

RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

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Here is this week's issue of *RiceFax*, sponsored by the Midsouth staff of Valent U.S.A. Corporation, maker of Regiment™ and Bolero® rice herbicides. We welcome your suggestions.

Owen Taylor, Editor

OVERVIEW

More rain is falling in places that don't need it. As we closed this issue Tuesday night, northeast Arkansas was under yet another band of showers. Rice fields there are submerged on a wide basis. Accumulations of 12-18" are reported.

Coastal areas remain dry. Some locations have gone 40 days without rain. There's little effect on rice, but other crops are suffering.

The following reports were made Monday and Tuesday.

TEXAS/S. LA.

Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Specialist, Crowley, La.: "In south Louisiana

we're still burning up. No rain of any significance has fallen in over 40 days in some places. Rice, of course, isn't suffering, but I've only seen one soybean field that's up.

"There's enough water coming down from Mississippi to keep fresh water moving through the countryside, so we haven't had saltwater intrusion to any degree. Where we had increases in salt earlier it appears mainly due to southerly gulf winds pushing saltwater inland.

"A lot of rice is going into green ring down here and is just about at midseason. Due to the slow start we had, I still expect the crop to be running about 2 weeks behind in south Louisiana, so we may not see significant harvest before late July."

Garry N. McCauley, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Eagle Lake, Texas: "It rained to the west and north, but I don't know of any significant rain that fell in our rice growing area over the weekend. These dry conditions aren't affecting rice directly, but it is drying up other vegetation and pushing insects

into rice that we normally don't see. In Wharton County we're getting both sugarcane aphids and the oatbird cherry aphid. We've also had extreme pressure in places from chinch bugs, although I haven't heard of armyworm problems.

"With our weak stands from the slow start we had this year, we're probably not going to have a record breaking season of any kind. This is the first time we've had good prices in several years, and we're coming off 2 record seasons. But yields this season will be reduced.

"The crop remains behind, too. Even in our early fields, nothing is at midseason yet. Plus, we still have rice coming up. The bulk of it has been under flood 7-10 days and is starting to look a little better.

"It's also getting hotter -- 95 at Houston's Intercontinental (Airport) Monday. We usually don't see that until late June or early July."

Blaine Koch, Accounting Manager and Grain Merchandiser, G&H Seed Co., Crowley, La.:

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“The rice is doing good. There are little problem pockets here and there, but nothing major. We’ve hit green ring faster than people expected, and a lot of rice will be jammed up together at harvest, so we’d better hope for good weather.

“Dry weather has held back soybean planting. Our seed manager estimates that 60% of our soybeans were planted by this time in 2002. Today, we’re less than 5% planted.”

MIDSOUTH

Scott Holder, Helena Chemical Co., Cleveland, Miss.: “Rice, overall, is in good shape. It rained another 4” at Shelby Saturday, one farmer reported. I measured 2” between Drew and Merigold. With all the moisture, Command has been holding pretty good. It’s just starting to break. A spot or two is just now getting a bit out of hand.

“We got a lot of work done last week when the wind died, and we’ve got more rice going to flood now. We just need dry weather now to finish up pre-flood work.”

Michael Browning, Tri-County Farmers Association, Brinkley, Ark.: “We got 3.5” to 5” of rain last Thursday through Saturday, and now there’s a lot of rice under water. Growers are pumping it off where they can. A lot of it hasn’t had the first shot of nitrogen yet.

“Weeds are getting to be a major issue. We haven’t had good control with Command in some cases, partly where applications weren’t made in time and grass got established.”

John Hedden, Consultant, Lawhon Farm Service, McCrory, Ark.: “Depending on the location, we’ve gotten 6-15” of rain this month. We’ve been inundated in the last few days. Growers are pumping

water off where they can. Backwater flooding along bayous and rivers is affecting some acreage, too.

“Things are at a standstill, and there still is a good deal of work on the board. We’ve gotten some weed pressure under control with cleanup sprays here and there. Command held good on 60-70% of the rice.

“Overall, the crop looks good, and it made a strong start. About half our rice is 10 days ahead of normal. Right now, we just need dry weather to take more of it to flood.”

Chuck Farr, Mid-South Ag Consultants, Crawfordsville, Ark.: “We’ve gotten 6-14” of rain in this last round of storms, and that was on top of all the wetness we already had. One older gentleman said you had to go all the way back to 1931 for a year with as much rain during this period. You can easily find precision graded rice fields that have had water above the levees for 4 days, and it may be another 4 days before we see levees again.

“The river is out of its banks. We had 80% of our fields planted on the other side of the levee, and crops were up to some good stands. We’ll probably lose all of that. I’m telling my growers to rest up because when things dry up, we’ll be going 24/7.”

David Stohl, Aerial Applicator/Grower, Skarda Flying Service, Inc., Tollville, Ark.: “North of Hazen some growers got 4-5” of rain Friday night, and it washed out a lot of levees. Here at Tollville we measured 1.75”. Maybe 10% of the rice has received pre-flood nitrogen and has the flood started. With most of the rest we’re waiting for things to dry up enough to apply nitrogen.

“Generally, we’re off to a good start. Icon was used pretty widely, and we’re not dealing with grape

colaspis like last year. We’ve cleaned up a little escaped grass, but Command has held pretty well.”

Terry Erwin, Morehouse Parish Extension Agent, Bastrop, La.: “Rice is doing pretty good. It’s been hurt a bit where water couldn’t get off fast enough. We’ve had some 4-5” rain events. Growers also haven’t been able to do pre-flood herbicide and fertilizer work.”

Chuck Wilson, Arkansas Extension Rice Agronomist, Stuttgart, Ark.: “A bunch of rice is under water in at least 5 counties in northeast Arkansas. We don’t have a good idea yet on how many acres are affected. One grower measured more than 12” of rain in the last week. That included one day when his 6.5” rain gauge was running over.

“Rice can stand to be submerged for 10-14 days. How well it holds up depends partly on how murky the water is. When the water goes down, it’s flat on the mud, and it could take a week before it starts rebuilding its leaves and greens up across the field.

“You’ve got to start from scratch on weed control and rebuild all the levees. The growing point is still down near the soil level, so it can survive, but old vegetation may die off and a new shoot will develop.”

Keith Baioni, Jimmy Sanders, Inc., Hollandale, Miss.: “We got 1” of rain over the weekend, and that was the first rain we’ve had since sometime in mid April. The crop looks pretty good, overall. We’re cleaning up broadleaves and getting ready for pre-flood nitrogen so we can flood up a pretty good bit of rice. We’ve got scattered, larger grass where post-emergence treatments were delayed. We’re thinking about coming back after the flood with Clincher.”