

RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas Edition

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Here is this season's first issue of *RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas*. This marks the beginning of our seventh season.

Our thanks to the field staff of **Dow AgroSciences** for once again sponsoring the first half of our publishing year.

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

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OVERVIEW

We made a spot-check of planting activity this afternoon. Texas and south Louisiana are well along. Rain continues to delay progress in the Midsouth. The Delta crop is running somewhat behind the five-year planting average.

Rain moved through much of our coverage area on Monday, parking equipment on a wide basis.

These reports were made Tuesday afternoon.

CROP REPORTS

Garry N. McCauley, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Eagle Lake, Texas: "A lot of rice is up, and a good deal has already reached the 2- to 3-leaf stage. We're maybe 75% to 80% planted. A front moved through parts of our production area Monday, but it was going fast enough that the rainfall totals were fairly low in some areas.

"We're planting some today and will be setting up plots at the Beaumont station on Thursday."

Chuck Wilson, Arkansas Extension Rice Agronomist, Stuttgart, Ark.: "The rain has kept us from making much progress. We had about 6% of our rice planted, as of last Friday. Growers caught a pretty good opening 10 days ago, but then rain moved into the state about the middle of last week, and that slowed us down.

"Some folks were just getting into the fields again over the weekend, but then it started raining again Monday. Our five-year average for this time period is 13%. I think that once things dry up we can catch up pretty quickly."

Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Specialist, Crowley, La.: "We're

Continued on next pages

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gradually getting the crop planted. By the end of this week we ought to be at about 80% completed in south Louisiana. Farmers were slow to get started.

“Part of that was due to the rain. Temperatures were warm enough, but it’s been too wet. The other delaying factor has been the general mood. With low prices, it took longer for people to get into the frame of mind to go ahead and start planting, and some may have still been trying to get the banks to come up with the money.”

Nathan Buehring, Mississippi Extension Rice Specialist: “Only a small

amount of our acreage has been planted. The USDA had us at about 4% planted up to April 10. We’ve only had about three days of good planting weather. Some guys were starting again over the weekend before it began raining again early Monday morning. I’m hearing of amounts ranging from 2" to 4" in places. Ditches are full and water is standing in fields, so it’s going to be several days before we see much activity resume.

“We’ve still got plenty of time to make a good crop. A lot of ground is ready. We just need some open weather.

“The USDA is still putting our estimated planting at

260,000 acres, but I’m skeptical. Soybeans are at \$6, plus I think growers aren’t as concerned about soybean rust as they were last fall, so all that will work against rice acreage. And rice prices, relatively speaking, don’t look as positive as they did a year ago. I’m going to be really surprised if we hit 250,000 acres, and it could be more like 235,000 to 245,000.”