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RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

May 21, 2002

Here is this week's issue of *RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas*, sponsored by Valent U.S.A., maker of Regiment and Bolero. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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Texas/S. La.

David Mitchell, M&M Air Service, Beaumont, Texas: "We finally got some rain, from 1.5" to 2". We're in a full run of topdressing rice. What herbicide treatments that are being made this week are for escapes that got through the preemergence materials. It's been a challenge to keep enough water on fields to maintain control. There's no insect activity. A little chinchbug pressure was starting, but that went away with the rain."

Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Specialist, Crowley, La.: "We're nervous about the record low temperatures. The low dropped under 50 one morning, and we've had two to three mornings in the low 50s. Our concern is that a lot of the crop is at panicle initiation, and that's when pollen grains and eggs are just form-

ing. If it's too cold, some portion of the head will be sterile and blank, but you won't know to what degree until heading occurs.

"This is a problem in California that's compounded by their use of cold water that comes from melted mountain snow. We use a good deal of surface water, which is warmer, and we hope that helps. It's important in these conditions to have water above or at least just at the growing point.

"Overall, fields look pretty clean. We didn't have much of a grass problem from the start. We're still working on some broadleaf weeds but don't see any big problems. Some Clearfield rice looked pretty ragged, but I think those are clearing up, too."

Howard Cormier, Vermilion Parish Extension Agent, Abbeville, La.: "We're hoping these 50-degree temperatures aren't lasting long enough to severely hurt the crop, but we know they probably will have some effect. We've got most of the nitrogen applied or are in the process of putting it out. A lot of planes are in the air right now. Some growers are draining for water weevils. We've had several Icon failures and some

situations where growers missed the timing on Karate or Fury.

"We had just over 1" of rain last week. That's eased immediate concerns about saltwater intrusion. This little bit of rain put some water in canals and ditches, so growers can reflood without worrying about salinity problems. But it's been too dry for too long. If we don't get more rain soon we could have a problem."

Midsouth

Reynold Minsky, Minsky Consulting Service, Lake Providence, La.: "Rice doesn't look that good. Besides the effects of this cold weather, a good deal of our area has been dry. North of town, we've gotten nearly ideal rainfall over the last 3 weeks. South of town, we've missed most rains until last weekend. We've run a lot of water to prevent things from crusting over."

Joe Street, Mississippi Extension Rice Specialist, Stoneville, Miss.: "Cold weather has slowed down growth and complicated our herbicide programs. We've been below the cutoff temperature for propanil for several days and are just now

Continued on next page

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reaching temperatures that are more favorable to good activity. We've been recommending that growers hold off spraying, if possible, until warmer conditions return. With the cold temperatures, the weeds haven't been growing that much, either.

"We're getting calls about disease problems, mainly north of U.S. 82 where it's rained the most.

"We're just now getting a good start on flooding, and some of the early fields went to flood last week. More will be ready once it's warm enough to apply herbicides. With this cold weather, the rice looks yellow, but it will pop back when the weather heats up again. A number of farmers still have 200 to 300 acres to finish planting."

Mike McCain, Manager, Agrilience, Shelby, Miss.: "We've got some 10" to 12" rice with no levees yet. Just about the time the grower thinks he can pull levees it rains again. On the plus side, the preemergence materials are working. We're getting some broadleaf weeds but aren't worried about them.

"Rice, overall, is progressing well. I'm pleased with most of what our growers have planted. We're at least 95% finished planting. In talking with guys north and south of us, there are still a lot of growers trying to plant. We've had rain delays in some locations, but most of it hit about when we needed it."

Chuck Wilson, Arkansas Extension Rice Agronomist, Stuttgart, Ark.: "We're still getting calls about sick seedling rice. A lot of things are contributing, and it could be two or even three factors at work in a specific field. It can be grape colaspis or lespedeza worm pressure, salinity problems, high pH or maybe zinc deficiency, which shows up more readily in cold, wet fields like we have right now.

"Some guys have started fertilizing and flooding. A lot of wells were turned on last week. Progress has

been scattered here and there, depending on rainfall and soil types. Those with soils that dried out a little faster could start flooding. Any of the clay soils that got rain this weekend are probably too wet right now.

"Rains varied from .5" in parts of southeast Arkansas to almost 2" in places in northeast Arkansas. It got down into the low 40s in some areas. If you're going to see zinc deficiency before the flood, these are the conditions that bring it out."

Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.: "We're 99% through planting. The cold weather has bothered the cotton more than the rice. It may have slowed down the rice a little, but it will bounce back with warmer weather. We have some fields flooding up now, and we're trying to get fertilizer out and finish cleaning up fields before we flood more. Between now and the end of next week we should be able to get most of our rice going to flood, weather permitting. With all the wind, we've had a tough time getting some materials out.

"We're not having big problems with escaped grass. Grass came through the Command in places, but it bought us some time."

David Hydrick, Hydrick's Crop Consulting, Inc., Jonesboro, Ark.: "Preflood fertilizer is going out on a good deal of our rice, and we're making our cleanup herbicide treatments. We put out some fertilizer before the rain last week, and we're flooding up that rice now. We'll start flooding some more this week then begin flooding the bulk of our crop next week. We still have a lot of one- and two-leaf rice."

Ross Wood, Certified Crop Advisor, Almyra Farmers, Almyra, Ark.: "We've got some rice going to flood, but it's patchy. The grape colaspis/lespedeza worm has set us back. We've done everything we could and still have it. It started about a month ago. Plant populations in the

worst spots have dropped from 30-40 per square foot down to 3-8, and every field has got patches like that. Consultants around me are dealing with it, too. I think every seed we sell next year will have Icon on it.

"We've been flushing with ammonium sulfate and DAP and holding water 24 hours. Extension recommendations call for 36 hours, but we're working with some small rice and didn't feel like we could go that long. The worms are so thick that you can see them floating to the surface when you flush, and you can scoop them up by the handful.

"Some are hitting a second time. We don't want to flush again, so we're forcing a flood where we can. If the worms hadn't hit we probably could have gone to flood two weeks ago in some of these fields. They've set us back that much, plus thrown more herbicide, fertilizer and pumping costs into the crop.

"Our rice around England hasn't been affected by this. It's all on buckshot, and we're moving toward flood. It's very clean. We put 24-26 ounces of Command out, and it worked like a charm. A little barnyard grass is breaking through, and we're going with Regiment. I looked at some rice today (Tuesday) that we treated with Regiment last week around Stuttgart. Barnyardgrass was 12" to 18" tall and at 4 to 5 tillars. Now, it's limp and just floating on the surface. I don't think I'll ever have problems with barnyardgrass again."