

Dealing with cotton diseases

By J.T. SMITH

WITH West Texas weather infamous for going from one extreme to another, you never know what to expect from the myriad of cotton diseases.

"There's no such thing as an 'average year' in West Texas," says Jason Woodward, Texas AgriLife Extension area plant pathologist, Lubbock.

But the good news is many effective products are available to control common diseases in cotton.

Sore shin is a common disease to cotton in Texas and is caused by *Rhizoctonia solani*.

Various seed treatments are available to control the disease, Woodward notes. In one study, researchers looked at:

- Baytan 30 + Argent + Allegiance FL (base fungicide)
- Base + Trilex + Vortex
- Base + Dynasty
- Untreated control

In the work, various seed treatments clearly increased cotton stands. Dynasty and Trilex worked extremely well against *R. solani* in curbing sore shin.

Key Points

- Seed treatments can increase cotton stands in cool soil.
- Skippy cotton stands lower yield and invite weeds.
- Good products are available to deal with cotton diseases.

Boyd Padgett, Louisiana State University plant pathologist, says especially when wild spring weather brings a cold snap, seed-applied fungicides, including Trilex Advanced Seed-Applied System, can be a good insurance policy for cotton growers.

"Trilex Advanced is a good product that has a fit," Padgett says. "Cotton just does not do well in cold soils, and seed treatments can carry the plant through cold snaps."

Pathogen problems

Padgett notes that although damaging seed pathogens like *Rhizoctonia* and *Phythium* do not thrive in cool soils, they survive well enough to infect cotton plants.

Padgett says cotton growers who have fields with a history

of high levels of these diseases should consider an additional in-furrow fungicide treatment to maximize protection.

Skippy stands don't just lower yield potential, he notes, the skips also are an open invitation for weeds to fill in the gaps. Severe stand skips can even cause difficulties during defoliation.

He says the decision to go with a base fungicide or upgrade to a premium fungicide like Trilex Advanced is a classic example of risk management.

"If growers are willing to roll the dice and stay with a base fungicide those few times they don't get a healthy stand, they'll either have to replant — which is expensive — or they're left with a crop that never totally recovers," Padgett says.

Trilex Advanced is an excellent partner with Aeris insecticide and nematicide treatment, he notes.

And growers who use an at-plant insecticide, such as Temik insecticide-nematicide, can also use Trilex Advanced. The two products will protect cotton seedlings against a broad spectrum of early-

season insects, nematodes and disease pressures.

New wilt in California

Fusarium wilt is a seed-borne disease that Texas growers long have been fighting in cotton fields.

But Woodward is a bit worried because of a new infestation of fusarium wilt that recently has shown up in California.

"It doesn't need nematodes to be present," Woodward laments.

Woodward says that's worrisome because in Texas the control of fusarium wilt has been a matter of controlling nematodes.

Woodward says officials in California were able to trace the arrival of the new infestation of fusarium wilt to Australian cattle feed coming into the U.S.

Verticillium wilt, root knot

Verticillium wilt infection takes place during the cotton growing season at first flower.

"You'll typically see a motley yellowing on leaves," Woodward notes.

Cotton variety selection is



DISEASE FIGHTER:

Jason Woodward, Texas AgriLife Extension Service area plant

pathologist, Lubbock, says there's no typical year when it comes to cotton diseases in West Texas. The weather is just too extreme year to year.

proving important in fighting verticillium wilt, he reports.

Certain FiberMax, Delta and Pine Land, and Paymaster varieties have done well against verticillium wilt, Woodward notes.

This includes the DP 455 BGRR as well as the FiberMax 960 series.

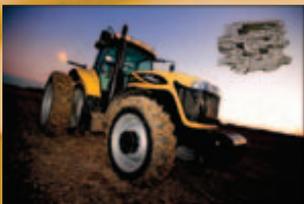
The pathologist says growers must be careful not to confuse nutrient deficiency for disease.

For example, root knot nematode damage can mimic nutrient deficiency in cotton. Meanwhile, nematodes can rapidly produce over several generations in a field.

Woodward says Temik 15G insecticide-nematicide has shown good results in controlling root knot nematodes.

"THIS POWERSHIFT IS COSTING ME BIG TIME."

"WE HEAR YOU."



TECHSTAR™
CVT
STANDARD EQUIPMENT
ON MT600B SERIES TRACTORS

Waiting for your transmission to catch up between gears is a drag. Translation?...lost power, lost time, lost money. Enter the TechStar CVT (continuously variable transmission). With infinite speed selections from 0 - 32 mph, it continues to enable the Challenger MT500B & MT600B Series tractors to literally leave the competition in their dust.

It allows you to precisely match ground travel speed to the specific application. You'll see significant savings in cost per acre per hour, over competitor models with powershift transmissions.

So stop stalling. Get it in gear. Get yourself a Challenger.

Challenger

Cat & Challenger are registered trademarks of Caterpillar. ©2007 AGCO Corporation CH484E07V01



holtcat.com
Victoria
203 Holt Road
361.573.2438



www.wagnerequipment.com
El Paso
10501 Dyer St.
800.345.7878



www.warrenecat.com
Midland
10000 W. I-20
866-2WARREN