

RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

Introduction:

Here is your fourth issue of RiceFax, covering crop conditions in the rice production regions of the Midsouth and Texas. RiceFax is sponsored by Valent USA as a service to Midsouth and Texas growers and rice workers. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact us.

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Overview:

Midsouth: Planting has progressed, with 40-70% of acreage seeded in most areas. Rains blanketed the region's northern half over the weekend, with totals running 1-1.5" in many areas and over 3" in parts of Arkansas. More rain moved through the upper Midsouth Monday, and showers also developed in the southern part of the region where the rain was needed.

Texas and coastal Louisiana: The region was dry going into the week. Showers Monday helped a little, but rainfall amounts were

spotty. Areas around Crowley, La., received .2" to 1.5". Beaumont gauges showed .2" to .6", our contacts report. Farther west, rainfall in El Campo ranged from .25" to 1.5".

"This definitely wasn't the drought breaker we've needed," one fieldman said Tuesday afternoon.

No significant showers were in the 5-day forecast. Lack of significant April rain is pushing up costs and sparking isolated armyworm problems.

Texas/Coastal La.

Arlen Klosterboer, Texas Extension Rice Agronomist: "We're at least 90% planted as of today (Monday). If rain comes, it will be welcomed. It's been very dry, and that's added to the water cost. The crop, overall, looks good. It's coming out of cold shock now."

David Mitchell, M&M Air Service, Beaumont, Texas: "We're about 70% planted and hoping for a rain. We've been really dry. If we don't get good rainfall, people will start running out

of water in some areas. We're seeing some insect pressure. Over the weekend, we applied Karate on 300 acres for armyworms that moved into rice. Several people Sunday said they had armyworms, too, but not at a treatable level. At night, I'm seeing a lot of moths. Stands, overall, look pretty good."

Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension rice specialist: "Planting is about 85-90% complete in the southern area and 30-50% complete in central and northern parishes. We're bone dry in some places today (Monday) in a large part of southern Louisiana. I think we're a lot drier than most people realize. In 22 years in Lafayette, this is only the second time I've sprinkled my yard. Wind is drying out everything and throwing applicators off schedule. I checked two yield verification fields today, and neither had water on them, and it wasn't because they had been drained. People are staggering their pumping and borrowing water when they can. If we don't get

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a couple of inches of rain early this week, we're looking at a serious situation. I also saw one field Friday afternoon that had armyworms, but not at treatable levels."

Dan Bradshaw, Crop Aid Agri Consultants, El Campo, Texas: "In this area, we're better than 90% planted. We started getting a light rain about 10 a.m. today (Monday) and are hoping there's more behind it. We haven't had a rain in 3 weeks. Young cotton and grain sorghum could use a drink, as well as rice planted since that last rain. We had to flush it up. Some herbicides have been going out after flushing and some just at planting. Some Command has been going out, but wind has been high for several days, and that's held up a number of treatments. A few armyworms have been spotted in rice, but none have been sprayed."

Wayne Hensgens, manager, G&H Seed Co., Inc., Crowley, La.: "Down here, the crop is nearly all planted except for late crawfish ponds. We're hoping for rainfall. Some people are having a hard time with surface water, but so far I haven't had reports of salt-water intrusion or heard of anyone who's stopped pumping. Strong winds have affected rice, turning it yellow and laying it down. Limited acreage has been sprayed in lower Vermilion and Calcasieu Parishes for armyworms. This is getting to be an expensive crop. People barely have time to stop wells to change oil and filters."

Midsouth:

Garrick Martin, Field Representative, Lawhon Farm Services, McCrory, Ark.: "Probably 70-75% of the rice here is in the ground. Over the weekend, we got

anywhere from 1.25" north of McCrory to 2.5" to 3" around Hunter. We needed it. Some people had started flushing. Probably 25-30% is up, and we've started DD50s on it. People are looking at a little Command, and we've been treating some fields with Roundup and Bolero or a Prowl-Bolero combination. A lot of people got ground worked up early and are going with stale seedbed planting on more acreage than in the past. They had vegetation up when they started planting."

Mark Maier, Field Representative, Stratton Seed Co., Stuttgart, Ark.: "We had 1.5" in Stuttgart between Saturday and another rain Sunday night. North of town, a couple of areas had 2" Saturday. A few people already were starting to flush. We're bumping 70% now on total planting, with 10-15% emerged. A number of people were trying to put out Facet, but very little herbicide work has been done because the wind has been too high. Water is standing in fields today (Monday) and we have a 90% chance for more rain tonight."

Joe Street, Mississippi Extension Rice Specialist, Stoneville, Miss.: "We're probably 70% planted statewide with 15-20% emerged. People are trying to get everything done before the rain comes today (Monday). We missed most of the rain over the weekend. It pretty much cut off from Cleveland south. We need some rain, or people are going to have to flush."

Winston Earnheart, Consultant, Tunica, Miss.: "About 40% of our rice has been planted, and rain over the weekend hit it just right. We were at the point of having to flush. None is up yet. Ev-

erything we planted last week was pretty much waiting for rain, and we needed some rain to activate herbicides, too. About a third of our acreage this season is Priscilla. Some big seed growers up here had an ample supply."

Marvin Lott, Sales Representative, Jimmy Sanders, Inc., Cleveland, Miss.: "We're 70% planted in the state, and Bolivar County may be slightly ahead of that. Maybe 5-10% is up, but that's not all to a uniform stand. We're keeping a close eye on armyworms with all the dry weather. We've sprayed them a little here in wheat. With the mild winter, there's a good supply of them. Rain would help right now. Over the weekend, areas north of here had 1.5". We need rain for herbicides, and some Group IV soybeans need moisture. If we miss rains early this week, most of our acreage will be flushed."

Dave Guethle, Extension Area Agronomist, Bloomfield, Mo.: "Parts of this area received about .3" Sunday, and it's still too sticky to drill today (Monday). So far, 30-50% has been planted. Except where a couple of farmers caught a window and planted 3 weeks ago, nothing is up. We don't need more rain right now, and if it doesn't rain right away, we could get all our rice planted by the end of the week."

Kevin Fisher, Pro-Ag Services, Wynne, Ark.: "We're close to 50% planted, and I expect to have 20% to a stand by the end of the week. I've started DD50s on two fields. We're getting heavy rain right now (Monday afternoon) after 1.5" in this area over the weekend. We sprayed a couple of fields Saturday with 2 quarts of Stam and 2 pints of Bolero."