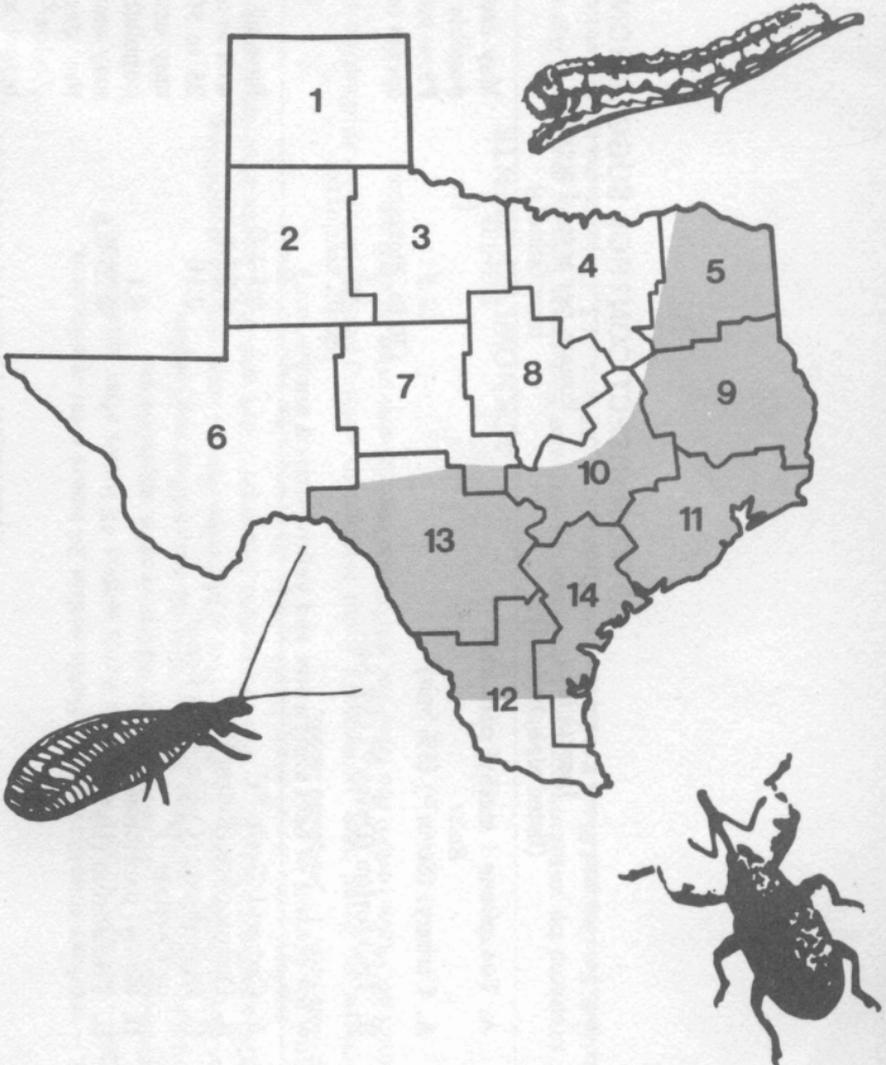


# SUGGESTIONS for controlling Cotton Insects

in South  
and East Texas Counties



# Suggestions for Controlling Cotton Insects in South and East Texas Counties

Suggestions in this publication are based on results of continuing research conducted throughout the state by the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and the Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Research results from other cotton producing states for some of the minor cotton pests have been evaluated carefully and utilized in developing these suggestions. A committee of state and federal research personnel and specialists of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service meets annually to review research results and to develop suggestions for the safest, most profitable insect control practices for Texas producers.

At least 12 insect and mite species attacking Texas cotton show some resistance to once-effective chemicals. Evidence indicates that the more extensively a material is used, the more rapidly resistance develops. Therefore, use of insecticides should be restricted to actual need, based on accurate field scouting for insect pests and their damage.

For information on identification of major cotton insects, their life history and the kind of damage they cause, see *Cotton Insects* (B-933, Texas Agricultural Extension Service).

## INSECT CONTROL PROGRAM

Precise timing and execution of each production operation is extremely important in reducing insect injury and maximizing profits. In planning an insect control program, the cotton producer should consider effective use of both natural and cultural control. Cultural practices which reduce late season insect damage, insecticide treatments and overall production costs include early planting, proper fertilizing rates, minimum irrigation and short season cotton varieties. The short season cotton production system is most successful when based on a cotton variety which blooms and sets bolls early, matures rapidly and is ready to harvest in 150 days or less. The system also has the advantages of allowing early harvest, shredding, plow-up and land preparation before adverse fall weather. Other factors to be considered include insecticide resistance, the importance of protecting natural enemies of cotton insects, resurgence of primary pests and increased numbers of secondary pests following insecticide applications, environmental contamination with pesticides and increasing restrictions on pesticide use. Therefore, insecticides should be applied only when justified on the basis of frequent field scouting for the presence of insect pests and their damage, beneficial insect populations, established treatment levels, and growth stage of the cotton. *This approach to cotton pest management is preferred over other alternatives available to cotton producers.* (See table of suggestions for cotton insect control for further information.)

### Early Season

#### (Plant emergence to first 1/3-grown squares)

The damage and population buildups of *aphids* and *thrips* vary from season to season and area to area. In most cases insecticide treatment for these pests is not economically justified. These pests normally cause heaviest damage from plant emergence until early squaring begins. Heavy infestations may reduce stands, stunt plants, reduce fruiting and delay maturing.

The *cotton fleahopper*, which damages small squares, commonly occupies a key position in a cotton insect management program. Base chemical applications not only on fleahopper numbers but also upon fruiting rate and excessive small square loss. Potential for fleahopper damage is greatest during the first 3 weeks of squaring, beginning with "pinhead" square stage.

Carefully evaluate the decision to treat any of these three insect pests, because conditions may be favorable for creating outbreaks of bollworm-tobacco budworm by destroying beneficial insects. Beneficial insects build up by feeding on these insect pests, especially aphids and thrips.

### **Systemic Insecticides for Early Season Pests**

In certain areas where early season pests such as thrips, aphids, spider mites and leafminers consistently damage young cotton each year, preventive systemic insecticide applications are sometimes used as early season control alternatives to the preferred pest management system discussed above. In choosing either approach to early season control, key factors to consider include acreage, yield potential, available equipment and labor, knowledge of cotton pests and beneficial species, difficulties in getting a stand, drought tendencies etc. Certain limitations and advantages of systemics used at planting should be evaluated carefully before choosing their use over post-emergence control based upon actual need.

Systemics can be applied as seed treatments or as granules in the seed furrow. Disulfoton (Di-Syston®), monocrotophos (Azodrin®), and phorate (Thimet®) seed treatments, at the rate of 0.5 lb. active ingredient per 100 lb. of seed, will effectively control thrips, aphids, spider mites and leafminers for 2 to 3 weeks following planting. Disulfoton, phorate and aldicarb (Temik®) granules applied in the seed furrow at 0.5 to 1.0 lb. active ingredient per acre will control these same pests for 4 to 8 weeks following planting. Aldicarb applied at the 1.0 lb. a.i. rate will also control fleahoppers for up to 8 weeks after planting; however, this rate sometimes results in greater numbers of bollworms and tobacco budworms later in the season. Overwintered boll weevils moving into fields treated with 1.0 lb. a.i. of aldicarb within 4 to 5 weeks after planting will be killed, but significant control may not occur because overwintered weevils may continue entering treated fields later in the season.

### **Midseason and Late Season**

*Midseason* is the 6-week fruiting period following the appearance of first  $\frac{1}{3}$ -grown squares. The major concern during this period is insuring adequate fruit set. Proper crop management and frequent field inspection often can prevent premature insecticide applications during this period.

Overwintered boll weevils emerge from winter hibernation in February and March, and later in some areas, to feed on cotton. They occur in very low numbers and females do not lay eggs until the first squares are  $\frac{1}{3}$  grown. Insecticides applied at this time will suppress boll weevil population buildup until after peak bloom. This allows the plant to set a large number of bolls early, while having little adverse effect on mid- and late season buildup of beneficial insects to control bollworm-tobacco budworm.

*Late season* is the remainder of the production season when the major concern is boll protection. In fields where insecticide applications were initiated during the midseason or late-season periods, boll protection should be a primary con-

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cern as long as immature bolls are present which can be expected to mature before the average frost date for the area or before crop termination through the use of desiccants or defoliant.

Since cotton grown under irrigation or on high-yielding land is subject to insect damage later in the season than dry-land production, any management practice which prolongs plant growth (particularly irrigation and excessive nitrogen use) should be avoided during the late season.

Bollworms, tobacco budworms, pink bollworms and boll weevils are the principal insects involved in the late season control program. Apply insecticides when infestation counts and crop damage indicate the need. If a satisfactory fruit set occurred during the first 30 days of blooming, then higher numbers of weevil damaged squares can be tolerated. *Insecticides may be required at application intervals of not more than 5 days for effective control of the boll weevil, bollworm, tobacco budworm and pink bollworm.*

Once insecticidal applications begin, inspect fields frequently and repeat applications until the pest population has been reduced below economic levels.

For additional information on the pink bollworm, see *Ways to Fight the Pink Bollworm in Texas* (L-219, Texas Agricultural Extension Service).

## **EARLY STALK DESTRUCTION AND FARM CLEANUP**

Early harvest, stalk destruction and plowing under debris immediately after harvest are important cultural practices in reducing boll weevil, pink bollworm, bollworm and tobacco budworm populations. Pay particular attention to the destruction of green or cracked bolls and other plant debris left at the ends of rows following stripper harvest. Do not allow stubble regrowth or development of volunteer seedlings.

These practices force a portion of the boll weevil population into starvation before time to enter winter quarters, prevent late-season buildup of boll weevils, pink bollworms, bollworms and tobacco budworms and reduce the number surviving the winter. The addition of 0.5 lb. methyl parathion or 0.25 lb. azinphosmethyl (Guthion®) to arsenic acid or phosphate-type defoliant has proved effective in reducing potential overwintering boll weevil populations. See "Guidelines for Areawide Fall Boll Weevil Control Programs," available from your county Extension agent. *Do not add methyl parathion or azinphosmethyl to chlorate-type defoliant.* See *Cotton Defoliation Guide For Texas* (L-145, Texas Agricultural Extension Service) for a list of chlorate-type defoliant. *Growers and applicators are cautioned to use combinations of phosphate-type defoliant (Folex® and Def®) and phosphate insecticides with extreme care.* These combinations may pose a greater toxicity hazard than either of the compounds used alone.

## **BENEFICIAL INSECTS**

Natural populations of beneficial insects often can effectively control cotton pests such as the bollworm, tobacco budworm, cotton aphid and spider mite. However, use of released beneficial insects in cotton fields has not proved practical. Because most insecticides are highly injurious to the populations of beneficial insects, applications should be avoided unless frequent field inspections reveal economically damaging levels of injurious insects.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

In the late-season program dusts and sprays are equally effective when applied properly. Where chemicals are applied, thorough plant coverage is required to achieve control. If showers occur within 24 hours following an application, fields should be checked to determine possible need for repeating the applications. When infestations are heavy, increase dosages to the maximum recommended.

For detailed information on using sprays and spray machinery, see *Insecticidal Spraying of Field Crops With Ground Machinery* (L-486, Texas Agricultural Extension Service), and *Pesticide Application Ground Equipment Calibration Guide* (L-764, Texas Agricultural Extension Service).

Dusts should be applied when the air is calm, but the presence of dew is not necessary. Place dust nozzles on ground machines 4 to 6 in. above plants. Dusts and wettable powders are washed off by light showers more easily than sprays.

Ground machines and airplanes are equally effective for insecticide application. For best results with airplanes, flag swaths so that they overlap.

## PRECAUTIONS

All insecticides are poisonous. *Follow carefully all precautions on the label.* Take special precautions when handling aldicarb (Temik®), azinphosmethyl (Guthion®), monocrotophos (Azodrin®), dicrotophos (Bidrin®), demeton, disulfoton (Di-Syston®), methyl parathion, parathion and phorate (Thimet®). Avoid skin contact. Do not breathe vapors or drift from sprays or dusts.

**Conversion Table — Pounds of actual insecticide in different quantities of spray concentrate\***

Insecticide	Gal.	2 Qt.	1 Qt.	1 Pt.
Azinphosmethyl (Guthion® or Gusathion®)	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.25
Carbophenothion (Trithion®)	4.0	2.0	1.0	0.5
Demeton (Systox®)	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.25
Dicrotophos (Bidrin®)	8.0	4.0	2.0	1.0
Dimethoate				
Cygon®	4.0	2.0	1.0	0.5
De-Fend®	2.67	1.33	0.67	0.33
Revelate®	2.67	1.33	0.67	0.33
Ethion	4.0	2.0	1.0	0.5
Methyl Parathion	4.0	2.0	1.0	0.5
Monocrotophos (Azodrin®)	5.0	2.5	1.25	0.625
Parathion	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.25
Toxaphene	6.0	3.0	1.5	0.75

Pounds actual acephate (Orthene®), carbaryl (Sevin®) or trichlorfon (Dylox®) per acre				
3.0	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.25

Pounds of acephate (Orthene®), carbaryl (Sevin®) or trichlorfon (Dylox®) required:

80% wettable or soluble powder	3.75	2.5	1.25	0.625	0.312
75% wettable or soluble powder	—	—	1.33	0.66	0.33
50% wettable or soluble powder	6.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	0.5

\*Certain formulations may differ in the amount of actual insecticide per gallon. Refer to the manufacturer's labels for specific concentrations, and adjust spray mixtures accordingly.

Workers reentering treated fields should observe specific waiting periods. Refer to "Worker Reentry Intervals" on the last page.

Do not graze livestock in cotton fields or feed gin trash treated with insecticides, except those with no label restrictions.

Prevent drift from contaminating neighboring crops such as fruits, vegetables and animal feeds. Continued excessive use of persistent insecticides results in soil residues which jeopardize the use of fields for growing certain forage, vegetable or root crops.

Follow recommended procedures in disposing of "empty" pesticide containers and discarding unneeded pesticides. See *Disposal — Pesticides and Pesticide Containers* (L-1008, Texas Agricultural Extension Service) for recommended procedures.

Most insecticides are destructive to honeybees. Since bees help pollinate many agricultural crops, make every effort to prevent their destruction.

For information on identification of major cotton insects, their life history and the kind of damage they cause, see *Cotton Insects* (B-933, Texas Agricultural Extension Service).

## **POLICY FOR MAKING INSECT CONTROL SUGGESTIONS**

Suggestions on use of pesticides made by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station are based upon:

- Effectiveness under Texas conditions
- Avoidance of residues in excess of allowable tolerances
- Avoidance of toxicity to humans, animals and desirable vegetation
- Avoidance of adverse side effects upon beneficial predators, parasites, honeybees, fish and other wildlife, plants, animals and humans

Suggested pesticides must be registered and labeled for use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Department of Agriculture. The status of pesticide label clearances is subject to change, and may have changed since this publication was printed. County Extension staff and appropriate specialists are advised of changes as they occur.

The USER is always responsible for the effects of pesticide residues on his livestock and crops, as well as problems that could arise from drift or movement of the pesticide from his property to that of others. *Always read and follow carefully the instructions on the container label.*

For further information, contact your county Extension staff or:

Project Leader in Pesticide Chemicals,  
Texas A&M University (713/845-1353)

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## COTTON INSECT CONTROL SUGGESTIONS

Insects	Insecticides (listed alphabetically)	Pounds per acre of actual insecticide(s)	Remarks
Cutworms	A. Toxaphene + methyl parathion <sup>1,2</sup> <i>Baits</i>	2.0+1.0	May cause damage during seedling stage. Keep fields as weed-free as possible 3 weeks before planting to minimize cutworm problems. Plow under cover crops at least 3 weeks before planting. Insecticide sprays or baits are recommended for application over the drill.
	A. Carbaryl (Sevin®) (5% bait) <sup>5</sup>	1.5 (30 lb. bait/acre)	
	B. Trichlorfon (Dylox®) (5% bait) <sup>7</sup>	1.5 (30 lb. bait/acre)	
(See below for control of beet armyworm and yellow-striped armyworm.)			
Cotton flea hopper	A. Carbaryl (Sevin®) <sup>5</sup>	0.5-1.0	Base all treatments on 15 to 25% damaged pinhead-size squares as well as numbers of fleahoppers. During the first 3 weeks of squaring, 25 to 50 cotton fleahoppers (nymphs and adults) per 100 terminals may cause damage. As plants increase in size and fruit load, larger populations may be tolerated without yield reduction. Insecticides may result in outbreaks of bollworm and tobacco budworm due to the destruction of beneficial insects. When using Trichlorfon (Dylox®), spray solutions should be buffered to a pH of 7.0 or below and applied immediately. <i>Use suggested higher application rates only when infestations are severe.</i>
	B. Dicrotophos (Bidrin®) <sup>4</sup>	0.05-0.1	
	C. Dimethoate (Cygon®, De-Fend® or Revelate®) <sup>6</sup>	0.10	
	D. Methyl parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.1	
	E. Trichlorfon (Dylox®) <sup>7</sup>	0.25-0.5	
Lygus bugs	A. Carbaryl (Sevin®) <sup>5</sup>	1.0-2.0	Lygus bugs are attracted to succulent growth where their feeding causes shedding of squares and young bolls, stunted growth and deformed bolls. During the period of prebloom to 2 weeks after bloom initiation, begin treatment when 10 lygus bugs are found per 50 sweeps of a 15- to 16-inch net. Make sweeps at several locations in the field by <i>sweeping across the top of one row only</i> in such a way that the top 10 in. of the plants are struck. After the early fruiting period, begin treatment when lygus counts exceed 20 to 30 per 50 sweeps. These populations can be tolerated without causing yield or quality loss <i>provided the plants have retained squares and set bolls normally during the first 4 to 5 weeks of fruiting.</i> When using Trichlorfon (Dylox®), spray solutions should be buffered to a pH of 7.0 or below and applied immediately.
	B. Dimethoate (Cygon®, De-Fend® or Revelate®) <sup>6</sup>	0.5	
	C. Methyl parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.5	
	D. Parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.5	
	E. Trichlorfon (Dylox®) <sup>7</sup>	1.0-1.5	
Overwintered boll weevil	A. Azinphosmethyl (Guthion®) <sup>3</sup> (EC or ULV)	0.25	Where weevils are found, apply at the "match head" (1/8 inch diameter) square stage to prevent egg laying. Inspect the portion of the field where plant growth is most advanced. Where fields are reinfested a second application should be made 3 to 5 days after the first. <i>Do not apply this application within 10 days of bloom.</i> Base additional treatment on economic damage levels shown under "boll weevils" below. These insecticides also control cotton fleahoppers.
	B. Carbaryl (Sevin®) <sup>5</sup>	1.25-1.5	
	C. Malathion (ULV only) <sup>8</sup>	8-12 fluid oz.	
	D. Methyl parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.25-0.5	
	E. Toxaphene + methyl parathion <sup>1,2</sup>	1.0+0.25	
Cotton aphid	A. Demeton (Systox®) <sup>9</sup>	0.125-0.25	Generally beneficial insects will effectively hold cotton aphid populations below damaging levels. Therefore, give careful consideration before beginning applications.
	B. Dicrotophos (Bidrin®) <sup>4</sup>	0.1	
	C. Methyl parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.25-0.375	
	D. Parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.25-0.375	
Bollworm Tobacco budworm	A. Acephate (Orthene®) <sup>13</sup>	1.0	FIELD INSPECTION PRIOR TO INITIAL CHEMICAL APPLICATION: Check fields at least twice weekly. Examine 100 green squares (½-grown or larger) at random throughout the field for worm damage. <i>Before bloom</i> , begin treatment when 15 to 25 percent of the green squares are worm damaged. <i>After bolls are present</i> , begin treatment when 8 to 10 percent of the green squares are worm damaged. Avoid flared or yellowed squares in field sampling. Chemical control is seldom effective after worms are ¼ in. long.
	B. Carbaryl (Sevin®) <sup>5</sup>	2.0	
	C. Methyl parathion <sup>2</sup>	1.25-2.0	
	D. Monocrotophos (Azodrin®) <sup>12</sup>	0.8-1.0	
	E. Toxaphene + methyl parathion <sup>1,2</sup>	0.5+1.0 to 0.5+1	

Under most conditions, avoid treating cotton for early bollworm/budworm infestations until after blooms are observed in the field. Where moderately resistant tobacco budworms are noted, treatment interval may need shortening to 3 days and methyl parathion dosage increased to 2 lb. per acre. WHERE HIGH RESISTANCE LEVELS OCCUR, EFFECTIVE CHEMICAL CONTROLS ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

**FIELD INSPECTION AFTER INITIATION OF INSECTICIDE APPLICATIONS:** Check fields closely 2 to 3 days following each application. Where control has not been obtained, repeat application immediately. Apply insecticide at intervals as determined by infestations.

*Method A:* Examine the terminal buds of cotton plants and a total of 100 green squares and small bolls taken from several points in the field. Repeat treatment when bollworm eggs and four to five young worms are found per 100 terminals and 5 percent of the squares and small bolls have been injured by small bollworms.

*Method B:* Make a whole plant examination (terminals, squares, flowers and bolls) of all plants on 10 feet of row in at least five locations in the field. When counts average two or more larvae per 10 feet of row or exceed 10 in 50 feet, repeat treatment. Sevin® (Carbaryl) is not labeled for tobacco budworm control.

Boll weevil*	A. Azinphosmethyl (Guthion®) <sup>3</sup> (EC or ULV)	0.25
	B. Carbaryl (Sevin®) <sup>5</sup>	1.6-2.0
	C. Malathion (ULV only) <sup>8</sup>	12-16 fluid oz.
	D. Methyl parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.375-1.0
	E. Toxaphene + methyl parathion <sup>1,2</sup>	0.5+0.25 to 0.5+0.5

\*Refer to overwintered boll weevil control section above before 1/3-grown square stage.

**FIELD INSPECTION** – Examine cotton weekly. Examine 100 squares, at least 1/3-grown, at random, taking a few squares at several representative places in the field and from various portions of the plant. From the time of squaring up to peak bloom, begin treatment when 15 to 25 percent of the green squares have weevil punctures. Apply insecticides at 5-day intervals. Under extremely heavy buildups, it may be necessary to shorten the interval to 3 days. As the boll load increases, higher square damage can be tolerated. However, additional applications may be necessary to protect smaller bolls. *Malathion* – 16 oz. restricted use in fall diapause application only.

Beet armyworm Yellow-striped armyworm	A. Methyl parathion <sup>2</sup>	1.0-1.5
	B. Monocrotophos (Azodrin®) <sup>12</sup>	0.5-0.75
Spider mites	A. Carbophenothion (Trithion®) <sup>10</sup>	0.375-0.75
	B. Demeton (Systox®) <sup>9</sup>	0.25
	C. Ethion <sup>11</sup>	0.375-0.75
	D. Dicofol (Kelthane®) <sup>14</sup>	1.0-2.0
	E. Methyl parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.25-0.375
	F. Monocrotophos (Azodrin®) <sup>12</sup>	0.25-1.0
G. Parathion <sup>2</sup>	0.25	

Examine cotton for presence of these pests. Apply treatment as needed. Insecticides are most effective if applied when worms are small.

Treat when mites begin to cause noticeable leaf damage. Two applications at 5-day intervals may be necessary with all materials except demeton. Spot treatment of fields is encouraged when population distribution is restricted. In certain locations some mite species are highly resistant to miticides and are difficult to control with available materials. Use 0.6 to 1.0 lb. of Azodrin® for control of resistant carmine mite.

Cabbage looper Soybean looper	A. Monocrotophos (Azodrin®) <sup>12</sup>	1.0
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Cabbage looper infestations usually are reduced or eliminated by disease agents before excessive leaf damage occurs. If Azodrin® is used, several applications may be necessary for effective control.