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Jeff Davis Rice Talk

News and information for our parish's agricultural producers and dealers

April 2008

Electronic Mail

In an effort to reduce publication and distribution costs, we are encouraging recipients to receive this newsletter electronically. Just call in your e-mail address, or e-mail me at eeskew@agctr.lsu.edu , and I will add your name to my rice e-mail list.

Also, if you have access to the internet, I recommend that you visit the LSU AgCenter Rice webpage at www.lsuagcenter.com/en/crops_livestock/crops/rice/.

This is an excellent source for up-to-date rice information as well as a library of past presentations, projected costs, etc. If you are interested in other crops go to www.lsuagcenter.com and click on "Crops & Livestock" on the left side of the page under Topics.

And don't forget to go to the Jeff Davis Parish website at www.lsuagcenter.com/parish/jeffdavis/ for past copies of this newsletter and other agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth development news.

Weed Control Guide

The 2008 LSU Weed Control is now available on the LSU website. Go to: www.lsuagcenter.com, and click on "Crops & Livestock". Then click on "Louisiana Suggested Chemical Weed Control Guide". From this site you can print any of the various crop recommendations.

The most serious yield reduction occurs in the first three weeks of the season, so it is important that you make good decisions at this time. Scout your field and make a list of the top three grasses and the top three broadleaf weeds and then develop a herbicide program that will control these. Also, let your irrigation water compliment your herbicide program. Weeds cannot germinate without oxygen, so timely flooding will keep most fields weed free.

Some of these recommendations were included in last month's *Rice Talk*, including the effectiveness of rice herbicides on our predominant weed species.

Weed control is one of your major expenses in rice production in Southwest Louisiana. Use these tables to select the best combination of herbicides to control your major species of weeds.

Rice Update

We had a really good March, with warm weather and plenty of sunshine. The rice crop got off to a very good start, and by Friday, April 4, we had planted approximately 75% of our intended acreage. We are anticipating a slight increase in

acreage this year, anywhere from 4-7%. Most of this will come from growers increasing slightly, but there will be some crawfish acres drained early due to low prices and planted to rice.

In recent years, the month of April has been cooler and more stressful on rice than March. Although April began on the good side, we still have several weeks to go. One of the biggest problems we see when cold, cloudy weather hits is bronzing. If a cold front is forecast, be on the lookout for weak, chloric plants with leaves that float in the water. This can be corrected immediately with an application of zinc chelate. Within 24-48 hours the rice plant has recovered and will respond to fertilizer and herbicide applications.

Be familiar with all rice cultural and pest management practices to insure cost effective decisions. High fuel and fertilizer prices will persist throughout the crop season, so timing of every cultural practice will be critical to minimizing your expenses.

Water Weevils

The rice water weevil is the most serious of all rice insects. This one pest contributes to yield loss every year, with the severity of loss depending on how accurate you are in getting timely applications of insecticides applied. With the loss of Furadan several years ago, we are no longer able to focus our attention on controlling the larvae that is causing the damage, but rather on trying to prevent the larvae from getting to the roots in the first place. And that takes very careful scouting to make the application pay for itself.

There has been some research, and some monitoring of commercial rice fields, that indicate early planted rice will escape water weevil pressure and will not need insecticide applications. These fields would be those that are planted in the very first week or so of the planting season, usually by March 20. Over-wintering adults are just coming out and have not built up enough numbers to do any significant damage. However, this is still preliminary data and you still need to monitor these fields as closely as the others.

The products on the market today that LSU recommends are Karate Z, Mustang Max, Mustang EW, Prolex, and Proaxis. All of these control the adult only, and as a result, must be applied prior to eggs being laid on the rice leaves. These products offer a quick knock down of adult water weevils and give some limited residual control. But if you delay treatment for too long, you will kill the adults, but the eggs will hatch and the larvae (maggots) will still do extensive damage.

Draining for larvae control is still practiced with good results, especially where crawfish is concerned. However, draining can be expensive today with high fuel prices, especially if you have to drain as a salvage method because of severe pressure. In this case, you lose twice by having pruned roots that will result in some yield loss and extra costs to reflood.

This year, Louisiana has received a Section 18 label for the use of Dermacor X-100 seed treatment that has looked very well in research conducted at the LSU Rice Research Station in Crowley. This product is applied to the seed in the same manner as Icon was, but will only be labeled for drill-seeded, or dry broadcast seed.

This product has tremendous potential to control water weevils and other early season pests, but acreage will be limited due to the dry seeded restriction. A demonstration plot has been set up with Mark Pousson in Welsh and will be monitored throughout the season for all insects, including borers. The results will be available at next year's rice meetings.

Trebron 3G, a granular insecticide, has received a Section 18 label for 2008. A total of 128,000 acres are approved in south Louisiana. This product is <u>not</u> a replacement for Furadan. It

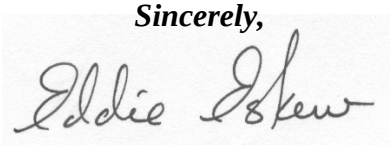
is just like the other products in that it kills the adults. Once applied to the field, the granule dissolves and sets up a chemical barrier at the water surface and soil surface. As adults go under water to lay their eggs, they come into contact with the chemical and die. Some very limited larvae control may occur as they hatch and drop to the soil surface and come into contact with the chemical. If they reach the root before the Trebron is applied, they will not be killed. Then, like with the other products, you will kill the adults but still have a yield loss because of root pruning.

Crawfish – White Spot Disease Update

Although the viral disease confirmed in many Louisiana crawfish ponds last spring has been referred to as White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV), it may be time to look for a new name to describe this disease – like "slow-motion disease," "crawfish stroke" or something along those lines. Affected crawfish don't move much, can't pinch hard and most lose their balance and cannot walk. These symptoms are most apparent in medium-to-large crawfish, while smaller animals in the same pond usually show no problems at all. Affected crawfish eventually die, sometimes in traps or throughout the pond. The presence of the virus, however, does not necessarily cause mortality – the vast majority of ponds that tested positive in the spring of 2007 showed no problems with mortality or reduced production. This disease began to show up in sick and dying crawfish in some ponds in March of last year.

Recent genetic analysis of the white spot virus from Louisiana crawfish by LSU School of Veterinary Medicine has found differences in this virus that have not been seen in other WSSV isolates from around the world. Our virus appears to be genetically unique, and it may have been present at low levels in our natural environment for some time. Research is currently being done to further determine the source of our virus, to investigate the mechanism by which WSSV is transmitted from crawfish to crawfish and to identify possible management strategies. The majority of Louisiana crawfish ponds tested positive for the virus last year, so there is no quarantine program for ponds that have white spot problems. If you suspect an outbreak of white spot virus in your crawfish operation, let your local county agent or aquaculture agent know. We need to work together across the whole industry to gather information that can help us understand this problem and how to avoid outbreaks.

Sincerely,



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Visit our website at:
http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/parish/jeff_davis/