

Curbing *Insect* Damage

BETTY VALLE GEGG-NAEGER
MidAmerica Farmer Grower

JACKSON, TENN.

Plant bug control was presented by Dr. Scott Stewart, University of Tennessee extension entomologist, recently as he gave a "State of the Union" talk on the topic at the



Dr. Scott Stewart, University of Tennessee Extension Entomologist spoke about the boll weevil eradication and the adoption of Bt technology at the recent Cotton Focus program. Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

Cotton Focus program at the West Tennessee Research and Education Center. The overview centered on some of the things that have changed recently, looked at the present state of

plant bug control and where the future of control might lead.

"One of the things I talked about was boll weevil eradication and the adoption of Bt technology, like Bt cotton, because those things have really profoundly influenced and eliminated some major pests in our production system; but they've also had some indirect impacts on other pests such as plant bugs and stink bugs which never used to have a chance because of all the insecticides we were using," he said.

A second theme is that changes in technology are not static. New technologies and changes in production practices are happening faster than ever. There are Bt technologies that are being adopted in corn and other crops that are going to affect cotton and some landscape level effects on these pests will begin to appear. Other things have changed such as the widespread use of seed treatments and the pests themselves.

"We're monitoring for things like organophosphate resistance in tarnished plant bugs and pyrethroid resistance in bollworms," Stewart said. "We're trying to keep up with any potential problems that could throw a wrench in the works.

"Right now I'd say we're in a pretty good place as far as insect control but there are some things that could change and dramatically influence how competitive we stay in the future," he continued. "Some of those things are insect related, some of them are weed related."

Major problems, he said, are the plant bugs, the stink bugs in particular, along with spider mites that have emerged in some areas. Part of that is because some other problems have been eliminated, and part of it is they've emerged in this low spray environment.

"We are trying to use our chemistry wisely because there are limited options," Stewart said. "Resistance management really needs to be proactive whether it's for insects or weeds. We are talking about using different modes of action in rotation and treating when needed with the right rates so you can at least delay the onset of resistance. Once you get resistance, you have to live with it the best you can. You lose control options, so the best offense is a good defense," he summed. Δ

The Syngenta logo, featuring the word "syngenta" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font with a green leaf-like shape above the letter 'y'. The logo is set against a light yellow background.

Link Directly To: **SYNGENTA**