

Richland Parish

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Early Season Wheat Production

Successful wheat production begins with early season management decisions that will impact yield and profitability including land selection, seedbed preparation, variety selection, seeding dates, rates and depth and fall fertilization.

Wheat is most productive when grown on soils that have good surface and internal drainage. The old saying that “wheat does not like wet feet” is very true. Fields with poor drainage that are subject to flooding or extended periods of standing water will reduce stands and yields. Weather patterns and rainfall cannot be controlled but planting wheat on well drained soils will reduce the risk of stand and yield loss during periods of heavy and/or extended rain events.

Planting wheat on a well prepared seedbed with adequate moisture allows for uniform seed germination and emergence. Rolling prepared seedbeds will create a firm planting surface that allows even better control of seeding depth enhancing uniform germination and emergence.

Although wheat planting is near and most variety decisions have been made, selecting good varieties is essential. High quality, certified seed should be used. If using bin-run seed, a germination test should be performed as well as having seed cleaned to remove foreign matter. Yield data for the top performing varieties in north Louisiana from the LSU Ag Center’s variety evaluation’s publication is the best place to look. One - three year variety data are available but selections should be made using two- three data year. Varieties that perform well in the two-three year data will prove to be more consistent and stable performers in the field. Variety characteristics are available in the publications that should be

considered when making variety decisions including maturity, vernalization, lodging resistance as well as yield, and rust resistance. Selecting varieties that have been evaluated for two to three years will reduce the risk of surprises during the crop season that may have a dramatic impact on yield.

Recommended wheat planting dates for north Louisiana is October 15 – November 15 with adequate moisture and a favorable weather forecast. These are not absolute, hard and fast dates, but they are based on years of planting date research and should be used as a guide for planting date decisions. Late maturing varieties should be planted in the early window of recommended planting periods to allow for adequate vernalization. Early maturing varieties with shorter vernalization requirements should be planted in the latter part of recommended planting window. These suggestions will also reduce the risks of early season insect damage as well as winter kill in March and early April.

Although wheat is a cool season crop that requires enough days of cool temperatures (vernalization) to maximum yields, optimum soil temperatures for rapid seed germination is 54-77° Fahrenheit. Wheat will germinate in soil temperatures as low as 40° but will take longer increasing the risk of less than optimum emergence.

Planting wheat with a grain drill is the preferred method versus broadcast. Grain drills allow for more uniform depth of planting that result in a more uniform stand as well as reduced seeding rates. Broadcast seeding should be followed by light disking or harrowing to cover seed to ensure good seed/soil contact that will increase germination.

Seeding rates during recommended planting dates on well prepared seedbeds with adequate moisture are 70-90 lbs per acre. Wheat tillers exceptionally well with good fertility that can produce good yields. If less than optimum conditions exist at planting, such as poorly prepared seedbeds, broadcast planting, poorly drained fields, inadequate moisture at planting etc., seeding rates should be increased 10 – 20% for such situations.

Wheat emerges best when planted at a depth $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " into adequate moisture for germination but may be planted at a depth of 2" or greater if needed to reach moisture. Planting at shallower depths normally results in a quick and more uniform emergence.

Fertilization should always begin with a soil test and nutrients applied according to recommendations. Phosphorus and potassium should be applied and incorporated. Fall applications of nitrogen (N) may be used to encourage tiller production but over application of N may cause excessive growth and be more susceptible to winter injury. Common sources of phosphorus, DAP or MAP, contain adequate amounts of N to promote tillering.



2009 Certified Acres by Parishes/Percent of State in Northeast Louisiana

Parish	Corn	Cotton	Sorghum	Rice	Soybean	Wheat	Sweet Potato
Caldwell	4826	5307	0	1408	4367	1689	0
East Carroll	46436	9854	39	8300	94723	5783	65
Franklin	79254	11871	69	3134	40828	17528	3379
Madison	93520	20985	414	7282	72226	2768	0
Morehouse	85568	6039	2368	46316	56169	20680	1861
Ouachita	13066	3370	495	7564	18029	2686	0
Richland	57718	6763	2544	7291	31258	19281	712
Tensas	62075	62164	802	2918	35088	10817	0
West Carroll	21067	953	37	3430	42099	17644	2696
NE Region	463530	127306	6768	87643	394787	98876	8713
State Total	619,740	220,390	67,473	460,194	1,002,441	173,379	13,269
NE % of State Total	74.80%	57.80%	10.00%	19.00%	39.40%	57.00%	65.70%

Calendar of Events

December 7-9, 2009

Rice Outlook Conference, New Orleans

January 4-7, 2010

Beltwide Cotton Conference, New Orleans

January 12-13, 2010

Conservation Tillage Conference, Tunica, MS

January 15-16, 2010

AgExpo, Ike Hamilton, West Monroe, LA