

Early-Season Insecticide Applications on Cotton to Control Lygus

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Early-season insect control in New Mexico cotton includes seed treatments, at-planting insecticide treatments, and early-season topical application, which may disrupt beneficials. New Mexico producers may assume that early-season square shed in cotton is due to insects such as lygus. While this can be true, early-season insect control isn't necessarily worth the expense.

Over an eight-year period, NMSU researchers studied lygus control in cotton. All insecticide applications failed to produce a significant increase in cotton yield, even when lygus pressure was ex-

tremely high. Although lygus cause early square loss, a cotton crop can recover even from severe lygus damage.

Also, topical insecticide applications for lygus significantly reduced beneficial insect populations for 20 to 30 days after application. The cost of insecticide application, the fact that early-season treatment for lygus doesn't improve yield, and insecticide damage to beneficials indicate that early-season use of insecticide for lygus is rarely needed.

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