

RiceFax Midsouth/Texas Edition

Introduction:

Here is your first copy of RiceFax, our weekly newsletter covering crop conditions in the rice production regions of the Midsouth and Texas. We will gather reports on Monday and Tuesday each week and distribute RiceFax each Tuesday night. If you have questions or suggestions, please call or drop me a line.

Owen Taylor, Editor
888-327-6329
Lksouth@ibm.net

Overview:

Rain continues to delay field-work and planting through much of the Midsouth. Heavy rains over the weekend piled on top of fields that already were wet in many areas, and more rain is in the forecast late this week. Nobody expects field work to restart before next Monday or Tuesday, provided more rain doesn't develop. The Texas/Louisiana Gulf crop is 10-40% planted, depending on the area.

The downward shift in the crop

insurance program probably will trim a slight amount of acreage off projected plantings, especially in the Midsouth. Several of our contacts have seen farmers pull back slightly on rice acreage after program changes were announced. In some cases, growers who had never produced rice and thought they would shift acreage out of cotton or other crops have reconsidered the move.

One Arkansas seed dealer reported that in a few cases growers had planned to break rotation and go with rice another year on some fields. "One guy told me today (Tuesday) that he was switching his order to beans," the dealer says.

Texas/La. Gulf:

Dan Bradshaw, Crop Aid Agri Consultants, El Campo, Texas: "We're probably 40-50% planted in this area, and some rice was planted by the end of February. The rice that's up looks real good. We've got better stands than at the start of last year's crop when it was so dry and stands were spotty and erratic. Progress is

mixed. Some growers are through and others are just starting. With the rain, nothing much has been planted in the last 10 days, and it's raining again today (Monday). But with the dry winter, everyone got plenty of field work done. We had a frost in mid-March, and some rice was up. It burned the leaf tips, but plants are okay now. Quite a bit of Cypress is being planted, and there's still some Jefferson, but it's not as hot as it looked like it might be last year. We're seeing more Gulfmont and Lemont than we've had in recent years. People are counting on Quadris for sheath blight. Jefferson is down because we lost the parboil market when Uncle Ben's pulled out of Houston."

Arlen Klosterboer, Texas Extension rice agronomist: "Maybe 30-40% of the state's acreage is planted. Rain in the last 7-10 days put everything on hold. Stands look good to this point. I'm not hearing about major problems, and we haven't had really cold weather

Continued on next page

Flexibility—Key to Effective Weed Control

You never know what the year will bring, but it'll surely include sprangletop, barnyardgrass and aquatic weeds. Bolero® 8 EC herbicide controls all three, while keeping your options open. You can apply BOLERO delayed preemergence, in early postemergence tank mixes or in split applications with propanil. And if dry weather makes you flush your field, or you get a heavy soaking rain, BOLERO is easier on rice than other herbicides. -- SPONSORED MESSAGE

BOLERO® 8 EC

Rice Herbicide

RiceFax is sponsored by Valent USA as a service to rice producers and the rice industry.

<http://www.valent.com>

BOLERO is a registered trademark of Kumiai Chemical Industry Co., Ltd. for thiobencarb herbicide © 1999 Valent U.S.A. Corp.

in the last 2 weeks. Based on what dealers and consultants are telling us, we'll see about half the acreage in Cypress, 25% in Jefferson, 20% in Gulfmont and Lemont, and the rest a mix. We're maybe seeing slight increases in Gulfmont and Lemont."

David Mitchell, M&M Air Service, Beaumont, Texas:

"We're about 20% planted and about 10% emerged. Some rice around here was planted on March 5, and we're starting to spray some this week. The earliest stands look thin and are slow, but we're picking up warmer nights, and that will help. Some of the fields planted in the last 7-10 days actually look better. We're seeing a little more of the medium varieties, mostly Bengal, plus Lemont and Gulfmont beginning to come back a little. Jefferson and Cypress are being planted, but not as vigorously. Cypress blighted 2 years ago, and that's been a concern. We're seeing seeding rates on Jefferson and Cypress increase from 85-120 lb/acre last year to a 120-170 lb/acre average this year. People are trying to compensate for potential blight."

Wayne Hensgens, manager, G&H Seed Co., Inc., Crowley, La.: "We're about 50% planted now and we're putting nitrogen on now and starting to spray some fields with Bolero-Stam tankmixes. Some rice is at the 3-leaf stage now. We had rice planted about March 1 and maybe even some in the last week of February. The rice that's up looks pretty good. The bulk of planting has been in the last 2 weeks, and warm weather in the last 4-5 days has helped get the rice moving finally.

The real early rice has a flood on it and looks pretty good. We'll probably go about 80% Cypress and a little Maybelle, Jefferson, Cocodrie and Bengal. Bengal may be a little on the increase, depending on pricing for medium grain rice."

Midsouth:

Garrick Martin, field representative, Lawhon Farm Services, McCrory, Ark.: "A few guys have planted limited acreage -- maybe 50-60 acres in one case and 250-300 in another. I doubt if we're 5% planted in this area. It's raining right now (Monday) on top of all the rain we had in the last few days. If we don't get any more rain, we might see some planting 7 days from now on the lighter soils. Most of my guys booked Bengal, Drew and Cypress. Bengal may be up slightly over last year. Some growers are looking at Cocodrie, and Kaybonnet will be planted on some acreage where we get into late planting."

Dan Roach, consultant, Cleveland, Miss.: "I don't know of any rice planted in Bolivar Co. Some has been planted around Hollandale in Washington Co. and in Sunflower Co. If it doesn't rain anymore and the sun pops out and the wind blows, we might see rice planted on April 12 at the earliest. I don't think we'll see a lot of experimentation with varieties. Lemont will be the principal variety with a good percentage of Priscilla."

Mark Maier, field representative, Stratton Seed Co., Stuttgart, Ark.: "Nothing has been planted, and we had another 2" of rain Monday night. If we

don't have any more rain, the earliest anyone will be in the field will probably be this weekend or Monday. Unfortunately, more rain is in the forecast for Thursday and Friday. We're ahead of schedule on rain. I just wish we could save some of it for July and August. We expect 40-45% of the acreage around here to be in LaGrue, with another 20-25% in Drew and Cypress. People around here believe in fungicides and manage their water well, so blast hasn't been a concern. LaGrue has been yielding 20 bu/acre more in many cases. I'm seeing some people shifting 100% of their crop to LaGrue this year after trying everything else."

Grady Coburn, Pest Management Enterprises, Cheneyville, La.: "A little rice has been planted in south Evangeline Parish but nothing in my immediate area. This area got 1.5" to 3.5" of rain Saturday night and early Sunday. Everything's super saturated and shut down. Some growers may have ground ready for flooding up and water seeding, but with the harvest season last year things were rutted up pretty badly. Maybe 25-30% would be ready right now for water seeding."

Amy Beth Dowdy, ABD Crop Consulting, Dexter, Mo.: "Even the people who always make it a point to plant some rice early still haven't been able to plant. Around Dexter, we received 3-4" of rain over the weekend, and areas south of here had about 2". We may see some planting between April 15-20 if we miss rains late this week, but most will start after April 20. Cypress and Drew will be our main varieties with some Jefferson and Lemont next."