

**INVESTIGATIONS OF BOLL DAMAGE CAUSED BY PIERCING/SUCKING PESTS AND DISEASE  
AGENT TRANSMISSION****Enrique Gino Medrano****Jesus Esquivel****Al. A. Bell****USDA-ARS-SPARC****College Station, TX****Jeremy Greene****Clemson****Blackville, SC****P. M. Roberts****University of Georgia****Tifton, GA****Jack Bachelier****North Carolina State University****Raleigh, NC****J. J. Marois****D. Wright****University of Florida****Quincy, FL****R. L. Nichols****Cotton Incorporated****Cary, NC****Abstract**

The southern green stink bug (SGSB) is one of the most important pests of cotton due to changes in insecticide application programs. Recently, we showed that boll damage typically associated with SGSB feeding is actually dependent on whether the insects harbor and transmit infective microorganisms. If stink bugs that are free of cotton pathogens feed on developing bolls, then seed and lint is not noticeably affected. Conversely, effects of feeding by stink bugs that carry and deposit a disease agent results in spoiled, unmarketable lint and seed. Notably, we also determined that developing cotton bolls become immune to both insect damage and bacterial infections at three weeks after flower fertilization. Finally, we determined that our greenhouse work is definitely comparable to field-grown boll disease associated with piercing/sucking insects from southeastern states (NC, SC, GA, and FL).