

RiceFax: Midsouth/Texas

MAY 16, 2007

Here is this week's RiceFax.

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- Owen Taylor, Editor (888-327-6329)

OVERVIEW

More Midsouth rice is going to flood.

A little rice in Texas is approaching heading. But some rice east of Houston has yet to be planted due to weather delays.

Armyworms are moving into some rice in Arkansas, and there was one report of heavy chinch bug pressure in Texas.

CROP REPORTS

Steve Schutz, Ind. Consultant, Coushatta, La.: "We're getting ready to fertilize, do weed control work and then follow with the flood. We'll apply a pyrethroid for water weevils."

Scott Gifford, Gifford Crop Consulting, Manila, Ark.: "We are flooding up our first fields this morning (Monday). It's about 91 degrees today, and fields are drying up fast. We replanted a small portion of our rice, maybe 500 acres."

David Mitchell, M&M Air Service, Beaumont, Texas:

"Thunderstorms have been scattered and, at times, intense. Yesterday (Sunday) we got nothing, but down the road it rained 2 inches. Just now, we got an inch. Rain has been falling someplace nearly every afternoon. We're starting to do some herbicide applications and a little topdressing after that. There doesn't seem to be any insect pressure yet. Anyone who put in rice early ended up getting caught by sleet over the Easter weekend, and a lot of that rice really struggled. Some people replanted because they did not get a stand."

Allen McKnight, Delta Ag Consulting, Greenville, Miss.: "We're planting the last 4 fields today (Monday) around Belzoni. The grower just finished land forming and working up the fields. A crew was here today drilling wells. South of U.S. 82, rice acreage could be down 70% and maybe even more as you get closer to Hollandale."

Chuck Wilson, Arkansas Extension Rice Agronomist, Stuttgart, Ark.: "We're still a little behind normal in terms of planting. But, overall, things are in pretty good shape. Some guys are into preflood herbicide applications, while others are starting to fertilize and flood. We're already hearing reports of pretty heavy rice water weevil pressure and armyworms moving from wheat into rice. When the flood goes on, we need to be scouting closely for water weevils. And we need to be scouting for armyworms now, particularly in rice close to wheat. They can defoliate plants pretty quickly once they start moving."

(Continued)

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“Everybody is trying to figure out their nitrogen programs in light of the high urea prices. Do you put out urea and Agrotain or go with ammonium sulfate? Ammonium sulfate costs less, but you’ve got to put out more, so application costs could at least double. A lot of people are doing the math on that question right now and trying to determine how the pricing works out for them.

“Herbicide drift complaints started coming in late last week. We need to be cognizant of wind speeds and the new regulations.”

Hugh Whitby, KC Consulting, Wynne, Ark.: “We’re starting to get a flood on probably a third of our rice. Preflood herbicides are being applied on a lot of our fields, too. We’re having more trouble with marehail in the rice this year and are trying to figure out how to control it. The other unknown factor is to what extent it might be a problem once the flood is on. We’ve never had it this big or this thick. It’s a problem year, in general, for marehail. Up until now, it’s mainly been a concern in beans. But this is a new situation with the rice.”

Lance Honeycutt, Craighead Farmers Co-op, Jonesboro, Ark.: “We’re just starting to get everything ready for permanent flood. We’re spraying where needed, fertilizing and pumping. The crop is 7 to 10 days ahead of our normal schedule. Typically, we’re not at this point until just before or during the Memorial Day weekend.”

Lewis Wells, Agro Distribution, Gillett, Ark.: “In another 7 to 10 days we’ll have most of our rice headed toward a permanent flood. We’re trying to clean up the rice now and line up fertilizer applications. A few people are pumping up fields now. The crop is a little later here due to the cold weather earlier, and rains have held us up, too. A field or two of rice was up at Easter, and the freeze burned it off. But that rice came back.”

Garry N. McCauley, Extension Rice Production Specialist, Eagle Lake, Texas: “We keep inching toward 100% planted, although nobody knows exactly what 100% will finally be this year. And the crop is spread out. There’s still rice east of Houston that hasn’t been planted yet due to weather delays. We also have rice that’s past PD and approaching heading, mainly in Matagorda County and a little in Jackson County. Overall, 10% to maybe 15% has yet to be planted. Growers east of Houston are trying to get it in when they can between rains. One farmer in the Raywood area said he still had 800 acres to plant.

“We’re already past the optimum yield time. In an average year, yields drop off 5% a week after late April. **The question is, are we going to have an average year?** There’s no chance for a ratoon crop with a lot of this late rice, but there usually isn’t much ratoon production east of Houston, anyway.

“Some spotty weed control problems are turning up where things didn’t work. One county agent said today

(Tuesday) that they’re finding some of the worst chinch bug pressure he’s ever seen. It’s in late rice that’s at 3 to 4 leaves and putting on first tiller. We’re also dealing with what seems to be micronutrient problems, with scattered spots of off-color rice that eventually dies. We’re trying micronutrient packs, plus fertilizing and flooding, to see if that has an effect.

“A lot of rice is going to flood in the next 7 to 10 days. The early stuff has been flooded for a while.”

Johnny Saichuk, Louisiana Extension Rice Specialist, Crowley, La.: “Leaf miner calls seem to be subsiding. Rice, overall, looks good. We’re seeing a lot of things this week that we don’t quite understand but believe are somehow weather related. The problems appear to be either nutrient deficiencies or localized decline, but they are atypical of both. We’re putting out small plots with various nutrients to see how rice responds. In some cases, we dried down fields and then put water on them again.

“It’s not just in south Louisiana. Last week, we saw some of these atypical symptoms in north Louisiana where rice is younger and just going to flood. We’ve also looked at a couple of cases of Roundup drift on rice, which isn’t surprising since people are planting soybeans and spraying. This warmer-than-normal weather is really good for the rice that isn’t having problems. But the crop, in general, is running behind where we usually are.”

Nathan Buehring, Mississippi Extension Rice Specialist: “We’re trying to wrap up the last weed control work on the early rice and move it to flood. A good bit of fertilizer is going out where possible. It finally dried up enough Monday to get some things done, then it rained again today (Tuesday). At least a couple of tenths fell from Greenville north, enough to keep people out of the field.

“I’ve looked at a few drift situations, mainly where Clearfield moved into conventional rice. That’s partly due to the fact that we have fewer Clearfield acres and they’re more spread out this year.

“Most of the rice has been planted, but growers are still planting beans and sorghum, plus wheat harvest is about to start. It’s going to be difficult to get everything done.”

ON THE WEB

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