

**2009 year-end program update**

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five years, statewide yield per harvested acre averaged 707.6 pounds per acre up from 524.2 pounds per acre in the prior five years (NASS/USDA).

These record-setting cotton yields provide convincing evidence that boll weevil eradication is giving Texas farmers the opportunity to compete successfully with other parts of the U.S. and the world.

It is clear that boll weevil eradication is critical to the sustainability of cotton production in Texas and that the elimination of the boll weevil is a key factor that has enabled growers to produce record crops. Equally

essential, however, is the partnership that exists between cotton growers and the boll weevil eradication program. This partnership is the cornerstone of the program and fundamental to the successes seen thus far.

**Priorities for 2010: volunteer cotton and communication**

As the LRGV zone readies for the 2010 cotton season, the Foundation urges cotton growers to be on the alert for volunteer cotton and cotton in other crops. Finding and monitoring volunteer fields is critical and we need grower help in locating all fields. Please contact your field unit supervisor to report 2010 cotton and volunteer cotton.

Please also remember the importance of vehicle access for your field techs. Full access around all fields is critical as it provides for accurate and

efficient trapping and treatments.

Foundation personnel will be conscientious when deploying traps, doing what they can to avoid impeding farming operations. We will work with you to coordinate mapping and trapping activities around your fields. Doing so allows us to complete these tasks quickly and in the most efficient manner possible.

If you have questions or need information, please contact your local office and thank you for your continued cooperation.

*Producers are seeing a return on their investment.*

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# Boll Weevil Bulletin



An Eradication Information Resource

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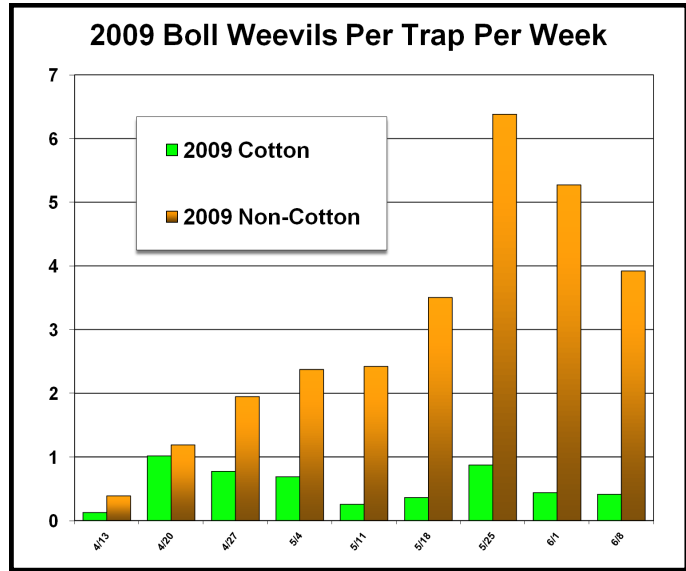
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## 2009 non-cotton fields the source of significant weevil populations

Prior to the 2009 growing season, the Foundation's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met to discuss program issues in South Texas. What it determined was that increases in the average number of weevils per trap for 2008 were not only attributed to hurricanes and other weather anomalies, but also to volunteer cotton and cotton in other crops. It concluded that volunteer cotton must be addressed, and stalk destruction must improve in order to eradicate the boll weevil from Texas.

Noting the danger associated with volunteer cotton, the Foundation implemented a revised program plan in certain areas of the state for 2009. The plan included mapping and trapping all previous year cotton fields in some areas with active weevil populations and for treating 2008 and 2009 fields when weevils were caught and applications could be successfully



made. The plan also called for identifying, and if possible, destroying all volunteer cotton plants along roadsides, pastures, and other non-crop areas.

The following charts illustrate data taken from one such active weevil area that employed the new trapping plan. The area consisted of approximately 20,000 acres (234 fields) of 2009 commercial cotton and fields consisting of over 25,600 acres (441 fields) of volunteer cotton.

As of July 31, this area collectively trapped

some 85,000 weevils on both 2009 cotton and non-cotton fields. Importantly, the chart, *2009 Boll Weevils Per Trap Per Week*, shows that for this particular area, the majority of weevils captured were found in fields not planted to cotton. In fact, of the total boll weevil captures through July 31, 73 percent of weevils trapped were trapped in non-cotton fields. Furthermore, of the top 40 weevil capturing fields in this area, only eight had

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**2009 non-cotton fields are the source of significant weevil populations**

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planted 2009 commercial cotton.

The second chart, *2009 Total Weevils Captured*, demonstrates this phenomenon another way. For the week of May 18, there were over 500 percent more weevils captured in fields planted to other crops (with volunteer cotton) than in those planted to cotton in 2009. In fact, of the 85,000 weevils trapped in this area through July 31, the top three fields reporting weevil captures were volunteer cotton fields. Collectively, these three fields reported trapping some 17,000 weevils - 20 percent of the total for the area. All three of these fields were planted to cotton in 2008 but not to cotton in 2009. Moreover, the top 10 boll weevil capturing fields represent 31 percent of all captures in this area. All 10 of these fields were volunteer cotton fields.

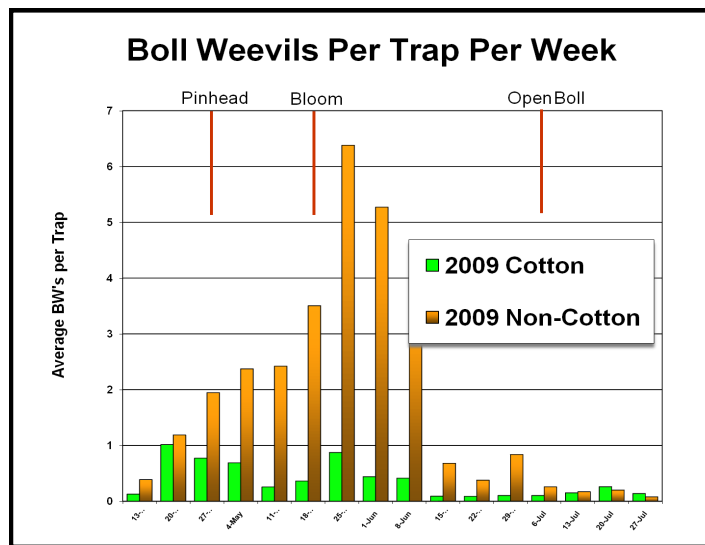
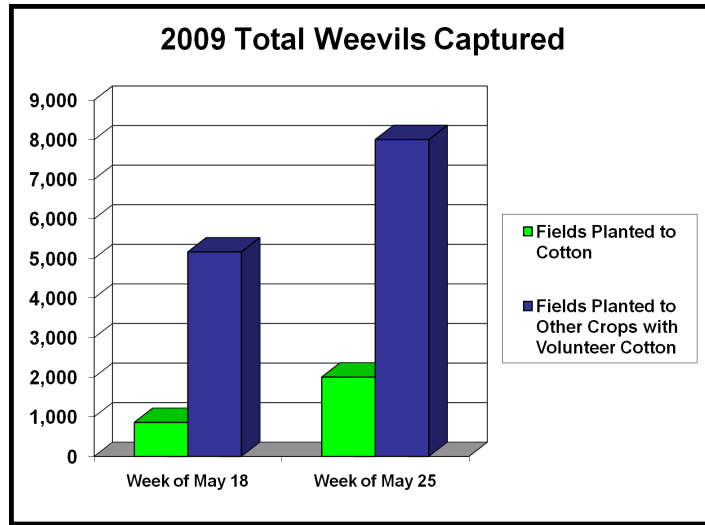
The third chart, *2009 Boll Weevils Per Trap Per Week*, shows weevil captures in relation to cotton crop stages: pinhead, bloom and open boll. This is important because at pinhead square weevils begin to feed and reproduce rapidly. Logically, this is when the program begins making boll weevil treatments. Notice the spikes in weevil captures in 2009 non-cotton fields at pinhead crop stage. Weevils in this cotton are feeding and reproducing at a high rate. Unfortunately, because this cotton is volunteer and in fields planted to crops other than cotton, treating it is challenging. One could see how volunteer cotton beneath a corn canopy, for exam-

ple, could be difficult to treat. Unfortunately, not addressing this volunteer cotton is not an option, as untreated plants allow for uninterrupted weevil reproduction.

Although the data presented is only one example, it tells a story consistent across South Texas and justifies the emphasis put on this problem by the legislature, the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Foundation and the growers, all of whom agree volunteer cotton must be addressed in order for eradication to succeed. We must work even harder to identify, destroy and treat all cotton plants, not just those in cotton fields and not only current year commercial cotton.

**Lower Rio Grande Valley**

In the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), by working together to address this issue weevil numbers have been reduced by 85 percent in 2009 over 2008. Growers here are witnessing the increased yields associated with eradication. In fact, according to *Valley Ag*



*Matters*, in 2009 one grower reported a record setting 4.75 bales per acre in the zone, a feat not possible before boll weevil eradication.

Based on the data collected from the 2009 modified trapping plan, in 2010 the Foundation will extend the protocol to all zones with active weevil populations. In the LRGV, the Foundation will trap and treat 2010 cotton fields as well as those fields planted to cotton in 2009.

**2009 year-end statewide eradication program update**

At the recent 2010 Beltwide Cotton Conference in New Orleans, Program Director Larry Smith delivered a update on statewide boll weevil eradication program activities through 2009. According to Smith, the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation (TBWEF) completed a successful year.

**Statewide**

In 2009, boll weevil eradication activities were carried out in all Texas and eastern New Mexico cotton fields, on a total of 5.4 million certified cotton acres. And, for the year, every zone reported either no weevil captures, or reductions in boll weevil captures compared to 2008. Overall, statewide weevil captures were reduced 84 percent from 1.9 million in 2008 to just over 300,000 in 2009. In addition, cumulative treated acres were reduced by 50 percent.

**West Texas and New Mexico**

In the over 4.7 million acres that make up the 11 West Texas and four New Mexico zones, only 206 weevils were captured throughout the year. This was a 76 percent reduction from the 886 weevils caught in 2008. Program personnel treated 56,650 cumulative acres in the West Texas region compared to 147,548 in 2008.

**South and East Texas**

In South and East Texas, strong progress was made in 2009, predominantly in the Northern Blacklands (NBL) and Upper Costal Bend (UCB) zones. According to Smith, 2009 cumulative boll weevil captures were reduced in South and East Texas by 84 percent overall, compared to 2008. In addition, the number of acres treated for boll weevil in the five South and East Texas zones decreased by over 1.9 million acres.

*This partnership is the cornerstone of the program and fundamental to the successes we've seen thus far.*

The NBL, UCB and Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) contributed to the boll weevil population reduction by; 96, 99 and 85 percent, respectively. Boll weevil captures in the South Texas/Southern Blacklands (SBL) zones were reduced by 84 and 78 percent, respectively.

Winter Garden (STWG) and Southern Blacklands (SBL) zones were reduced by 84 and 78 percent, respectively. Although the absence of tropical weather and an extreme drought enhanced TBWEF eradication efforts and allowed for significant program gains, poor stalk destruction, migration, and boll weevil detection issues associated with irrigation continue to be problems in isolated areas of some South and East Texas zones. Furthermore, high numbers of boll weevils were captured in 2009 non-cotton fields that were planted to cotton in 2008 and not planted to cotton in 2009. These problems

will be addressed with the 2010 program plan.

**2010 Program Plan**

Smith reported that in 2010 program operations in LRGV, STWG, UCB, NBL, and SBL will concentrate on identification, trapping and treatment of all cotton, including volunteer cotton in other crops and non-crop areas, and working with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to achieve early, thorough stalk destruction. To do so, the Foundation will trap and treat 2010 cotton fields as well as those fields planted to cotton in 2009, in areas with active weevil populations.

**Benefits of Eradication**

Texas cotton crops are making Texas history. In 2004, the all-time Texas cotton production record was broken. It was broken again in 2005. Dry weather limited cotton production in 2006, but despite those harsh growing conditions, Texas cotton growers produced the fourth largest crop in history. The 2007 cotton crop came in as the second largest crop on record. Extremely dry and windy conditions in 2008, primarily on the Texas High Plains, resulted in a statewide total of over 1.6 million failed acres. In 2009, the failed acreage accounted for 1.3 million acres. Nevertheless, four of the largest crops in Texas State history have been produced in the last six consecutive years. This outstanding production would not have been possible without a successful boll weevil eradication program.

Producers are seeing a return on their investment. In the last

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