



Cotton/Soybean Insect Newsletter

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24 July 2020

Pest Patrol Alerts

The information contained herein each issue is available via text alerts that direct users to online recordings. I will update the short message often for at least as long as the newsletter runs. After a new message is posted, a text message is sent to alert users that I have recorded a new update. Users can subscribe for text message alerts for my updates in two easy steps. Step one: register by texting **pestpat7** to 97063. Step two: reply to the confirmation text you receive by texting the letter “y” to complete your registration. Pest Patrol Alerts are sponsored by Syngenta.

Updates on Twitter

When noteworthy events happen in the field, I will be sending them out quickly via Twitter. If you want to follow those quick updates, follow me at [@bugdocisin](https://twitter.com/bugdocisin) on Twitter.



News from Around the State

Charles Davis, county agent in Calhoun County, reported that it is difficult for him to find aphids in cotton now because of the natural fungus taking them out. He saw plenty of lady beetle pupal “skins” attached to leaves (photo here) that completed their development after doing all they could in eating aphids. **Fleming McMaster**, local crop consultant, reported earlier this week that he is triggering thresholds for stink bugs in cotton he has in the 3rd week of bloom. He also reported it being pretty quiet in the soybean fields he is checking. **Tom Smith**, local crop consultant, reported that “last week we began treating a few fields for the sucking bug complex. This week activity has jumped quite significantly, particularly with cotton fields nearest corn and peanut fields as you would anticipate. Have been observing both green and brown stink bug species with a few tarnished plant bugs in mix as well. In some fields, “boll hits” have more than doubled from last week to now. The aphid fungus is spreading now but still varies from field to field. No sightings of spider mites yet, but I’m expecting to see them shortly in some fields unless rains become widespread. Bollworm moth sightings also picking



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up...lot of corn fields drying down now.” Tom also saw some southern green stink bug nymphs feeding on squares, adults mating, and predatory stink bugs and spiders out there trying to help us.



Cotton Situation

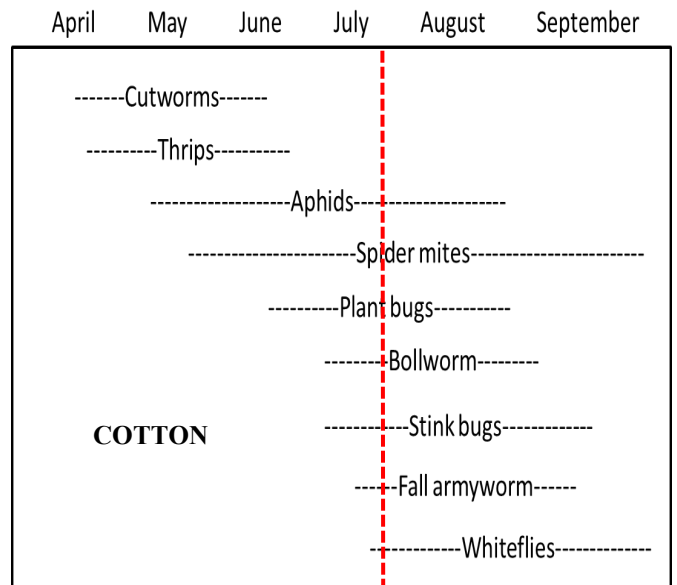
As of 19 July 2020, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office estimated that about 69% of the crop is squaring, compared with 58% at this time last week, 83% at this time last year, and 76% for the 5-year average. About 14% of the crop is setting bolls, compared with 7% at this time last week, 48%



at this time last year, and 37% for the 5-year average. The condition of the crop was described as 13% excellent, 48% good, 23% fair, 11% poor, and 5% very poor. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

Cotton Insects

Things have changed quickly in the past week. Bollworm moths are very noticeable flying around in blooming cotton, and trap captures went up again. I think we are higher now with traps captures than we were all last year, and activity is likely going to pick up more in the next couple of weeks. Eggs are more easily observed now. We observed caterpillars and injury in non-Bt cotton in my plot work this week, but the 2- and 3-gene Bt cotton seems to be holding up well, although we still detected some injury. The first couple of weeks of bloom are critical for finding bollworm escaping control from in-plant Bt toxins. Continue to scout for eggs, injury to squares, and look for damage to and larvae in white blooms and bolls, as well as under bloom tags, particularly on 2-gene cotton.



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We did see larvae in blooms on non-Bt cotton, and a few of them were rather large. We also saw a few odd things in the field today you don't see on every field visit. Here is a hatching egg mass of saltmarsh caterpillars.



Populations of cotton aphid have crashed in a big way due to the naturally occurring fungus *Neozygites fresenii* in some areas. Are you glad you didn't spray for aphids now? Saving input costs and having Mother Nature help out is a good deal. I have yet to see widespread symptoms of the viral Cotton Leaf Roll Dwarf Disease (CLRDD) transmitted by cotton aphid. That is also a good thing.

We are going to start talking more about managing stink bugs next week, but I hope you have noted the first week of bloom for scouted fields, as you will need to know what week of bloom you are in to use our dynamic boll-injury threshold to control stink bugs effectively. I mentioned this last week, but it is worth repeating. We consider the first week of bloom when every other plant has its initial white flower. This occurs shortly after you notice the first bloom in the field (generally about 60 days after planting). Don't miss noting the first week of bloom! As stink bugs become the main focus during the "stink bug month" of August, we should continue to scout for bollworm and manage the complex appropriately. The pyrethroid insecticides are still the class of insecticide chemistry we should be using for controlling stink bugs, and we still get some control of bollworm escaping Bt toxins with the pyrethroids, but be aware they are not what they used to be. I will provide more about that next week, as we have assayed bollworm in the laboratory with pyrethroid-coated vials and will have some data to report.

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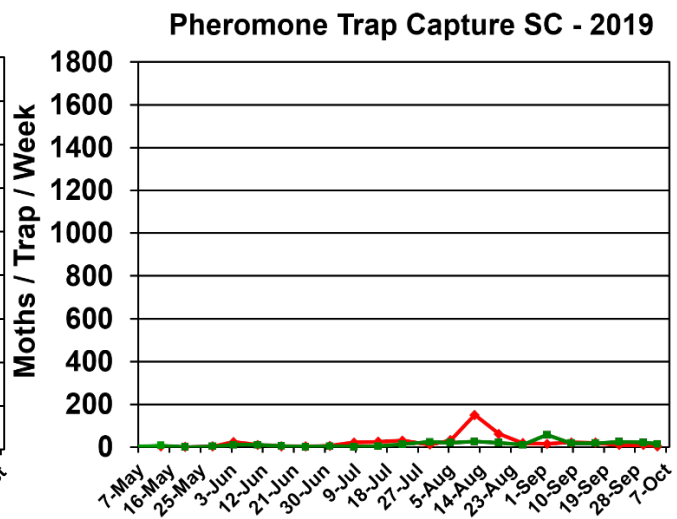
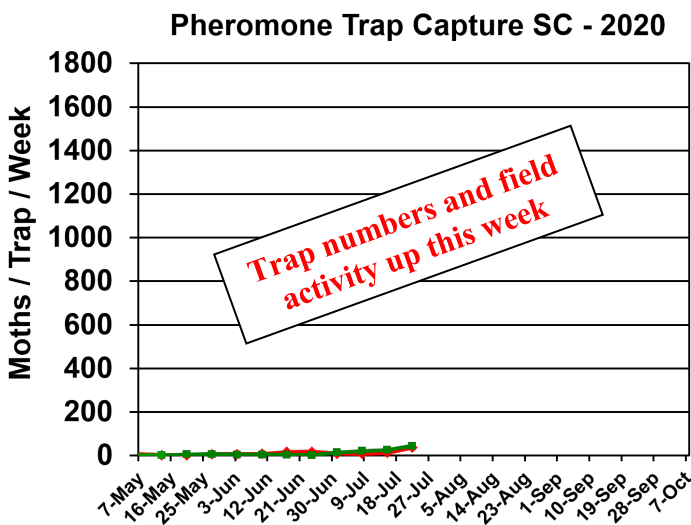
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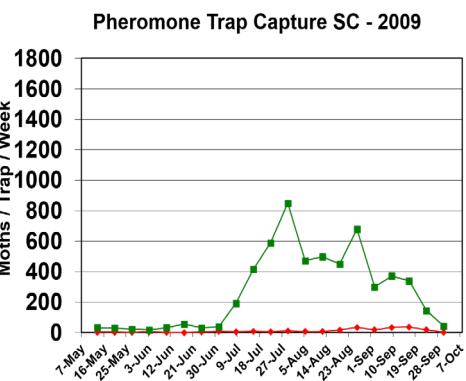
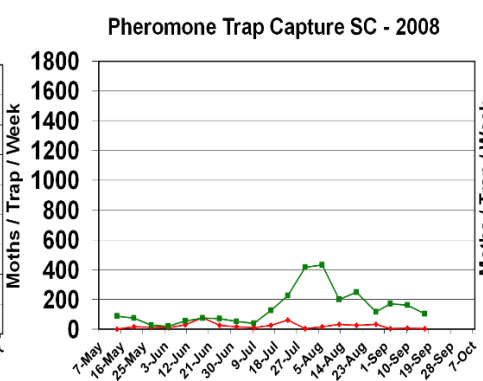
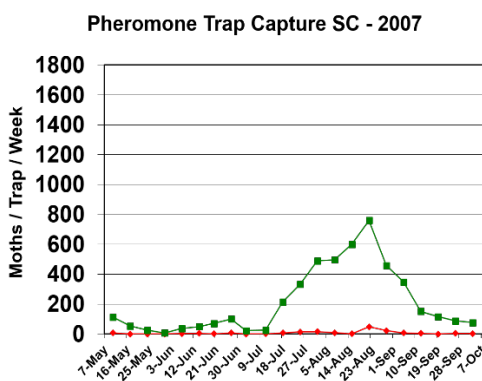
Bollworm & Tobacco Budworm



Captures of bollworm (BW) and tobacco budworm (TBW) moths in pheromone traps at EREC this season are shown below, as are the captures from 2007-2019 for reference. Tobacco budworm continues to be important for our soybean acres and for any acres of non-Bt cotton. I provide these data as a measure of moth presence and activity in our local area near my research plots. The numbers are not necessarily representative of the species throughout the state.



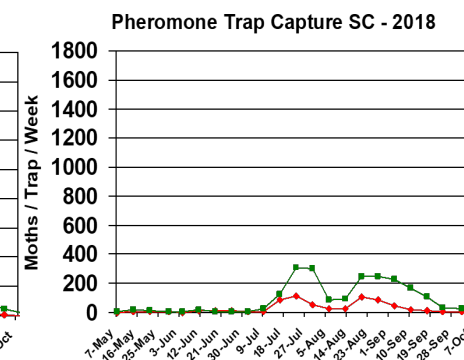
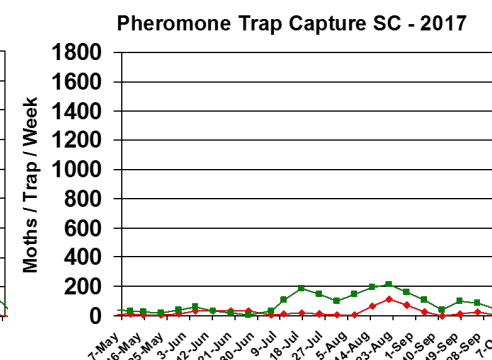
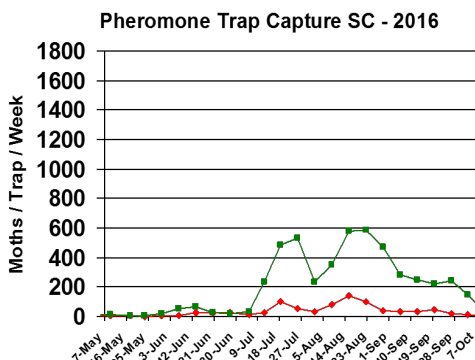
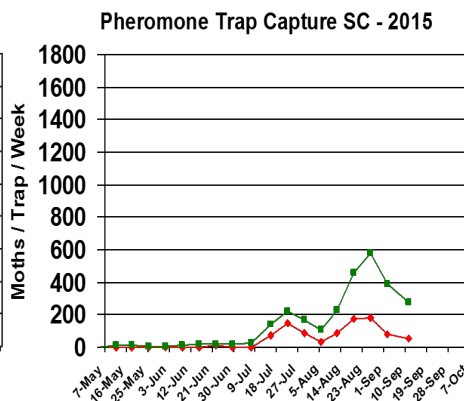
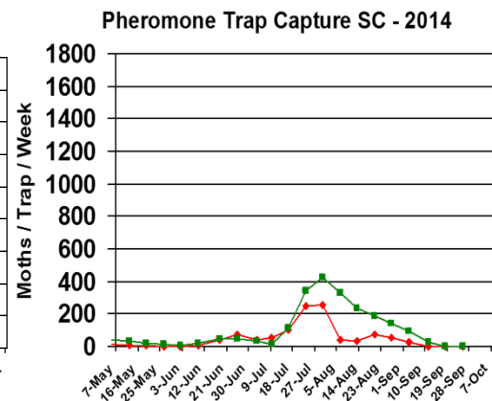
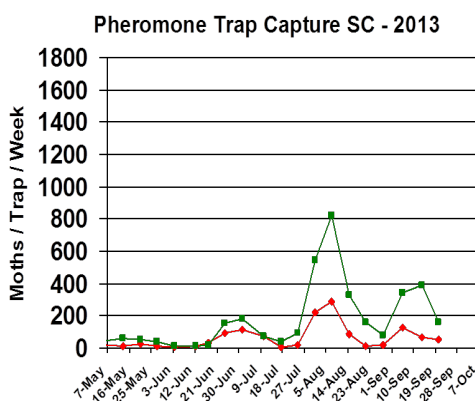
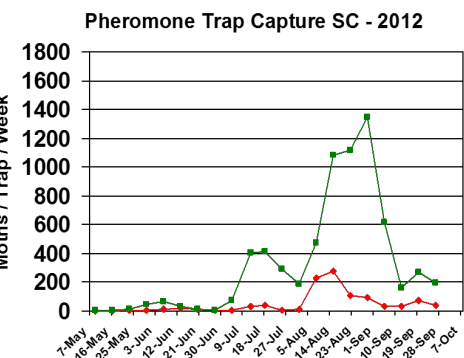
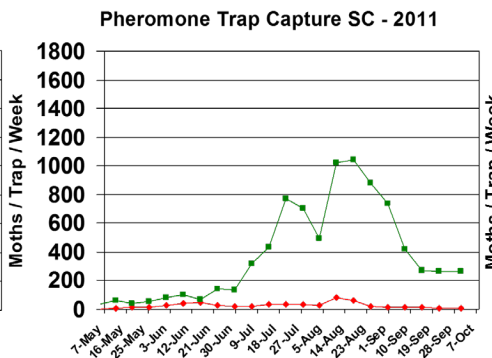
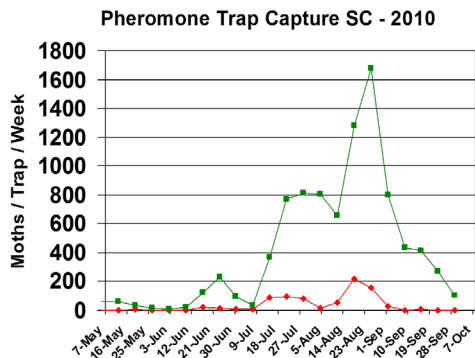
Trap data from 2007-2018 are shown below for reference to other years of trapping data from EREC:



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Pest Management Handbook – 2020

Insect control recommendations are available online in the 2020 South Carolina Pest Management Handbook at:

<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/agronomy/pest%20management%20handbook.html>

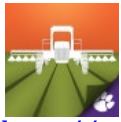
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For historical cotton/soybean insect newsletters:

<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/agronomy/cotton1/newsletters.html>

Sincerely,

Jeremy K. Greene, Ph.D.
Professor of Entomology



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