Welcome to the first issue of Panhandle Agriculture Crop Alert. It is our objective to keep you, the agricultural professional, current on alerts, events, and trends affecting all phases of commercial agriculture in Florida's Panhandle region. This newsletter is designed to bring you the critical facts and contact information if you want further data. This publication is the combined effort of UF/IFAS Extension Agents and State Specialist who have first-hand expertise with Florida's Panhandle Agriculture. Your questions, comments and suggestions are welcome. Feel free to call or e-mail me or your local UF/IFAS County Extension Agent, and yes, we do want your questions and photographs.

We are here to keep Florida Agriculture successful by serving you with the latest information.

Prepared By: Les Harrison, Extension Agent - Sustainable Agriculture, Leon County, harrisong@leoncountyfl.gov

**Thistles in Pasture**

**Issue/Affecting Crop:** Thistles are especially bad this year. Does El Nino effect thistles? Are there any better or lower cost solutions for thistle control?

**What does the specialist say about this:** I’m not sure, but I doubt El Nino has influence. The winter was more severe than normal and cool temperatures continued well into the spring. Instead of the pasture grasses transitioning at normal time, they were delayed due to cool weather. This suppressed grass growth allowed more thistles to survive/thrive due to lack of competition with the desirable grasses.

At least we have a herbicide with a new name from Dow AgroSciences.

While there are many herbicides that control thistles GrazonNext is reported to work very well controlling thistle. Many of these herbicides currently available are most effective if applied before the thistle blooms. GrazonNext contains aminopyralid, one of the most potent herbicides ever developed for thistles. GrazonNext applied at 2 pt/A ($8/A) will control most all thistles, regardless of size or reproductive state.

Prepared By: Doug Mayo, County Extension Director, Jackson County, demayo@ufl.edu
**Target Spot in Tomatoes**

**Issue/Alert Affecting Crop:** In the last 10 days I have seen Target Spot in tomatoes in 3 different commercial producers fields, scattered across Holmes County.

**What does the specialist say about this:** Target Spot (fungal causal agent: *Corynespora cassiicola*) The symptoms are leaf spots which start as small brown spots and as each increases in size, a sunken area, dull green in color, surrounds the spot. In older leaves the center of the spot is white. Fruit rot is most often on the shoulder or sides and starts as small white, circular spots with a definite border. Later the spots enlarge or coalesce up to 1/2 inch, become noticeably sunken, and are brown to black.

Chemical Controls: Fungicides available for control include Amistar, Quadris, Tanos, Evito, and Cabrio. Combine one of these materials with chlorothalonil every 5 to 7 days.

Prepared By: Shep Eubanks, County Extension Director, Holmes County, bigbuck@ufl.edu

**Northern Corn Leaf Blight Reported**

**Issue/Alert Affecting Crop:** Several county faculty have reported disease on corn as corn starts tasseling. This is a critical stage to control diseases since corn will not be mature for grain until about 60 days later. There have been reports of northern corn leaf blight along with rust on corn. Consider an application of fungicide under current weather conditions (daily afternoon showers).

A tank mix of a strobilurin (Headline, Quadris, etc.) and a triazole (Folicur, Tilt, etc.) covers a broad spectrum of diseases.

Prepared By: Dr, David Wright, Professor, Small Grains, North Florida REC - Quincy, wright@ufl.edu

**Worms in Amaranth**

**Issue/Alert Affecting Crop:** Please take a look at the attached photo of worms on amaranth leaves. Some of our local market gardeners have reported these and would like to know what they are and how they should be treated.

**What does the specialist say about this:** I can’t tell for sure what kind of caterpillar they are. My first guess is beet army worm, but I need better pictures. You are also welcome to send me some actual specimens if you’d like (alive would be best), for a positive identification. The link below provides information about the beet army worm.

http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/leaf/beet_armyworm.htm

Prepared By: Les Harrison, Extension Agent - Sustainable Ag, Leon County, harrisiong@leoncountyfl.gov
Thrips in Cotton

**Issue/Alert Affecting Crop:** The western panhandle cotton crop is in the ground and progressing. Fertilizer has been applied for the next two weeks and insect pressure has begun. Thrips are showing up in larger numbers. Starting pinhead square on older cotton. An inch to 2 ½ inches of rain in early June has accelerated the week growth.

**What does the specialist say about this:** Thrips are showing up in high numbers in cotton across the panhandle. Most of the cotton has had adequate rainfall although there are areas with a moisture deficit. Some cotton is being treated. However, with good growing conditions, cotton can outgrow the thrips damage. All of the side-dressed nitrogen should go out between pinhead square and bloom period. Nitrogen applications after the 3rd week of bloom does not contribute to yield in most cases if an adequate boll load has been set. Weeds should be controlled by lay-by applications with residual materials along with glyphosate.

Prepared By: Libbie Johnson, Extension Agent - Ag/Agronomy/Aquaculture, Escambia County, Libbie@ufl.edu

Washington County Agriculture Busy

**Issue/Alert Affecting Crops:** Agriculture related activity is going full bore. Cantaloupe harvest started in earnest the first week of June. Watermelons should start during the third week. Squash and tomatoes are moving at a rapid pace as is most other produce. The Farmer’s Market in Chipley has been open a few weeks and activity is brisk. Cotton and peanut planting should wrap up this week except for a few acres of late green peanuts. Pastures and weeds are both growing at a rapid pace. Soda Apple and pig weed appear to be the worse at this time, but ragweed and dog fennel aren’t far behind.

Prepared By: Andy Andreasen, County Extension Director, Washington County, amajr@ufl.edu

Contact Your Local UF/IFAS County Extension Agents

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