

# RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

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Here is our first regular issue of RiceFax for 2004. This marks our sixth season of covering rice production in the Delta and coastal Louisiana and Texas.

We welcome our new sponsor, Dow Agrosciences, maker of Clincher®, Stam® and Grandstand® herbicides.

As always, we welcome your suggestions and comments, and we appreciate the help of all the Extension workers, consultants and dealer personnel who provide our reports each week.

Owen Taylor  
Editor, RiceFax

## OVERVIEW

A few more fields are going to a shallow flood in Texas, which could wrap up more than 90% of its planting by the end of the week. In south Louisiana, more fields also are going to flood.

Midsouth planting is going full

bore. Even in parts of the Missouri Bootheel – where the weather has been mostly dry – planting has progressed briskly.

Wind is an issue in a number of areas we called Monday and Tuesday. It's holding up rice herbicide work and raising more fears about drift into rice.

## CROP REPORTS

**Dan Roach, Ind. Consultant, Cleveland, Miss.:** "Out of 16 farmers I'm working with this season, 8 started planting rice today. The rest haven't been planting long, and probably have 25-30% in the ground. We're close to what I would call a normal start. We planted our first fields last year on April 12, and this year the first seed went into the ground on April 9."

**Chuck Wilson, Arkansas Extension Rice Agronomist, Stuttgart, Ark.:** "Everything looks pretty good, so far. Rice is coming up, and we're probably 40-50% planted. Quite a bit was

planted over the weekend after things started drying down late in the week. We were pretty wet in some areas, but people are blowing and going now."

**Tim Walker, Assistant Rice Research Professor, Stoneville, Miss.:** "As of last Friday, we were 80% planted south of U.S. 82 and 30-40% north of 82. About half the rice in that area south of 82 has emerged, while north of there it's mostly just cracking."

"It was dry enough for some folks to start planting again over the weekend, but others waited until yesterday (Monday). Whether we wrap up most of it this week depends on what the weather does."

"Seeding information has probably been the most frequent call in the last few days. People are paying more attention to seeding rates, particularly as they plant Clearfield varieties."

**Wendell Minson, Bootheel**  
Continued on next page



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**Crop Consultants, Dexter, Mo.:** “We started planting earlier than we ever have and are actually just about finished. It’s a very unusual start. Normally, we don’t begin until the April 10-11 period.

“Some of my customers have been done for a week, but even those who are still planting will probably wrap it up much sooner than what we consider typical. It’s kind of scary, too, to think about how much rice is coming up at the same time. One of our earliest fields is up to a 25% stand and will probably be at 50% by Thursday.

“But we do need rain. This is as dry as I’ve ever seen it in April. A couple of guys are flushing. It’s been clouding up and it even drizzled a little this morning (Tuesday) but the sun is shining again. We got .2” in places the other day, but we’ve had winds gusting at up to 35 mph, so it didn’t do us any good. They’re talking about a chance for rain for the rest of the week. We’ve got seed in the dry dirt waiting for a good shower. An inch of rain right now would be worth a million dollars.

“The Command needs to be activated. If we miss rain this week, a lot of growers will be flushing next week.”

**Garry N. McCauley, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Eagle Lake, Texas:** “If the weather holds for the next couple of days, we’ll be over 90% planted

in Texas. We’ve had nagging interruptions from showers, but people have been going hard when they had a break in the weather. Some of our first rice is now holding a shallow flood. I was working east of Houston today (Tuesday), and the most advanced rice is at 3 leaves going on to 4.

“With the cold, wet conditions we are finding seedling disease and mortality. But most of the crop looks good. Mo Way (TAES Entomologist) and I were in a field south of Bay City and found noticeable signs of adult rice water weevil feeding.”

**Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Specialist, Crowley, La.:** “Our biggest problem this week is the wind. It’s keeping us from getting some fields sprayed. One research verification field already is overdue for a Newpath treatment. The direction of the wind last week was wrong, and this week the problem is both direction and velocity. It’s holding up a lot of work.

“We picked up a few more rice water weevils this week, but nothing bad. We have more water on the fields now. The wind is causing problems because it’s shoving water around. It’s going over the rice plants upwind and leaving the plants downwind exposed.”

**Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.:** “We’re over halfway finished planting rice. They’re talking

about rain and scattered showers through the rest of the week. But if that doesn’t develop then we could pretty much wrap up everything – cotton, rice and soybeans.

“I don’t have any of the super-early stuff that was planted 3-4 weeks ago, but we’ve got some at the two-leaf stage. Here it is April 20<sup>th</sup>, and folks are in a hurry to get through. They’re afraid if they don’t wrap it up by April 25 that they’ll be late. A few years ago they would have been happy to have started on April 25. People have a lot more planting capacity now, and when an early window opens they can quickly cover a lot of ground.

“We’ve gotten so much planted so quickly that I’m wondering where we’ll get enough combines, trucks and bins to handle all the grain that will be coming out all at once. August and September could get frantic.

“As soon as planting is over, we’ll start cleaning up these fields. I’m not sure how, considering the wind right now. This Roundup drift issue also is on growers’ minds. One family that’s been growing rice about as long as anyone in Mississippi decided not to plant any this year for that very reason. They’ve been fighting drift the last 2-3 years and are tired of it. They didn’t put any out, themselves, and their rice was in the middle of their farm, but it still hit them.”