

RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

Introduction:

Here is your fifth issue of RiceFax, covering crop conditions in 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:

Texas/Coastal LA: Spotty showers west of Houston over the weekend provided little relief. Growers in one Louisiana parish are testing surface water now for saltwater intrusion.

Midsouth: Rain is expected today and Wednesday through much of the region. Most areas would welcome showers. But in parts of central Arkansas and northeastern Louisiana, heavy April rains already have set planting somewhat behind schedule.

Texas/La. Gulf:

Arlen Klosterboer, Texas Ex-

tension Rice Agronomist: "We're 95-98% planted. Things are still pretty dry. We received some spotty, light showers west of Houston Sunday night. Rice is still looking pretty good. We've had nearly ideal growing conditions, aside from the lack of rainfall. I haven't heard of any disease problems. Isolated armyworm problems have been reported, but certainly nothing extensive."

Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Agronomist: "In southern Louisiana, a lot of people are still struggling to water rice. They're alternating fields where they can. A couple of farmers in Calcasieu Parish are concerned about saltwater intrusion, and they're testing on an ongoing basis. The chance for rain looks promising in the next couple of days, and we could use it. The crop otherwise is off to a decent start in the southern part of the state. We've had plenty of sunshine. But the lack of water is pushing up costs and making weed control more difficult."

Rick Ferrell, Owner, F&P Agri Sales & Service, Eagle Lake, Texas: "We had no significant rain

here at all over the weekend. It's still dry, and the wind is out of the southeast at 12-15 mph. We're flushing all the rice. There's a 60% chance of rain Tuesday, and we could use every bit of it. Stands are pretty decent. We're able to keep up fairly well with watering, but if it stays dry we could get in a tight spot. We need 1-2". We're 7-10 days from a permanent flood on our earliest fields. We haven't had problems in this area with armyworms. On some fields, it looks like we will be able to get by with one grass herbicide treatment, and we've been able to do pretty well with some reduced rates."

Gary Bradshaw, Bradshaw Ag Consulting, Brookshire, Texas: "Everything is emerged and is flooded or just about to be flooded. We're spraying for nutsedge, metering Ordram into the water with the flood, and fertilizing. We're also putting out Karate in some fields with second herbicide treatments to control rice water weevils where we don't have Icon already."

Continued on next page

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The weevils tend to migrate to the earliest flooded fields. Stands look good, and on-farm reservoirs are full. Last Monday, we caught .6" to 1" of rain. Some areas south of here didn't get that much, and they've been flushing to make a stand."

Midsouth:

Darrell Hess, Consultant, Jimmy Sanders, Inc., Wynne, Ark.: "Growers returned to the field about noon Friday and worked through the weekend. We're about 70% planted. Facet, Command, Prowl, Bolero and other materials have been going out, and we've gone over about 40% of our acreage with a herbicide, so far. We should get through with most planting this week if there's no more rain. About 50-55% is up to a stand. Earliest fields are at three leaves, but most is 1-2 leaves. So far, herbicides are doing a real good job. Stands look uniform."

Wayne Dulaney, Field Representative, Helena Chemical Co., Clarksdale, Miss.: "We're close to 80% planted in this area. Overall, about 45% has emerge. Some is slow coming out of the ground. Priscilla seems to be slower to emerge than the Lemont. Where I've got both varieties planted the same day in the same soil type, Priscilla looks like it's taking four more days to make a stand. We received some isolated showers this morning (Monday)."

Bruce Beck, Extension Regional Agronomist, Butler, Mo.: "We're about 40% planted in Butler County. That's a record, I think, for this date. We've had 10 days of good field conditions. About 25% of the rice in this county is emerged to a stand. Some growers are needing rain now. Herbicides are just

starting to be applied."

Keith Shelton, Consultant, Farmland Technical Services, North Little Rock, Ark.: "In the area I work (around England), we've probably got 40% of the rice crop in the ground. With our buck-shot soils and all the rain, there hasn't been enough time to do anything more than that. About 20% is up to a stand, and it looks pretty good. It's coming up fast. We had just about perfect temperatures. Some Facet and Prowl have been going out. Everything around cotton has pretty much been sprayed before that crop goes in. We will have early fields flooded up in two weeks. We have some fields that crusted with the rain they got week before last, and we saw some flushing Saturday. If it doesn't rain Tuesday, more fields will be flushed."

Joe Street, Mississippi Extension Rice Specialist: "The crop is progressing quite well. We need a rain in some places, and people are flushing. We're 85-90% planted, but that's maybe a difficult number to estimate, since we don't know for certain how many acres will be planted. The amount could vary, partly due to the changes in the crop insurance program. Also, the price really isn't doing any better, and some people are trying to decide how much they actually will plant. About 15%, has emerged."

Nathan Slayton, Arkansas Extension Agronomist: "Everyone who hasn't finished already is trying to get more rice planted before Tuesday when we've got a strong chance of rain. Acreage planted in the middle of April is looking rather spotty. I saw this over the weekend and today (Monday) and county agents have reported it, too. We're seeing real variable emergence where rice was planted 5-7 days

before those 2" rains. It crusted everything over, and we need another rain now or flushing. State-wide, we're at least 60% planted."

Billy Shelton, Sales Representative, UAP Midsouth, Rayville, La.: "Our planting, so far, is in the 45-50% range in this immediate area, although we normally would be at about 75%. In fact, we're lucky to be as far along as we are. Everytime our growers get going good, it's started raining. They've been able to get into the field just long enough to work ground, but not get many acres seeded. Of the acres planted, maybe 15% is up."

Bill Killen, Bill Killen Consulting Services, Cleveland, Miss.: "I've been working in the Hollandale area today (Monday), and 90% or more is planted. We need a rain. Where we got a rain last week, it was variable, from a quarter-inch in some areas up to 2" in spots. Some people are turning on wells to get rice up through the crust. The north wind has really dried out things, and it's howling again today. The no-till rice that's up looks pretty good. The seed was put into moisture. Where we have a problem is in the fields where ground was worked or seed was planted at shallow depths. The winds are holding back some people on making another Roundup application in no-till fields before rice emerges. If it rains, we will have rice coming up through weeds, which will be an expensive situation. We're seeing some differences in Priscilla's emergence. It's coming up faster where we planted it no-till in gumbo compared to where fields were tilled and planted. In those cases, it looks a little slower than Lemont. Other people are noticing this difference, too."