

NW Panhandle Crop Notes

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Getting Underway with Blog Notes

Yes, it is time to get started with a blog so thank you for tuning in and reading. I plan to post updates, educational event announcements, summaries of published information and links to resources on a range of agronomic-related matters pertaining to the Northwest Panhandle of Texas (primarily Dallam, Hartley, Moore and Sherman counties). Discussion will be related to management of crop inputs, general agronomy, cropping systems and conservation of our limited soil and water resources.

The list of crop commodities grown throughout the Northwest Panhandle is extensive including cotton, corn, grain sorghum, wheat, alfalfa, potatoes, sun flowers, various cover crops, melons, and more. Forage production is needed on a large scale throughout this region, particularly in support of the feeder livestock and dairy industries. Combined, there is no short fall of things to communicate about. If you are aware of an emerging, agronomic concern that needs answering individually or in this post, please let me know. E-mail to dennis.coker@ag.tamu.edu or call the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Dallam-Hartley, Moore or Sherman county offices and the staff will connect us.

Weather – Precipitation and Temperatures at Planting

A few precipitation events have continued to occur, even since the middle of April as corn and eventually cotton planting efforts got underway across the region. Rainfall amounts vary across the region as one might expect. According to weather data reported by Better Harvest Inc., Dalhart and Stratford have received just under two inches rainfall year to date while 3.23 and 3.74 inches fell near Dumas and Sunray, respectively. Any amount of rainfall received this time of year helps to conserve water applied pre-plant via irrigation systems, replenish top-soil moisture, partially replace what is lost via surface evaporation and supports seedling germination and emergence. I will be frequently revisiting the topic of soil moisture status and crop water need as the season continues.

Temperatures around the region were on the upward swing with day highs reaching 80 degrees F at Dumas by the 27th of April and holding steady through the end of last week (May 8th). During that time, Growing Degree Units for cotton (DD60s) were accumulating as well as for corn. Daytime high temperatures decreased by about 10-12 degrees F since then with no accumulation of heat units for cotton but it appears this trend will be short lived. Yesterday's temperature in Dumas reached 90 degrees F. I will be posting more information soon about resources for tracking heat units and how these relate to growth and management of corn and cotton.

Cotton Studies Planted Last Week

Efforts to plant the 2020 cotton RACE Trials have been underway. The following images were collected May 4th at the Tommy Cartwright Farm (Northeast of Sunray, Sherman county) and May 6th at the North Plains Groundwater Conservation Farm (East of Etter, Moore county).



Plate 1. Planting three varieties of cotton seed, eight rows each pass down length of plot in the 2020 Cotton RACE Trial at Tommy Cartwright Farm, Sherman county.



Plate 2. AgriLife Extension team changing out varieties of cotton seed for the next set of plots to be planted in the 2020 Cotton RACE Trial at Tommy Cartwright Farm, Sherman county.



Plate 3. Checking seed placement and ground conditions as cotton planting got underway on plots in the 2020 Cotton RACE Trial at the North Plains Groundwater Conservation Farm, Moore county.

Thank you for reading...stay tuned. I will aim to post information frequently. Looking forward to gentle rains and sunshine in between.