# RISE OF THE BUGS

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## Abstract

The reduced use of broad-spectrum insecticides in cotton afforded by eradication of the boll weevil and wide-spread adoption of Bt cotton has allowed sucking bugs to "rise" in importance. Coincidental control of true bugs provided by insecticides used frequently and routinely for pests such as tobacco budworm, bollworm, and boll weevil is almost non existent. In a couple of years, when available cotton seed consists entirely of dual-protein Bt-expressed varieties, further reduction of insecticide for bollworm and other caterpillar pests will almost entirely eliminate foliar insecticide use for pests other than sucking arthropods. Furthermore, availability of alternate hosts for true bugs continues to escalate due to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); increased acreage planted to soybeans, corn, wheat, and other attractive cultivated hosts; and production practices that promote untimely weed control. These alternate hosts serve as nurseries and safe havens for bugs at varying but critical times during a given year. When you add to these major factors the importance that our current trends in weather (increasing temperature, regional drought, etc.) have on insects and the increasing problems with resistance to and availability of insecticides with activity on bugs, insects such as plant bugs and stink bugs are destined for number one pest status, depending on regional importance/differential of the two groups across the cotton belt.