

# RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

## Introduction:

Here is this year's first issue of RiceFax. Because of delays in planting in the Midsouth, we are concentrating this week only on Texas and Coastal Louisiana. We will begin full coverage next week as planting progresses in the Midsouth.

If you have questions or comments, don't hesitate to call or e-mail me.

Best regards,

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## Texas/Coastal La.

**Dan Bradshaw, Crop Aid Agri Consultants, El Campo, Texas:** "Overall, we're about two weeks ahead of normal. Some people say they finished this year before the date when they usually start planting. We're down maybe 15%. Most of our rice is planted, and a very small part of our first

fields are going to permanent flood. On a lot of fields, we're looking at top dress fertilizer applications, and in a week or two we will be starting cleanup herbicide work and permanent floods. Rice looks good, but this cool weather has slowed things down somewhat. We had timely rains. A little rice had to be flooded. A lot of Cocodrie is being planted. Probably 25% of our acreage will go into that variety, and it's probably replacing a third of our Cypress. It's got a better stalk than Cypress, finishes a little earlier and appears to work well in second crop production."

**Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Specialist, Crowley, La.:** "The last round of cold weather gave the crop fits, but it will come out of it. We're 60% to 70% planted where we can plant, but we still have areas with water problems, particularly in the coastal parishes. In those parishes,

40% to 60% still isn't planted. Rains two weeks ago helped, but amounts varied tremendously, from as much as 4" to as little as a quarter inch. We've got areas that still don't have enough fresh water in the surface supply, and there also are some wells with fairly high salinity levels. We've been working with the U.S. Geological Survey, and the agency has been monitoring some wells since the 1950s. They're finding, especially in the last three years, that there aren't cycles of replenishment like they've seen in the past. Between the drought and use by cities, industry and agriculture, levels aren't going up periodically, and some water tables have dropped 30 to 50 feet in recent years and haven't come up. We're estimating that rice acreage will be down in Louisiana at least 10%, but it could be twice that, depending on how much cotton is planted in the central and

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northern parishes. At one point, we thought acreage would be down 100,000 acres in the southern parishes, but it's probably going to be more like 50,000."

**Arlen Klosterboer, Texas Extension Rice Specialist:** "We know for sure that two-thirds is planted, and it may be as much as 80%. Maybe 50% of the total crop has emerged. It looks good. I haven't heard of any major problems with growth. There still are concerns with water and salt content, but I haven't heard of any actual problems. Some scattered areas are having trouble getting wa-

ter. It looks like Cocodrie acreage will be up this year."

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

"We're about 20% planted, and a little is up. Right now, we're estimating rice acreage will be down 25% to 30%. A lot of corn and milo are replacing it. We received 5.5" of rain over the weekend. Luckily, very little of the rice was up because we had three bad rounds of hail with silver dollar to golf ball size pieces. If it had been two weeks later, we would have lost a lot of rice."