

RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

From Looking South Communications, Owen Taylor, Editor

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

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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OVERVIEW

Conditions remain dry through much of south Louisiana and the Texas rice belt. Saltwater intrusion has become a concern in one area in Vermilion Parish, Louisiana.

Storms dumped rain on parts of the north Delta Sunday night and Monday in association with the weather systems that tore through areas in Missouri, Arkansas and West Tennessee.

Scattered locations in south Arkansas picked up rain Monday, but much of the lower Delta remained dry as we closed this issue. These reports were made Tuesday.

TEXAS/S. LA.

Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Specialist, Crowley, La.: "Even though it's warmed up, the crop in south Louisiana is running 10-14 days behind the historic average. I ran a bunch of DD50s, and they pretty much bear out why the long-term predictions are way ahead of the actual crop.

"In this part of the state we're over 90% planted. It continues to be very dry for this time of the year."

Garry N. McCauley, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Eagle Lake, Texas: "Our first rice started going to flood last week. From a development standpoint, all of our rice is 7-10 days behind this time last year. The cool, wet weather early in the season had an effect. The other thing we're facing is that rainfall, so far, has been just about half our normal amount for the period.

"A lot of farmers are on their fourth flushing and can't hold a flood yet. It's not just the cost of flushing, it's the loss of nitrogen. We may have

to add some early N and/or bump up the rate as we go to flood.

"I've seen a lot of chinchbugs, to the point that we're starting to lose rice on the centers of levees where the flood has chased the bugs. But unless a field has an extreme number of levees, treatment probably isn't justifiable."

Howard Cormier, Vermilion Parish Extension Agent, Abbeville, La.: "Rice is starting to turn around with this warmer weather. We're having some saltwater problems already in low-lying areas due to dry weather. A sample this week hit 2,500 parts per million, which is way too high. Luckily, the field already had some water in it, so hopefully the fresh water will dilute it. Our last significant rain across the parish was April 7. We've had scattered showers since then, but people have been pumping a lot of water.

"We haven't drained any fields for rice water weevils yet, but we're seeing some scaring from adults. In a week or so we'll be far enough along

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to find root damage. Where fields have to be drained, we could be in a critical situation if saltwater remains an issue.”

MIDSOUTH

Reynold Minsky, Minsky Consulting Service, Lake Providence, La.: “The rice is coming up pretty evenly. Everything that has been planted has been flushed. We’re dry and can’t get a rain for anything right now.”

Brent Lassiter, ProAg Services, LLC, Newport, Ark.: “Some pretty strong storms came through the area Sunday night. Most places got at least 2”, but in some locations the rainfall measured up to 5". And an earlier storm put up to 3" in spots. We were about to flush nearly every field for weed control and emergence, but that won’t be needed now. We’re close to 100% planted.

“Command is holding. Right now we’re just letting things drain down. Mostly, we’ll have to deal with nutgrass before we flood, and some of our early fields may be ready for the flood next week.

“We had a lot of straight-line winds with this storm that blew down power poles along some roads. In the McCrory area there were center pivots turned over, too.”

Joe Street, Mississippi Extension Rice Specialist, Stoneville, Miss.: “The rain that’s fallen so far has mainly been in the north Delta. As soon as the water comes off there, people will be trying to kill the grass that’s coming up. South of U.S. 82 people are flushing fields with

some difficulty. The wind is stacking up the water on the ends of fields, and it’s tough to get the ground wet in places.

“With somewhat stronger prices, we’ve got people who’re still undecided about how much rice they’ll finally plant. We may have 70% of the crop planted, or it could be 80%. It’s hard to say because nobody knows what 100% will finally be. Several growers have told me they’re going back for more seed. One guy said Monday that he finished planting a month ago but has decided to plant some more now.”

Mike Burchfield, Jimmy Sanders, Inc., Cleveland, Miss.: “We’re 90% planted and maybe 75% emerged. The rain, where it fell, will help. A lot of guys started flushing last Monday and covered quite a bit of acreage. The rain this week was mainly north of Cleveland. I’ve heard reports of up to 5.75". Around Cleveland, the totals ran about 2.5". And on the south end of the county, little or no rain fell.

“A lot of our rice had Command as a preemergence, and there hasn’t been much activity where fields weren’t flushed. As soon as we get the excess water off we’ll start herbicide work.”

Charles Denver, Denver Crop Consulting, Watson, Ark.: “Rainfall totals Monday night ranged from nothing up to 6". Areas north of Stuttgart didn’t get anything. From McGehee south we didn’t get anything, either. But at Dumas the total was 5.5", and it reached nearly 6" at Watson. At Dermott it was spotty, maybe a half-inch in places.

“Our rice is 80-85% planted, unless people start planting again, which is a possibility with some expectations for stronger prices. We’ve got fields that are getting grassy because growers were short on labor and didn’t flush when it was necessary. People who flushed are in good shape. Some herbicide work started late last week, and a lot more will begin in the next 5-7 days. The grass is getting enough moisture in places to start tillering out, and we’ll start treating grass in some of these fields whether we have a stand or not.”

Chuck Wilson, Arkansas Extension Rice Agronomist, Stuttgart, Ark.: “The rain has been scattered in this immediate area. In the last two days we’ve gotten .2" here at the station, but 20 miles due south the gauge at my home showed 2". It’s been scattered across the state, too. The northern part got a good deal of rain with all the storms, then parts of southern Arkansas caught some. But central Arkansas has missed most of the rain.

“Planting is about to wrap up. As of last Friday, 87% was planted. That’s about 16% ahead of normal for this time of the year. Stronger prices may push up our planted acreage in fringe counties where people can shift land from cotton or soybeans.

“Depending on the weather, we could see some pre-flood fertilizer going out and our first flooding start up late next week. The majority of our crop, though, is 2-3 weeks away from that.”