

Five Steps for Managing Sugarcane Aphid Without Sacrificing Yield or Agronomics

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HYBRID SELECTION REMAINS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT DECISION

Sugarcane aphid was first observed in grain sorghum fields in 2013. Since then, the pest has spread rapidly across Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas. The sugarcane aphid reproduces exponentially on sorghum in a matter of days, severely stressing plants by sucking moisture out of leaves and depositing sticky honeydew that causes mold to grow, reducing photosynthesis.

As you look ahead to your 2018 crop, remember these five steps for managing sugarcane aphids:

1. SELECT THE RIGHT HYBRIDS

When making sorghum hybrid decisions, remember the most important considerations to help maximize yield potential:

- Placing the right product on the right acre — and managing fertility and planting rates accordingly
- Selecting hybrids for important agronomics like standability, head exertion, disease resistance and drought tolerance

No sorghum hybrid is “aphid proof,” but Pioneer® brand hybrids are available in a range of maturities, and several have demonstrated tolerance to sugarcane aphids.

2. CONTROL VOLUNTEER SORGHUM AND WEEDS AFTER HARVEST

Sugarcane aphids can overwinter on volunteer sorghum plants and weeds such as Johnsongrass, setting up the following year’s sorghum crop for an early infestation.

3. HAVE A PLANTING PLAN

Aphids tend to become more active as temperatures increase. They seek out the newest sorghum plants. Planting early can give seedlings a head start before aphid populations multiply; planting too late can make the field more of a target for hungry aphids.

4. SCOUT EARLY AND OFTEN

Sugarcane aphid nymphs are yellow; winged adults develop stripes and green wings. In high numbers, both can cause significant yield loss.



Infested sorghum leaf with all stages of sugarcane aphids present.

Scout for aphids once a week after emergence and at least twice a week after aphids appear. Aphids tend to feed first on the underside of leaves and then move to all plant surfaces.

5. APPLY INSECTICIDE AT THE RIGHT TIME

An insecticide seed treatment can provide early protection from aphids without harming beneficial predators.

During the growing season, consider spraying an insecticide when thresholds reach 50 to 125 aphids per plant on 25 percent of plants in a field. Spraying earlier could result in problematic aphid infestations before harvest.

Avoid spraying pyrethroid insecticides, which are harmful to beneficial insects.

DUPONT PIONEER: INDUSTRY-LEADING SORGHUM RESEARCH PROGRAM

DuPont Pioneer researchers are continually developing new sorghum hybrids from our elite germplasm with enhanced sugarcane aphid tolerance traits. They go well beyond field observations to help ensure yield potential under aphid pressure.

- Cutting-edge breeding program is focused on identifying aphid-tolerant markers
- More than 60,000 data points have been collected on aphid tolerance in the last three years
- Aphid tolerance screening is conducted at three dedicated nurseries and in dozens of on-farm trials
- Our entomologists screen up to 400 hybrids per month for aphid tolerance



Ask your local Pioneer sales representative about the best sugarcane aphid-tolerant sorghum hybrids for your acres in 2018. Learn more about sugarcane aphid biology and management at bit.ly/PSorghumSCA.