

**RICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 17, 2005
EXTENSION OFFICE, 8:30 A.M.
ABBEVILLE, LA.**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Present were Howard Cormier, Steve Linscombe, Richard Hardee, Dr. Richard Dunand, Dr. Jason Bond, Dr. Brooks Blanche, Dr. Johnny Saichuk, Linda and Wayne Zaunbrecher, David LaCour, Dane Hebert, Glen Duhon, Jeremy Hebert, Ted Girouard, Durel Romaine, and Christian Richard.

Chairman Richard Hardee asked members to introduce themselves.

Dr. Steve Linscombe presented a research update. He introduced Dr. Brooks Blanche, who replaced Dr. Chi Ren Chu. Brooks will do variety development of medium grains. Dr. Sha will do long grain work, along with Dr. Linscombe. Long grains show promising yield quality and disease packages. There is an increase of one line. The medium grains have had a yield jump over Jupiter. CL131 was released as comparable to CL161. 003 is better than Cheniere and Cocodrie on yield. New hybrids are doing very well. More information will be presented at the Rice School in January.

Steve will decide about Pine Island plots after he sees the affects of salt water. As far as the tests in Klondike, Kent Lounsberry will continue to host the Rice Field Tour in July.

Jasmine type varieties are a major part of Dr. Sha's work. Milling is erratic, from 100, down to 70, but improvements are being made. Jupiter has a yield advantage over Bengal. The ratoon on the medium grain is a hit or miss situation. Jupiter is more consistent than Bengal on second crop and has better blast, straight head, and panicle blight resistance than Bengal. It does have some peck damage, but this is related to limited acreage. Insects seem to be more attracted to medium than long grain varieties. Cypress is a variety that does well late, but April 1st is always a better planting day than May 1st. The day length affects photosynthesis. By June 1, temperature and sunlight are on the decline for late spring and early summer, and ratoon crop.

Dane stated that it is hard to plant new varieties with a drill. Steve drills one inch deep, maximum. He tries to plant to the moisture and avoid flushing. He does not use gibberellic acid. He

needs to see the variety differences without influence of any hormonal treatments. Dr. Dunand stated that on the station, water goes on and off the same day. It's harder on big fields to do flushing. Water displaces air, creating low oxygen levels. Rice can take this, but it does hurt it. With gibberellic acid, it is important to try to plant to the moisture. Gibberellic Acid helps get the rice up and out. Ted Girouard stated that you need good soil compaction for germination. Flushing seems to cause problems. Steve stated that Clearfield has given the best red rice control in water seeded operations. David LaCour stated that he waits seven days for seeds to emerge. Flushing delays germinating seeds because it takes oxygen away. Dunand stated that it's important to plant the lower cuts first and plant up to the top. Plant deeper as the moisture goes deeper. It is not practical to reset the drill at each new field. Linscombe did state that packed soil gives more consistency in drilling. Dropping seed on the top of the soil and covering lightly is not as good as drilling ½ to 1 inch deep. A fluffy field is an enemy to drilling. Farmers are dropping seed through the drill for seeding rate calibration purposes.

Next, Dr. Johnny Saichuk gave his overview. He stated that 2005 has been our driest year, with 5.46 inches of rainfall average since early spring. Twenty-two to twenty-five acre inches is pumped each year, not much difference between what was lasered and what was not. Next year we'll average \$2.50 per acre inch for 22-25 acre inches pumped. The average total rainfall and water needed is 36 inches. It is very hard to capture the fuel costs and determine expenses for pumping, but he estimates it is about \$55-\$70/acre for irrigation costs. He suggested budgeting \$75/acre to be on the safe side.

Johnny stated that salt and soil sampling was a great effort by agents and dealers. Five hundred samples from two hundred sites were taken in one to two days. We do not have a cut off for salt level yet. Research is going on to try to determine that.

Verification fields this past year were a mixed bag. The results are not complete yet. The hybrids shattered badly and had to be drained early to reduce this. Milling on XP723 was not good, even though the yields were good.

We're still working on the DD50, trying to get the glitches out. It seems that everything on the DD50 was delayed two weeks. Richard Dunand reminded farmers that Clearfield and hybrids come

with Gibberellic Acid due to reduced seeding rates to save cost of seeding. The hybrids used to guarantee drill seeded stands, but now they charge 50% of replanting costs of the seed. We need a drill seeding presentation at the Rice School. Richard Dunand agreed to help teach this.

Jason Bond reported that Agrotain costs about \$4.00 per acre. Ninety pounds of nitrogen plus Agrotain, at low, medium and high rates, had no significant difference on yields. We can use lots of nitrogen by delaying the flood. Jason is working on salt soil tests now. Cocodrie was planted from several different sites affected by salt water. Rye grass is doing better than the rice in greenhouse tests conducted at the Rice Station. The plans are to simulate water seeding in the lab.

David LaCour commented that drought makes salinity problems much worse. A rainy season can negate much of the salt problems. Johnny Saichuk stated that results have been very variable with no pattern or predictability. We've had from 700 – 4,000 ppm within the same field.

In other business, Glen Duhon commented that not many people are coming in for loans. Durel stated that farming intentions south of Highway 14 will depend on if you have usable water. High fuel costs would hurt chances for profit very much next year. A wet winter could change everyone's decision. There could be 17 rural banks failing in Louisiana. This comes from Russell Clostio at the House Ag Committee Meeting. The banks would have to start calling in notes. Glen stated that most banks will.

Arkansas is looking at a 25% reduction in acreage. In Louisiana, we expect a 25-30 % reduction also. Steve stated that lots of land is being worked now. Evangeline parish will plant only what they need for crawfish and will cut 60% of 2005 planted acres. If we cut enough acres, the price will come up due to domestic needs. We need a major reduction in Arkansas, which is a 1.6 million acre crop.

Ted stated that something positive in the market is coming. Louisiana Rice Mill will plant 300 + acres. Johnny stated that landowners want to know where the money is going. Steve stated that a letter from the Rice Growers Association requesting help from landowners with rent did get people's attention.

In other discussion, the railway has been approved for a grant to rebuild the washed out section going to Riviana.

Next was a discussion of the average rice yield. Comments made were that the salt water definitely hurt the later yields; yields went down from the early yields; and the north part of the parish had better yields. After much discussion, it was agreed that the parish average yield would be 34.5 dry barrels, including second crop, most of which was not harvested.

In discussion of Field Day topics, the following ideas were brought up: water and its effects on land; Mystery Malady; varieties; drill seeding; market outlook; weed control; insects; Rice Tec overview; and Whorl maggots as a growing problem.

In other Extension educational programs, it was felt that emails served a good purpose. Steve Linscombe stated that anyone can use the delete button for items that they do not feel are important.

Durel Romaine was elected as the new chairman by unanimous decision of the group. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.