely reduce populations by washing them off the plants and sealing over the cracks in the ground where they often hide. Current thresholds for chinch bugs are only for plants 6 inches tall or less. Treatments are justified on plants less than 6 inches tall when 20% of the plants have 5 or more chinch bugs present. When treatments are warranted, increase water volume to 15-20 GPA. Plants larger than 6 inches tall can tolerate higher populations and there are no set thresholds at this time.



Slugs

Angus Catchot and Jeff Gore

We are beginning to get more calls on slugs. Slugs are almost exclusively a no-till problem. This year is shaping up to be very conducive for slug infestations. Wet and cool conditions are favorable for slugs. In almost every case it is also associated with no-till behind corn or milo. Like in years past where slugs have been an issue, it starts on corn, progresses to soybeans, and then calls start on cotton. This is simply due to the order that crops generally emerge in MS. Don't confuse snails with slugs. Slugs are the ones that cause the damage and don't have shells. Snails have shells and can sometimes be found in high numbers on the crops, however, we have never been able to attribute damage to snails (see picture at right).



So what do you do if your having slug problems? In 2004, Dr. Jeff Gore and myself conducted several tests and bioassays trying to control slugs. Chemically, we had absolutely no control with any product we could think of to test, both by topical application and ingestion. The exception to that is a product made by Amvac called Deadline MP. This is a slug and snail bait that is applied broadcast. Use rate is 10-40 lbs./Acre. We tested the 10# rate and reduced slug populations in replicated field test by 92% compared to the untreated check 10 days after treatment. Cost back then was about \$18-20/Acre at the 10# rate. However, as we moved into the summer, the problem went away and we never got to test lower rates. Short of this product, there are no other good options besides tillage that I am aware of. When temperatures warm up, and plants begin growing, usually you can "outgrow" the problem.

Cotton

Dr. Darrin Dodds

Planting Report: USDA reports indicate that approximately 7% of the Mississippi Cotton crop has been planted. Rough estimations place this at about 20,000 – 30,000 acres planted in the state. Nearly all of these acres were planted last week. Over the past five years, we have planted approximately 29% of our acres by the last week of April. Mississippi was projected to plant 420,000 acres of Cotton this year, only time will tell if we hit this mark.

Planting Forecast: The following comments are meant to be used as a guide. Keep in mind weather forecasts can, and do, change regularly.

Predicted DD60 Accumulation for Five Days Following Planting	Outlook for Planting
< 10	Very Poor
11-15	Poor
16-25	Marginal
26-50	Good
>50	Very Good

North Delta:

5-day DD60 accumulation: 26

Precipitation: 10% Thursday, 60% Friday, and 20% Saturday – Monday

Planting Forecast: Marginal – One-half of the total DD60 accumulation over the next 5 days will take place on Thursday. Beyond Thursday, planting forecasts are poor until at least the beginning of next week. With the exception of some fields with lighter soils, most field operations are on hold. Due to a good chance of rain on Friday and cooler temperatures over the weekend, it would be best to keep cotton in the sack until at least the beginning of next week.

Mid-Delta:

5-day DD60 accumulation: 46

Precipitation: 10% Thursday, 40% Friday, and 20 – 30% Saturday – Monday

Planting Forecast: Good – Wet soil conditions will prevent field work on mixed to heavier soil types until at least the end of this week. Field work on lighter soils could begin tomorrow. Caution is urged if trying to get back onto wet soils ahead of the predicted showers on Friday.

South Delta:

5-day DD60 accumulation: 51

Precipitation: 10% Thursday, 40% Friday, and 20 – 30% Saturday – Monday

Planting Forecast: Very Good – Many areas of the South Delta received substantially less rainfall over the past weekend than other parts of the state. Field operations are underway in several locations in the South Delta.

Northeast MS:

5-day DD60 accumulation: 27.5

Precipitation: 10% Thursday, 40% Friday, and 20 – 30% Saturday – Monday

Planting Forecast: Marginal – Areas between Highway 82 and Tupelo received significant rainfall over the past weekend and field operations are on hold for the remainder of this week. However, some areas north of Tupelo will begin field work today. Some areas in extreme north MS received increased rainfall and will be out of the field until the end of the week or the

beginning of next week. Cooler temperatures and the chance of rainfall toward the end of the week suggest cotton planting should be on hold until the beginning of next week.

Early Season Weed Control: The critical period of weed control refers to the time when weeds will have a negative impact on the crop. Generally speaking, the critical period of weed control to avoid yield losses ranges from two- to three-weeks after crop and weed emergence to about six weeks after crop and weed emergence. Some research has suggested that cotton should be maintained weed-free from two weeks to ten weeks after emergence to prevent yield losses. Cotton is not as competitive with weeds as some other crops, especially early in the growing season. Research has shown that lint yields are reduced 11.2% for each week that ivyleaf morningglory control was delayed until 9.5 weeks after weed and crop emergence. However, after 9.5 weeks, only 0.2% lint yield loss per week was observed. Other research has shown



Due to cottons low competitive ability, especially early in the growing season, we should strive for reduced early competition from weeds.

sicklepod, common cocklebur, and tall morningglory populations of 1 plant per 3 row feet can reduce yields 40-60%. Although late germinating weeds may not cause direct yield losses reduced crop quality, interference with harvest operations, and production of seeds and other reproductive structures ensuring future weed populations can cause problems down the road.

Fond Farewell: Dr. Will McCarty is retiring from the Mississippi State University Extension Service on April 30, 2008. Dr. McCarty served as the Cotton Specialist for many years and later served as Associate Director of the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Dr. McCarty rightfully earned a regional, national, and international reputation as Extension Cotton Specialist with Mississippi State University. He set an example for many to follow not only his knowledge of cotton production, but also in the way he carried himself and presented a valuable source of information for all of those who work in the cotton industry. We wish Dr. McCarty great success and happiness in his retirement.

Market Briefs

Dr. Steve Martin and Dr. John Anderson

Cotton: New York (ICE) cotton futures prices have weakened over the last two weeks. Market fundamentals have come back into play after the technical run-up played out. The December 2008 contract is trading around \$0.80 per pound down \$0.04 from earlier this month, and the Dec 2009 contract is around \$0.89.

The cotton market continues to try to balance reduced acres in 2008 and most likely in 2009 with record carryover and reduced domestic consumption. Prices will likely move up from current levels on weather related problems throughout the growing season but significant moves are unlikely unless disastrous conditions develop in the west Texas area. With the weather delays to corn and soybean planting in the mid-south and southeast, additional cotton acreage could be possible. The cotton market at this point does not expect additional acreage and therefore additional acreage would not be positive for prices.

Corn: Corn futures posted strong gains on Monday as the market tries to anticipate the possible impacts of continued wet and cool weather in the Midwest. September corn closed on Monday at \$6.24, up 23 ½ cents from Friday's close and getting back pretty close to contract highs put in a couple of weeks ago.

The reason for the market's intensity on Monday was made plain with the release of the weekly *Crop Progress* report on Monday afternoon. According to that report, corn planting stands at 10% complete as of April 27. That is a mere 6% increase over the previous week. More significantly, that planting progress is substantially behind the 5-year average progress of 35% planted by this time of year. The numbers are even worse in key states. In Iowa, planting is 3% complete compared to a 5-year average of 33%. In Illinois, planting is 6% complete compared to a 5-year average of 55%. This slow planting pace raises concerns that planting delays will, at best, compromise yield potential and, at worst, lead to a reduction in final corn acreage. With tight stocks and unprecedented demand, that suggests the need for even more rationing of corn through still-higher prices. Of course, it is early, and a good corn crop is not at all out of the question at this point. This first real weather market of the year provides a good opportunity to price a bit more corn for producers who may have a crop up and now may be feeling a bit more confident of their production prospects.

Rice: Rice futures contracts on the Chicago Board of Trade have continued to strengthen over the last two weeks as the realization of a global rice shortage continues to be felt around the world. New crop contracts have also advanced based on limited rice acres in 2008 and the continued strength of prices in the other grain markets. The May 2008 contract is currently trading around \$23.30 per cwt and the November around \$21.30 per cwt.

The big news in the rice market last week was the announcement by Sam's and Costco to ration rice. Their statement said that customers were limited to four-20 pound bags. One pound individual family packages were not affected. While this announcement created a lot of attention in the media, as we all know the US is not going to run out of rice this year. The rationing was for imported rice and thus did have some merit since many of the global exporting countries have limited their exports. However, there are other suppliers of this rice and, thus far anyway, they have not suggested any problems filling customers' orders. It was interesting though to see the

reaction of the U.S. when the scare of “no food” was presented. Certainly the answer to the food-versus-fuel debate was provided.

Rice prices should continue to remain strong and possibly increase over the next several months. Without doubt the June USDA *Acreage* report will show more acres planted than the March intentions reported indicated. However, it is unlikely that the increase in acreage will be enough to affect the market negatively. Look for Mississippi acreage to be up from the 180,000 acres suggested in March and be close to or above 200,000.

Soybeans: For much of the past six months or so, there has been a pretty strong positive relationship between corn and soybean prices. As one crop’s price has risen, the other’s has risen as well. The same has been true for price declines. This reflects the competition for acreage in which these crops are generally engaged. This week, however, we have seen a divergence in corn and soybean prices. On Monday, corn futures were up sharply while soybean futures were down even more sharply. November soybeans closed on Monday at \$11.96 ½, down 25 ½ cents from last Friday’s close. This reflects the effect of delayed corn planting in the Midwest. Corn planting progress is far behind schedule, and weather forecasts suggest that it may be difficult to catch up. This could very well lead producers to opt for more soybeans, which present a more flexible planting window.

Nearby soybean futures were down much more than new crop contracts on Monday. May soybeans closed on Monday at \$12.83 ½. This was a drop of 42 ¼ cents from Friday’s close. News in the market was that the Argentine farmers’ strike may be drawing closer to a permanent resolution. This strike has been seen as a positive factor for demand for US soybeans. Moving forward, soybean futures are likely to remain under pressure as these demand side issues sort out and, much more significantly, as Midwest weather continues to make corn planting difficult.

Wheat: Wheat futures have benefited from troublesome Midwest weather, advancing along with corn futures on Monday. July Wheat closed at \$8.41 on Monday – a gain of 25 ½ cents over Friday’s close. Support from the corn market notwithstanding, conditions in the wheat market remain pretty challenging in the short run. The market is facing what will most likely be a record-shattering wheat crop. At this point, crop conditions remain pretty good. Monday’s *Crop Progress* report showed 46% of the crop rated Good-to-Excellent – a 1% improvement over last week. The approaching harvest will likely keep the market on the defensive, with a weather-driven run in corn prices about the most positive fundamental factor to work with in the short run.

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.

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