



## Pest Cast

*The Row Crops IPM Newsletter for the LRGV, a cooperative project of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cotton & Grain Producers of the lower Rio Grande.*

John W. Norman, Jr.  
Editor

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### A New Season

This first *Pest Cast* of 2012 is to get everyone back into the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) news for the summer crops in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The newsletter will cover summer crops meaning cotton, grain sorghum and corn, and other crops as appropriate and needed.

Some rain has fallen in recent weeks which will help with planting moisture that has been non-existent since late last summer. Most all areas received enough rain to get the crops up, and the promise of more rain was in the forecast so, here's hoping.

### Cotton Root Rot

Cotton root rot, a pest of cotton and many other crops across the Valley, will have a chemical control tool available as a section 18 emergency exemption this year. *TopGuard* fungicide is the name of the product and research conducted in the last three years has indicated good control of the root rot fungus. Dr. Tom Isakiet, plant pathologist with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in College Station, has been conducting research on the product. He, along with a number of other folks, has put together a short document on the use of TopGuard. We have attached it to this newsletter because growers who apply the chemical to their fields for cotton root rot control will need to use specific application methods. Please read Dr. Isakiet's article below.

### Under New Management

We will also be hearing more from and about the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Weslaco. Dr. Juan Landivar has been named Center Director and he has assumed leadership of the Experiment Station. Dr. Landivar promises to engage the Center in providing more information about work at the Research and Extension Center to Ag producers throughout the Valley. Farmers should expect to see more crops and field days showcasing Experiment Station research. We look forward to those events.

### Pest Cast Mailing

This year's *Pest Cast* will again be sent by email and regular mail. Those who paid to get the newsletter by mail this past season **will not** have to do so this year. We will ask that anyone receiving *Pest Cast* that does not want to continue to do so, please call or write and let the staff at the Weslaco Extension office know. If you know of anyone who would like to receive *Pest Cast*, please let the staff at Weslaco know and they will be added to the mailing lists. We look forward to bringing you the latest info on insects-both pests and beneficials, weed issues and general conditions encountered as the season progresses.

**A Note from Webb Wallace, Executive Director, Cotton and  
Grain Producers' Association, Lower Rio Grande Valley:**

Production of the Pest Cast newsletter again this year depends on the support of our newsletter sponsors. We are in the process of raising support for this year's Pest Cast. Please consider a contribution to keep this important information available. No amount is too small. The minimum contribution to be labeled as a sponsor is only \$100.00—Bronze level. Larger contributions will be recognized as Silver—\$300.00 and Gold—\$500.00 or more. Please make your check to Cotton & Grain Producers', LRGV, and send it to P.O. Box 531622, Harlingen, Texas 78553. Be sure to mark your check as "IPM Project", and include your email address for the newsletter mailing list.

## **Some Points on Topguard for Control of Cotton Root Rot**

**By Tom Isakeit:** The recent section 18 approval of Topguard for control of cotton root rot is not the end of the story, it's a continuation. The T-band application in the label is based on positive disease reduction and yield data from different locations, plus the lack of phytotoxicity. With a T-band application, the chemical is not as concentrated around the seed as it would be with an infurrow application. Although I've not seen phytotoxicity with our in-furrow application experiments, I know of one trial where it was reported when a rain occurred a few days after planting. Other methods of application can and will be examined in future experiments, but at present, growers are restricted to the current label. In general, data so far suggests that the fungicide will work if it is placed around and above the seed. We have several good experiments behind us that indicate side-dressing is not effective, though. Our data so far indicates that when there is strong disease pressure, there is good control and a corresponding yield increase with the fungicide. In many of our trials, there was low disease incidence because of the dry weather, and so, there was no response to the fungicide. We are still learning about the use of this fungicide and I encourage agents to get involved in the process. The identification of Topguard as an effective fungicide was from an initial collaboration with Rick Minzenmayer, but the number of extension people involved has grown – and it needs to grow – if we are going to make this work in all areas of the state. It's my objective that whoever wants to be involved in this work should be highly informed and to that end, I would be happy to work with you and answer questions.

In addition to our small-plot experiments to improve the technology, we will also be evaluating the effectiveness of Topguard when applied according to the label in larger, replicated trials. If you would like to participate in this trial and have a cooperating grower identified, please contact me. Cheminova, which makes Topguard, is planning meetings all over Texas and they have told me that they want extension involved. I feel that the extension people who work most closely with the growers will be best suited to adapting the technology to make it work for their growers. I am here to support you.

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## Comments on TopGuard for Cotton Root Rot Control

### By David Drake:

1. It can only be applied as a "T band" at planting.
2. The rate range is 16 - 32 fluid ounces.
3. The higher rate is the maximum per year and there is a limit of one application per year.
4. It can NOT be put through any irrigation system.
5. Read carefully the fine print about careful placement, need for a rain or irrigation to activate and it not working in dry conditions.
6. There is a restriction of 288,000 acres in Texas.
7. The rotation restriction is a 365 day restriction. So a producer could replant to cotton or soybeans immediately, sweet corn after 180 days, or wait the till the following season to plant any other crop.
8. Section 18 labels have the same user restrictions as restricted use pesticides.

This list is not meant replace reading and understanding of the label but I hope it is helpful.

Don't hesitate to give Dr. Isakeit or myself a call if you have questions.

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