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RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

June 12, 2001

Along the Gulf Coast, the effects of tropical storm Allison are still being assessed. Rain accumulations of 10" to 30" were reported in the Houston area and east into Louisiana. In the Midsouth, most of our contacts report at least some delays in herbicide and fertilizer work due to rainfall over the last week. The following reports were made Monday afternoon and today.

Texas/S. La.:

DeWayne Dopslauf, Agro Distributors, Wharton, Texas: "We got about 1" of rain and could stand a little more -- but nothing like what they've had in the Houston area. We're getting the PD applications out now, and a little of the very earliest fields are starting to head. We expect more of the early rice to start popping out heads in the next 7-10 days."

Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Specialist, Crowley, La.: "After all this rain we are expecting more disease pressure. That's already complicated by the fact that rain last week

delayed a lot of treatments already scheduled. A good many fungicide treatments are backlogged now and more are going to be lining up. We've gone from some relatively dry air before the storm to humidity levels in the high 90s. Also, some farmers missed the window on 2,4D applications, so that means they're going to have broadleaf problems. Rains in south Louisiana ranged from 6-7" to highs of 20" in places, and there may be fields still under water today (Tuesday). Read those fungicide labels closely. Rates, carrier volume and product selection are going to depend on infestation levels, the type of disease, canopy thickness, the variety and other factors. A lot of rice is starting to head this week in the southern part of the state and is running 2-7 days ahead of DD50 predictions in a lot of fields. A reminder that the Crowley rice field day starts at 8 a.m., on Thursday, June 28." (For more information on the field day, call: 337- 788-7531.)

Arlen Klosterboer, Texas Extension Agronomist: "How much of our rice was adversely affected by flooding is something that we

can't really say for sure. Maybe 10% to 15% of our crop was in the reproductive stage where prolonged flooding could be a problem, but only a small percentage of that acreage might have actually flooded. Across the whole crop, it's going to have a minimal effect, but there's nothing minimal about it if you have rice that was caught in this. I expect that some of this rice will stretch out, and there could be lodging. There are going to be wider problems with weed control because of missed treatments. Weeds are going to get bigger and more expensive to control. Some growers have probably missed the window to apply 2,4D. As you go west from Houston, the effects of the storm taper off to the point that many people still need rain. The worst hit areas were around and east of Houston. Prior to the storm, we were having armyworm and chinchbug problems east of Houston, but I suspect the rain minimized that pressure."

Howard Cormier, Vermilion Parish Extension Agent, Abbeville, La.: "Our concern with

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the storm and flooding has been where rice has headed out and the water would wash away pollen. Fortunately, we don't have much rice at that stage, maybe 1% to 2%. I looked at some fields of early rice today (Tuesday) that just started heading out, pollen was in the air. If the rain had come 7-14 days later, pollination would have been more widespread and out potential yield loss might have been greater. We got 10" to 20", and the challenge for some growers is to get water off fields. One farmer is running 5 pumps and has 7 going right now. In the worst hit fields where rice is completely submerged, plants are laying down. You can run your fingers through it, and the leaves break off easily. It's believed the rice can be salvaged by getting water off, exposing plants to sunlight and giving them a shot of nitrogen. For the most part, we're in pretty good shape, but these conditions will increase sheath blight pressure. We haven't had any bad outbreaks but I was in a field today where sheath blight was midway up and moving fast. We've found a black discoloration on some panicles but aren't sure if it's superficial fungal growth or mold. It will be examined by plant pathologists. Pollination was underway where we took samples, so it may be a minor thing."

Midsouth:

Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.: "We're flooding up and putting on midseason fertilizer. By the end of the week we will have 75% of our crop flooded up and probably close to half our acreage at midseason. Everything is looking pretty good. We're trying to clean up grass in a few fields."

Steve Schutz, Ind. Consultant, Coushatta, La.: "Rain here last

week ranged from 4-5" up to 9" in places. We're a little late on some fertilizer work due to the rain but we're not worried about it quite yet. Rice is tillering but not at green ring yet. I've been worried about early disease pressure due to the humidity and heat but checked our fields today (Monday) and found nothing to indicate it."

Reynold Minsky, Minsky Consulting Service, Lake Providence, La.: "We're passed green ring on 95% of the crop now. We've got rice water weevil under control. We went with two treatments with Karate, the first 3-4 days after flood and then 7 days later. I don't think you can look at a clock and time it any better than that. We don't see any signs of diseases yet. Rain here last week ranged between .5" to 4.5". We're mostly Cocodrie, and green rings have been moving awfully fast on it."

Ron Cox, Tri-County Farmers Association, Brinkley, Ark.: "Rice is in pretty good shape, and most is getting the permanent flood on it. By the end of next week we probably will be doing some midseason treatments. We're 60% Cocodrie. As fast as it moves, it's been almost impossible to drain and dry down the field for straighthead control and still stay on schedule with finishing fertilizer work and reflooding."

Brad Koen, Area Extension Rice Agronomist, Stuttgart, Ark.: "The rice is looking real good. We've had good growing conditions over the last week, and that has really helped. Midseason nitrogen is going out on quite a bit of our earliest planted rice, and it's stooled out well. A good deal more midseason N will be applied over the next 2 weeks. Some fields looked rough 2-3 weeks ago, but they've filled in very well. We are starting to see quite a few stink-

bugs, and it seems kind of early. So far, this has been a tough insect year, and stinkbugs are something to keep in mind. In the past, they generally haven't caused a lot of problems, but pressure was intense in parts of south Arkansas in 2000, and we're seeing them in fields where they generally aren't present this time of year."

Bill Rushing, Consultant, Lawhon Farm Service, McCrory, Ark.: "We're draining some acreage for straighthead, and midseason applications are going out. A lot of treatments with phenoxy herbicides will be made this week and next week. Quite a bit of rice is hitting midseason now. It's been hard to get the water off enough to dry fields for straighthead. Over the last 18 days we've had about 7" of rain accumulations, mainly little showers that keep everything just wet enough to delay work. This is the biggest rice I've ever seen not to have had fertilizer on it yet. Herbicide work has fallen behind, too, and growers are looking at spending more money. There are going to be cases where herbicides will suppress grass but probably won't take it out completely."

Joe Street, Mississippi Extension Rice Specialist, Stoneville, Miss.: "Everybody seems to be finding grass all of a sudden, and it's big grass, too. All this rain in the last two weeks has kept people from making treatments, and weeds have gotten too big in a lot of cases. With the rice market like it is, some people are saying they may live with the grass or at least put up with more than usual. They aren't interested in spending as much money as it will take to clean it up. In general, the crop looks pretty good. It's just going to be a little weedier than anyone likes."