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*Agricultural Newsletter of the LSU AgCenter's Iberia Cooperative Extension Service*



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## **Communication and Contact Information**

Communication between sugarcane producers and the county agent's office is very important. This can be done through letters, phone calls, fax, office and farm visits and via email. Through this letter I am asking that all producers provide their contact information to me so that their needs can be met in a timely and efficient manner. Enclosed is a contact information form. Please take a few minutes to complete it and return it to me at the Iberia county agent's office by Friday, July 11, 2008. Your information can be called into the Iberia office by calling 369-4440, faxing it to the Iberia office at 373-0040, by mailing it to the Iberia office by sending to the following address: 300 Iberia Street, Suite B-110, New Iberia, La. 70560 or by emailing it to me at the following address: [bhebert@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:bhebert@agcenter.lsu.edu)

### **Iberia Agriculture/Sugarcane Advisory Council Meeting**

The Iberia Agriculture/Sugarcane Advisory Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 9, 2008 at the Iberia Extension Office located in the basement of the Iberia Parish Courthouse building. The purpose of this council is to provide input, guidance, leadership and feed back related to agriculture and natural resources as to sustain and improve ongoing and future extension educational programming efforts. Council members will be sent further details in the near future.

### **Field Days**

Several local field days related to sugarcane, soybeans and rice will be taking place during the month of July. (see below). All interested individuals are encouraged to attend.

July 2- Rice Field Day (9:00 a.m.) -Rice Research Station-Crowley  
-Call (337) 788-7547 for details

July 16-Sugarcane Field Day-(8:30 a.m.)  
-Sugarcane Research Station-St. Gabriel  
-Call (225) 642-0224 for details

July 18-St. Martin/Lafayette/St. Landry Sugarcane Field Day (2:00 p.m.)  
-Levert/St. John Sugar Mill-St. Martinville  
-Call (337) 332-2181 for details

July 24-Iberia/St. Mary Sugarcane Field Day and Banquet/Meal  
(Note: Vermilion Sugar Producers are also invited to attend)  
-Registration – 4:00 p.m.  
-Field tour-4:30 p.m./-Iberia Research Station-Jeanerette  
-Banquet/Meal -6:30 p.m.-Ward 8 Recreation Center-Jeanerette

The field day will include the following:

- Sugarcane variety plots, fallow weed control plots, sweet sorghum plots, Master farmer plot, Fertility plots, entomology update, ripener update

The banquet will include:

- door prizes, guest speaker-Commissioner of Agriculture, Mike Strain, (DVM) American Sugarcane League updates/announcements, and a sponsored meal

### **Iberia/St. Mary Soybean Field Day**

-July 25, 2008

-Layne Blanchard's Farm Shop

-Registration- 8:30

-Field tour will consist of

- plot of 10 varieties, disease and insect update, rust update, marketing/economics update. A complimentary meal will be served following the field tour.

### **Iberia/St. Mary Farm Safety Meeting**

The annual Iberia/St. Mary Farm Safety Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 15, 2008 at the Ward 8 Recreation Center, Hubertville Road, Jeanerette. All interested individuals are invited so please make plans to attend. **Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with the program starting at 9:00 a.m. A fee of \$5.00 per person will be charged to cover meal and other program expenses. Please bring the registration form along with your check payable to Iberia Farm Safety Program.** The program will cover the following topics: power line safety, ATV safety, tire safety, heat stress, equipment safety, highway safety, road/field diesel issues and conclude with a meal at Noon. Looking forward to seeing producers and workers at this meeting.

### **Grain Storage Meeting**

With many of our sugarcane producers growing more grain (wheat & soybeans) storage or a lack of storage seems to be an increasing concern. To assist with this a grain storage meeting has been scheduled for Friday, July 18 at Lynn Lanie's Farm. Industry representatives will be on hand to discuss construction and operating cost of grain bins. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m.

### **Certified Prescribed Burn Manager School**

The next Certified Prescribed Burn Manager School has been set for Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup> at the Sugar Research Station in St. Gabriel. The school will begin at 9:30 a.m. Please complete the enclosed form and return to the Iberia Extension Office by Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup> as to the number of individuals from your farm that need to be trained so that training materials can be purchased and other arrangements can be made. Further details will be sent to those who respond in the near future.

### **2008 LSU AgCenter Annual Sugarcane Variety Survey**

Your assistance in obtaining crucial information for use in the statewide variety survey for the growing year of 2007 is appreciated and now we are turning our attention to the 2008 survey. LCP 85-384 was still the leading variety in 2007 with 46% of the planted area; however, it is anticipated that HoCP 96-540 with 31% of the planted area in 2007 will take top billing for 2008 as most producers are switching to this variety as well as many of the newer varieties.

It is hoped that when completed, the 2008 variety survey will give us precise information on variety preferences and trends that can be used in formulating future research and extension programs. The variety survey information is very important on a local and statewide basis as it allows us to monitor the progress of varieties and their acceptance by producers. Surveys can also be used by the sugar industry to warn producers of potential problems if they are keeping varieties with serious problems.

Please note that the 2008 variety survey form has a listing for nine (9) varieties: LCP85-384 (1993), HoCP 85-845 (1993), HoCP 91-555 (1999), Ho 95-988 (2004), HoCP 96-540 (2003), L 97-128 (2004), L 99-226 (2006), L 99-233 (2006) and HoCP 00-950 (2007). All other varieties are to be listed in the "Others" category. Number in parenthesis represents the year of commercial release to the Louisiana industry.

Please return the attached 2008 Sugarcane Variety Survey by Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>. One (1) variety survey form should be completed by each farm (it is not necessary for each producer to complete a separate form).

### **New Sugarcane Variety**

Louisiana sugarcane farmers will have a new sugarcane variety this fall with the release of L 01-283. Developed in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sugarcane Research Unit in Houma and the American Sugar Cane League in Thibodaux, L 01-283 is the latest in a series of new varieties for the Louisiana sugarcane industry. This variety has had yield data throughout its testing that showed that it was equal or greater than HoCP 96-540 in plant cane, first-stubble, and second-stubble plots. L 01-283 has shown that it has a superior stubbling variety, with a lower stalk weight than HoCP 96-540. However due to its superior stalk count L 01-283 has out yielded HoCP 96-540 in tons of cane per acre in the first and second stubble test. All test have shown that L 01-283 has a higher TRS than HoCP 96-540. In addition L 01-283 offers good resistance to the Sugarcane Borer in all but one sugarcane disease found in Louisiana, RSD.

At this time commercial seed companies have not been successful in their efforts to tissue culture L 01-283. The only seed for this variety in the near future will come from ASCL secondary stations.

### **New Farm Bill**

The 2008 version of the Farm Bill has finally been passed into law. Key elements that will affect sugar producers are as follows:

1. Retains the inventory management system that provides no payments to farmers and has USDA balance sugar supply and demand to avoid sugar loan forfeitures.
2. New Market balancing mechanism: Limited sucrose-ethanol program that is to be used when imports exceed domestic demand.
3. Minimum Overall Allotment Quantity (OAQ) - US produces share the US market—set at no less that 85% of domestic human consumption.
4. Import Management-restricts initial TRQ to trade-agreement-mandated minimum (WTO+ CAFTA). There will also be no TRQ increase, unless due to crop emergency, until after April 1.
5. Loan rate increases for first time in 23 years. There will be no loan rate increase in 2008, but the rate will rise 1/4-cent each year after for 3 years(2009,2010, 2011).

Other details covering the 2008 Farm Bill can be obtained via the internet and typing in the search topic : "Farm Bill."

## **Weed Control**

### **A) Glyphosate**

The following is from Dr. Jim Griffin; LSU AgCenter Specialist:

This year growers are faced with increased fuel and herbicide costs. Now is the time to assess how fallow fields will be managed in preparation for planting. Bermudagrass is becoming more problematic and nutsedge is rapidly gaining a foothold. For both weeds tillage alone programs are ineffective. Dr. Salassi tells me that the cost of a single tillage operation is \$9.39 (variable plus fixed costs) and this value will change as the price of diesel fuel increases. The intent of this article is to get you thinking about efficiency in planning fallow weed control programs. Fallow programs will always be a cost to the grower but the investment is necessary to control perennial weeds and to maximize sugarcane production over the multi-year cropping system.

I am hearing a cost range of \$35 to \$48 per gallon for glyphosate products. If applied by ground rig you can add \$6.20 for application cost. In past years when glyphosate products were less expensive, rates of glyphosate used were higher than necessary to control problem weeds. We have conducted extensive research comparing glyphosate rates and formulations for weed control in fallowed sugarcane fields and support the following recommendations.

**Johnsongrass Control:** Rates of 1 to 2 qt /A of the 4L glyphosate formulation is sufficient.

**Bermudagrass Control:** A tillage program where rhizomes and stolons are broken up combined with glyphosate is most effective. Multiple applications of glyphosate are more effective than a single application. If only a single application is planned apply 2 to 3 qt/A of the 4L glyphosate formulation when bermudagrass has less than 8 inch runners. If multiple applications are planned 2 qt/A followed by 2 qt/A is sufficient.

**Purple and Yellow Nutsedge Control:** Glyphosate will not control nutsedge. Since several weeds will be present in fallowed fields the glyphosate rate should be based on the grass weed present and Permit at 1.0 to 1.33 oz/A, Envoke at 0.15 to 0.2 oz/A, or Yukon at 6 to 8 oz/A should be added to help control nutsedge. Surfactant should be added if surfactant is not already present in the glyphosate formulation. Higher herbicide rates are needed when nutsedge is large and dense. If two applications of glyphosate are planned, Permit, Envoke, or Yukon should be applied in the first application before nutsedge is 6 inches tall to reduce tuber population in the soil. Yukon is a newly registered herbicide and a 6 oz/A rate is equivalent to a 1.0 oz/A rate of Permit and a 6.6 oz/A rate of Clarity/Vision.

### **B) Eptam**

Farmers were given the option of another herbicide to use during the fallow period of sugarcane production. We are still in the research phase at this point and can not make definitive recommendations.

If you are interested in trying Eptam I would suggest that start on a small scale and evaluate the product under your farm conditions. **It is extremely important that Eptam be uniformly incorporated (a rolling cultivator works well) and that incorporation be performed**

**immediately after application.** Sugarcane should not be planted prior to 45 days after application so plan your application accordingly.

With the increase in the cost of glyphosate for 2008 use of preemergence herbicides in fallowed fields may be a viable option. Included are the research results from last year and the cost associated with using Eptam in your fallow program.

Table 1. Bermudagrass and nutsedge ground cover and control with Eptam as affected by incorporation using a Lilliston rolling cultivator and hipper/bedder at St. Gabriel, LA and a hipper/bedder at Welcome

Herbicide rate/A	Bermudagrass ground cover and % control based on ground cover - July 9		Nutsedge ground cover and % control based on ground cover - July 11
	Hipper/bedder incorporation	Lilliston cultivator incorporation	Hipper/bedder incorporation
Eptam @ 2pt	10 (55%)	2 (91%)	18 (61%)
Eptam @ 3pt	8 (64%)	2 (91%)	13 (72%)
Eptam @ 4pt	10 (55%)	4 (82%)	8 (83%)
Eptam @ 5pt	7 (68%)	2 (91%)	4 (91%)
No herbicide	22	22	46

Table 2. Cost comparisons of Eptam and glyphosate programs compared with two applications of glyphosate or two applications of glyphosate with Yukon or Envoke applied with glyphosate at the first application.

First application	Cost \$/A	Follow-up application (s)	Cost \$/A	Total cost \$/A
Eptam @ 2pt	\$8.00	Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz	\$7.30	<b>\$15.30</b>
Eptam @ 3pt	\$12.00	Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz	\$7.30	<b>\$19.30</b>
Eptam @ 4pt	\$16.00	Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz	\$7.30	<b>\$23.30</b>
Eptam @ 5pt	\$20.00	Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz	\$7.30	<b>\$27.30</b>
--	--	Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz	\$7.30 + \$7.30	<b>\$14.60</b>
		fb Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz		
--	--	Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz +	\$7.30 + \$16.50	<b>\$31.10</b>
		Yukon @ 6 oz fb Roundup	fb \$7.30	
		OM @ 46.5 oz		
--	--	Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz +	\$7.30 + \$10.80	<b>\$25.40</b>
		Envoke @ 0.15 oz fb	fb \$7.30	
		Roundup OM @ 46.5 oz		
1Herbicide costs for 2007: Eptam 7E @ \$4.00/pt; Roundup Original Max @ \$20/gallon; Yukon @ 6 oz/A = 1.0 oz/A Permit and 6 oz/A Clarity (dicamba); Cost = \$16.50 (Note: Permit @ 1 oz/A; Cost \$18.00/oz); Envoke @ \$72/oz				

### **Section 18 Emergency Use Label: Headline® fungicide for control of brown rust**

The following is from Dr. Jeff Hoy; LSU AgCenter Specialist

An Emergency Use Label has been granted by EPA for brown rust control with Headline fungicide during 2008. Sugarcane farmers are trying to reduce costs where ever possible, and fungicide applications will add to the direct costs of production. However, experiments conducted from 2004 through 2007 have demonstrated that brown rust can cause cane tonnage

losses ranging from 16-21% and total sugar losses ranging from 11-28 %. Timely applications of an effective fungicide can prevent those losses. Fungicide research conducted during 2006 and 2007 has shown a positive economic return from applications with Headline under some conditions. The conditions under which a positive economic return would be expected from the application of Headline are listed below.

**Conditions needed for decision to apply fungicide:**

Early start to rust – symptoms visible in field during April or first two weeks of May  
 Susceptible variety – LCP 85-384 or Ho 95-988

Early rust outbreaks are most likely to occur in plant cane and in cane planted on light soil but also may occur in cane planted on heavy soil and in stubble crops.

The results shown in the table below are from three experiments during 2007 comparing yields with and without Headline applications. They illustrate the effect of different starting dates on the amount of benefit that can result from treatment. Two applications made to LCP 85-384 plant cane showing rust symptoms beginning in late April improved yield by 8.4 tons and 1,200 lbs. of sugar. When the rust did not start until mid-May, two applications to Ho 95-988 only improved yield by 2.6 tons and 800 lbs. of sugar. A single application made after rust began in late June only improved yield by 1.2 tons and 400 lbs. of sugar. The two fungicide applications made to reduce rust during April and May provided a very positive economic return. The two applications in May and June probably made money. The application of fungicide to a late starting rust epidemic probably did not pay.

Results from three 2007 fungicide tests with Headline applications started in April, May or June.

Application dates	Variety	Fungicide +/-	Cane tonnage	Sugar/acre
27 April & 14 May	LCP 85-384	Yes	45.3	8,842
		No	37.9	7,611
18 May & 8 June	Ho 95-988	Yes	43.1	9,705
		No	40.5	8,887
28 June	LCP 85-384	Yes	44.1	9,068
		No	42.9	8,679

**Grant/Loan Opportunity**

The Louisiana Business Recovery Authority is hosting sessions to assist and take applications for grant and loan opportunities for small businesses, farmers and commercial fishermen affected by Hurricane Katrina and Rita. To qualify the business must have incurred a 20% decline in 2005 versus 2006 or a \$20,000 lost in assets caused by the Hurricanes. Grants do not have to be repaid and loan payments do not start until 6 months after closing with no interest for the first 2 years and 4% thereafter. The application deadline is July 17, 2008. The Iberia Parish informational session is scheduled for Wednesday, July 9, 2008 at the Iberia Career Solution Center (Acadiana Works one Stop) 124 E. Main Street, New Iberia. Clients should bring copies of necessary documents when coming to apply. For further details call 337-886-7782.

## **Bio-Diesel Workshop**

The LSU AgCenter will host a set of one-day workshops on how to make your own biodiesel. The choices are July 29, 30 or 31st at the W.A. Callegari Environmental Center in Baton Rouge.

**The workshops are free, but registration is required. People are to register on the Internet by going to: <http://biodiesel.eventbrite.com>.**

Each workshop begins at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 11:30 a.m. People can return at 1 p.m. for questions and answers and watch a demonstration of how to use the equipment to make biodiesel.

## **Other**

In closing I would like to share with you some observations and thoughts. The dog days of summer are upon us and the dry weather conditions we had earlier this growing season have been replaced with rainy days allowing for adequate moisture for much of the parish. The condition of the crop at this point seems very good with the possibility of better than average yields come harvest time. Fertilizer, weed and insect programs seem to be working by and large. With increased cost (fuel, fertilizer, seed, etc.) and a selling price that has not really changed in over 20 years, many in the sugar industry are looking at 2008 with much concern despite the promising crop conditions in the field. As a farming community, we must remain optimistic. Even though I am only 38 years old, I cannot remember a time in my life when American consumers have actually stopped to realize where their food comes from and how much they spend on food, fiber and shelter. I think American agriculture is at a crossroads and we must all do what we can to continually inform the American public about the small profit margin for American farmers. Here in Louisiana, in the sugar belt I am optimistic about the future for the following:

- 1) Bio fuels and the role sugarcane and other crops can play in this emerging field
- 2) The building of a new sugar refinery in South Louisiana
- 3) The nearly 180,000 acres of sugarcane in Florida being sold to the state of Florida to be returned to a "natural swampy" environment
- 4) The passage of the new farm bill
- 5) New technologies being developed to improve sugar production
- 6) Adverse weather conditions in the upper mid-west and the attraction of some sugar producers (both beet and cane) to switch to grains

and lastly; the perseverance and fortitude of you the farmer. Many of the reasons listed above do not seem to improve things in the short term, rather in a 5-6 year window and it is the survival of the sugar industry in the short term that causes so much concern. Let me conclude by saying that as farmers you may be discouraged at the moment, but things will turn around and improve; as they always seem to do. We here at the LSU AgCenter want to continue to serve your needs and

lets hope and pray that Mother Nature is kind to us and our neighbors during the 2008 hurricane and harvest seasons.

If you have any questions or need further information, you may contact me via phone (w) 369-4440, (c) 380-4484, mailing address: Courthouse Building Suite B-110, 300 Iberia Street, New Iberia, La. 70560 or via email [bhebert@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:bhebert@agcenter.lsu.edu).

Sincerely,  
*Blair Hebert*

Blair J. Hebert  
County Agent  
Iberia Parish

BJH/rv  
Enclosures

**Calendar of Events:**

**July**

- 2 Rice Field Day-Rice Research Station-Crowley
- 9 Iberia Agriculture/Sugarcane Advisory Committee Meeting  
Iberia Extension Office
- 15 Iberia/St. Mary Farm Safety Meeting
- 16 Sugarcane Field Day-Sugarcane Research Station-St. Gabriel
- 18 St. Martin/Lafayette/St. Landry Sugarcane Field Day-St. John Sugar Mill-St. Martinville
- 18 Grain Storage Meeting-Lynn Lanie's Farm-Jeanerette
- 24 Iberia/St. Mary Sugarcane Field Day  
Iberia Research Station
- 25 Iberia/St. Mary Soybean Field Day  
Layne Blanchards Farm Shop

**August**

- 7 Certified Burn Manager School  
Sugar Research Station-St. Gabriel