Field Notes
April 18, 2008
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The photographs above were taken in our verification field in Jeff Davis parish; one is good news, the other is not. On the left it is clear that the rush (*Juncus* sp.) is dying. It is the best activity I have seen on this pest. We got lucky with the herbicide choice. If we are able to do it three times in a row then I will feel confident we have something that works.

On the right are leaves of rice laying on the water. The symptom is called bronzing named for the bronze colored lesions on the leaves. The problem is zinc deficiency probably induced by the record cold weather. One gallon of zinc chelate per acre had been applied along with the herbicide in anticipation of zinc deficiency based on soil tests. We had discussed treating the seed with zinc, but because the farmer was using seed he soaked that was not a choice. If by next week it has not shown significant recovery we will add another gallon of zinc chelate. We really need warmer weather. We are leaving water on the field because this field has a history of red rice and the variety planted here is Cheniere.

Both of the plants shown in the photographs above were observed in our verification field in Calcasieu parish. Four ounces of Newpath per acre plus 1% crop oil had been applied 4 days earlier. Activity on smartweed (left hand photograph) is very evident, but only slight discoloration is visible on water paspalum. According to Dr. Eric Webster Newpath followed by Newpath has a rating of 8 out of 10 on water paspalum. Interestingly, the landlord complained to me that his "pasture" did not come back as well anymore following Clearfield rice. I explained as best as I could that it was because the rice farmer was able to control this pest much better than in the past. I'm not sure if I sold him on the benefits of controlling "weeds" in rice that were desirable as forage the next year.

If this field stays on schedule we will probably apply the second 4 ounce dose of Newpath next week. This is assuming warmer weather moves in and rice makes significant growth. The field is simply too uneven to flood now.

The two photographs above illustrate what many farmers call “potato chipping”. This occurs following working the field in standing water. In this field the soil type is listed as a Lebeau clay, but is mixed with a Gallion fine sandy loam in spots. It is derived from Red River alluvium. Walking across the field when it is mildly wet would lead one to believe it is pure clay and the stickiest stuff on earth. It makes Sharkey look and feel tame.

When the soil is mixed with water then allowed to stand the first soil particles to settle out are very fine sands. These form a thin layer or boundary between the non-suspended soil and the silt and clay that settle out after water stands for several days or longer. Because clay above and below the sand layer attracts water more strongly than sand (or even gravity) water does not migrate across the sand barrier. As the clay in the surface layer dries and shrinks the soil cups as a potato chip might when fried. Water in the clay below the sand will not move upward by capillarity. Flooding the field eventually wets all layers and the soil surface returns to a “normal” appearance.

The next page has more photographs of the Mississippi River. The first three are similar to others in last week’s Field Notes. The 4th from left is of the Red River at the Brouillette boat launch. I was told where the cattle are should have a 20 foot drop off. The bottom left hand shows seep water in a corn field taken from the top of the levee. The next photograph is taken from the same spot, but looking toward the river. Normally we cannot see any water there.


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