LSU AgCenter

**H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station**

# NEWSLETTER

**Volume 21 Issue 4 | December 3, 2024**

### Upcoming Events

- **SW Louisiana Rice Advisory Meeting** – Jennings, LA, December 5, 2024
- **USA Rice Outlook Conference** – Little Rock, Arkansas, December 8 – 10, 2024
- **SW Louisiana Rice/Crawfish/Soybean Production Meeting -** Welsh, LA, January 7, 2025
- **Evangeline/St. Landry Rice and Soybean School** – Ville Platte, LA, January 8, 2025
- **Acadia Rice/Soybean/Crawfish Production Meeting** – Crowley, LA, January 9, 2025
- **Vermilion Rice School –** Abbeville, LA, January 13, 2025
- **Avoyelles/Rapides Rice Clinic** – Bunkie, LA, February 6, 2025
- **2025 Rice Technical Working Group –** New Orleans, LA, February 17 – 19, 2025

### Upcoming Station Visitors

- **Kentucky Farm Bureau** – April 14, 2025

### New Station Personnel

- **Karen Bodoin** (Administrative Coordinator – SW Region)
- **Flavia Furlan** (Graduate Student – Breeding)

## Disease on Late Planted Crop Frustrate Expectations of Good Yields

The 2024 rice season faced significant challenges due to disease. While some fields had minimal issues, others experienced significant yield losses. Particularly those planted in April that were exposed to heavy rainfall at grain filling and harvesting. While other pathogens were present, and their impact should not be underestimated, the main causes of damage were kernel smut and Cercospora panicle blight. Cercospora, previously referred to as Narrow Brown Leaf Spot, is now categorized based on the affected tissue: Narrow Brown Leaf Spot (**NBLS**) for foliar symptoms, Cercospora net blotch (**CNB**) for sheath symptoms, and Cercospora panicle blight (**CPB**) for panicle infections. This distinction is important due to advancements in breeding and management strategies. While not a new disease, the increased prevalence of CNB and CPB highlights the evolving challenges in rice disease management.

### Why were panicle diseases so prevalent in the 2024 season?

Disease development is influenced by a combination of environmental conditions, the local pathogen population, and the resistance of the variety. This is known as the disease triangle. Using this concept, we can examine the potential causes of the 2024 disease outbreaks

**Environment**: The 2024 season had extended periods of rain at critical points. Rain and cold temperatures in March delayed planting, creating two planting groups: early (planted in late February/early March) and late (planted in early April). The early group had fewer disease issues. Rainy days around June 1st likely contributed to high kernel smut incidence. Additionally, consecutive rainy days with warm temperatures during grain filling and harvesting created a perfect environment for widespread panicle disease in the late planting group.

**Pathogen Population**: The pathogen population typically fluctuates throughout the year, starting low in winter. As the season progresses and weather conditions improve, the fungus infects rice, producing lesions and

spores, creating a problematic cycle. This is especially concerning for late-planted crops due to increased inoculation in the air. Research by Dr. Jonathan Richards shows that the Louisiana Cercospora population is genetically diverse, with approximately 75 percent having a mutation conferring fungicide resistance to the strobilurin group (e.g. azoxystrobin/Quadris).

**Varieties:** While CNB and CPB have always been present in Louisiana, they may have been misclassified in the field as other diseases, such as neck blast. The introduction of blast resistance genes in popular varieties reduced this misclassification. The LSU Rice Breeding Program recently discovered a gene conferring complete resistance to NBLS, which is already present in several popular varieties. AgCenter researchers are studying resistance sources for CNB and CPB, with promising preliminary results for CNB. Studies are underway at the Rice Research Station to classify current varieties into resistance groups. Plant stage is also a factor, as plants are generally more susceptible at the end of their cycle. The period of multiple rainy days in July coincided with plants in grain filling or later stages. We hypothesize that even plants with some resistance may not perform well under similar conditions.

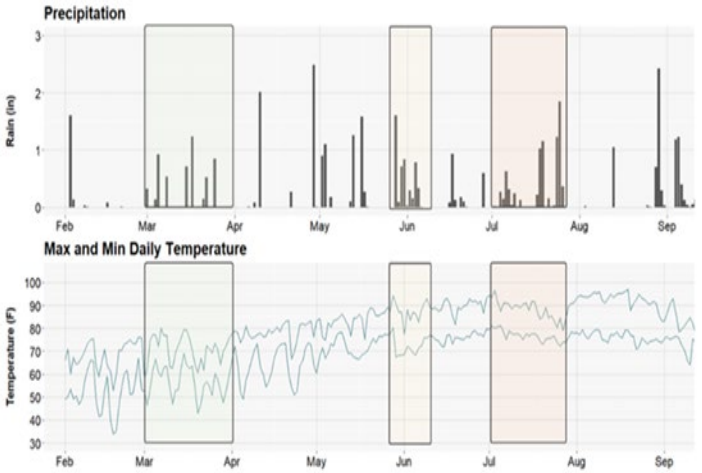


*Figure 1. Weather conditions at the Rice Research Station during the 2024 rice production season. Boxes emphasize moments during the production year in which weather conditions impacted disease development.*

### What can we do to prevent these problems?

Research on Cercospora in rice has traditionally focused on leaf symptoms (NBLS) rather than sheath (CNB) or panicle (CPB) diseases. However, in 2023, research specifically targeting disease management began. During the 2024 season, three studies across four locations examined fungicide timing and variety-fungicide combinations. Preliminary results indicate that propiconazole (Tilt) applications did not increase yield compared to untreated controls, regardless of application timing.

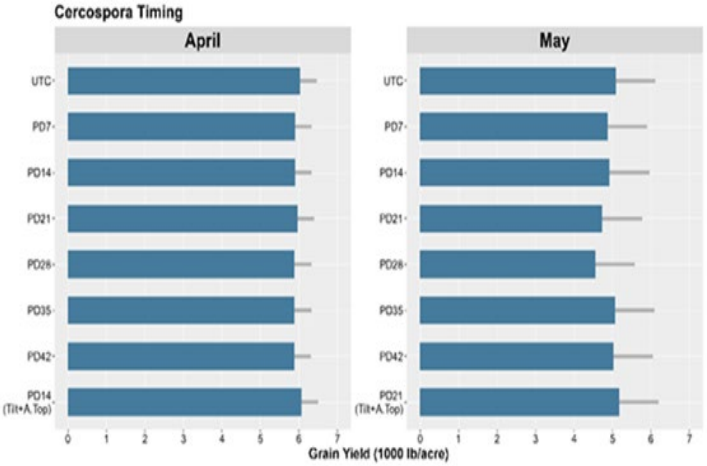


*Figure 2. Application of propiconazole at 10 fluid ounces per acre did not significantly increase rice yields over untreated controls. UTC = untreated control; PD = panicle differentiation; numbers following PD indicate the number of days following PD at which the fungicide was applied.*

We are currently investigating the reasons for these results. Possible explanations include suboptimal application timing or fungicide resistance. While we have limited options for fungicide and we are still working on developing more resistant varieties and better management, we must utilize existing control methods. Early planting, balanced soil fertility management, and timely harvesting are crucial.

Article by Dr. Felipe Dalla Lana (Rice Pathologist)

## Insecticidal Seed Treatment and Foliar Insecticide Recommendations in SW LA

With second-crop harvest wrapping up across south Louisiana, we are beginning to shift focus on next season's management decisions based on what we saw in 2024. Many growers across the state experienced delayed planting due to untimely rains in March, which lead to many acres being planted late. Insect infestations from rice water

weevils and stem borers tend to be more severe later into the season and can wreak havoc on a rice crop if not effectively managed. Typically, foliar pyrethroids are rarely needed to control weevils and borers as insecticidal seed treatments (ISTs) such as Dermacor X-100 and CruiserMaxx have been highly effective on their own and have been a mainstay of rice insect management for over a decade. However, control failures with IST's were reported across the southwest region leading some growers to seriously consider pyrethroids as a last resort. In on-station university experiments, we can report that Dermacor X-100, normally our most effective product, achieved just 50% control against water weevils (down from 80% or better in the past) and no control of stem borers. This has been a trend we've observed in the past couple years but was especially present in 2024. Research is on-going to identify the cause of reduced efficacy and control failures. However, since we can no longer reliably count on ISTs alone, we must consider adjusting how we manage our insect pests.

*Longitudinal scars on rice leaves from adult water weevil feeding.*

Prior to the development of seed treatments in rice, foliar pyrethroids were used successfully against water weevils in delayed-flood systems. Application timing is critical due to short residual of pyrethroids and ovipositional habits of female weevils. Before permanent flood is established, rice fields must be scouted for leaf scarring which indicates the presence of adult weevils (Image 1). Female weevils do not lay eggs until permanent flood is established. Therefore, application just before flooding can help reduce overall populations even if total control is not achievable. Application immediately after permanent flood can also be effective. Controls will not be effective if adult weevils persist in fields for several days after flooding.

*Adult sugarcane borer moth in late planted rice in 2024*

Poor control of stem borers with seed treatments means scouting for borer infestations will be necessary. Injury from stem borer larvae is most obvious when rice is heading out. Larvae tunnel into rice stems and destroy vascular tissue. This prevents nutrients from reaching the panicle leading to total yield loss for an injured plant. At this point, the damage is done and foliar pyrethroids will not be economical. For this reason, scouting for stem borers should start earlier in crop development around green ring when adult moths begin infesting rice. Females will lay egg clusters on leaves/leaf sheaths and larvae will begin boring into the stem around 1 week after hatching. During this time, leaf sheaths may appear discolored, typically brown to orange, right where the larvae are feeding. Scouting for newly hatched larvae is often difficult due to their small size (≈1 mm long), so focusing on adult moths and discolored stems can make scouting more efficient. Stem borer egg lay is not tied to permanent flood establishment like for water weevils, so timing of pyrethroids for stem borers should be based on presence of moths and injured stems from young larvae.

In addition to using foliar pyrethroids, stacking multiple ISTs of different modes of action (i.e. Dermacor X-100 + NipsIt Inside, Fortenza + CruiserMaxx) has shown to be economical in university research trials from 2019–2020, before product failures were regularly reported. Economic returns from multiple IST combinations may be increased comparatively in the current landscape.

Moving forward, insect management in Louisiana rice production will require more effort from rice producers, crop consultants, and field scouts being able to correctly identify and diagnose insect issues in real time. It is possible we are no longer in a position where we can simply treat with a seed treatment and manage insects without much additional effort. Foliar pyrethroids and stacking multiple ISTs appear to be our next best move. Finally, it's important to remember that issues with toxicity to crawfish will limit pyrethroid use in and around crawfish ponds. Always follow the label to prevent non-target effects. LSU AgCenter researchers and ANR agents are available to provide insect identification and management recommendations. Please contact your local parish extension office for additional information.

Article by Dr. Blake Wilson (Entomologist) and Mr. Tyler Musgrove (Graduate Student- Entomology)

## Crop Challenges in 2024 Highlight the Continued Need for Research and Development

The 2024 rice crop in South Louisiana exemplified the ongoing challenges faced by the rice industry. Over the past decade, we have experienced significant fluctuations between "good" and "bad" years, primarily driven by extreme environmental variations in temperature, rainfall, and disease. However, in 2024, these drastic differences manifested within the same growing season. Later-planted rice encountered substantially more issues than rice planted earlier. Surprisingly, much of the later-planted rice was sown within the typically favorable planting window. Meanwhile, earlier-planted rice produced good initial yields that drastically declined due to delays in harvesting caused by persistent rain over a 10-14 day period. Many fields appeared promising and were expected to yield well, but when combines entered the fields, the actual yields were disappointingly low.

In addition to low field yields, the milling yields were also down, particularly for rice harvested at low moisture levels. Grain moisture levels dropped rapidly in the fields, and persistent rains hindered timely harvesting, resulting in large areas of rice being collected at suboptimal moisture levels. When grain moisture falls too low and is subsequently reabsorbed, it can lead to fissuring—small hairline fractures that increase the risk of breakage during milling. While all rice varieties experience reduced milling yields when harvested at low moisture, the extent of the decline varies significantly by variety.

There was no single factor that could account for the lower field yields; however, several common challenges emerged. The most prominent issue was disease, with extensive areas affected by sheath blight, Cercospora net blotch on the stem/Cercospora panicle blight, and smut on the grains. Although these diseases negatively impacted yields, they do not fully explain the low output, as many fields experienced late disease development, post-grain filling, and still achieved respectable yields. More consistently observed was the ineffectiveness of fungicides in controlling these diseases, contrasting sharply with their demonstrated efficacy in earlier years.

Insect pressure was extremely high in 2024, particularly from stemborers, which became prevalent later in the season and in the ratoon crop. Research conducted by the entomology program at HRCRRS over the past few years has shown that the commonly used Dermacor seed treatment has diminished in effectiveness against the rice water weevil. Producers have reported similar reductions in Dermacor's efficacy, especially in water-planted rice. While the treatment still provides a significant positive effect, the damage from insects is substantial enough to result in reduced yields.

The recent and ongoing challenges faced by the industry underscore the urgent need for research into best practices, the development of varieties that can better withstand current environmental conditions, and the introduction of new crop protection products.

Although overall field yields have remained relatively stable in recent years, the performance of new rice varieties compared to older ones has significantly improved. For instance, when comparing the most widely grown Clearfield variety from 2024 (CLL19) to the leading variety in 2014 (CL111) across six years and 112 experimental trials, CLL19 achieved a yield that was 12% higher. However, its whole milling yield was 1.5 percentage points lower than that of CL111. A similar trend was observed with the conventional long grain varieties: Avant, the most popular in 2024, outperformed Cheniere from 2014 in yield by over 12% and had an increased ratoon yield but had an average whole milling yield that was 3 percentage points lower.

The notable improvement in yields from new varieties, paired with stagnant overall field yields, suggests that other factors are constraining yield increases. These factors likely include more extreme and unpredictable environmental conditions, decreased effectiveness of agricultural chemicals, and heightened pest and disease pressures that have emerged recently.

Addressing these complex issues will not be easy, but they must be confronted. The situation stresses the vital need for ongoing research by universities and private companies to develop new varieties and management strategies. Additionally, it is crucial for new agricultural chemicals to enter the market to help the rice industry maintain its capacity to produce abundant and sustainable crops. Given limited resources, it is essential to concentrate these efforts on the most pressing challenges, prioritizing actions that will produce substantial benefits for the largest number of growers and the industry as a whole.

Article by Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder)

## Venus: A New Conventional Medium Grain Rice Variety

Medium grain varieties accounted for approximately 10% of Louisiana rice acres in 2024. Over 85% of the medium grain acres are comprised of two conventional varieties, Jupiter and Titan, which in recent years have been observed to have declines in yield.

*Venus - the new conventional medium grain variety developed by the Rice Research Station's Breeding Program*

Venus is a new medium grain variety planned for release in 2025 for commercial seed production, with commercial seed available for the 2026 crop. Venus has been tested since 2018 and has been in multi-location trials since 2019. It has shown a very strong and stable yield performance compared to Jupiter and Titan. In some years, the yield of Venus was similar to Jupiter and Titan, but notably in multiple years, including 2023 and 2024 the yield of Venus was significantly higher than the commercial varieties. In yield trials, it produced an average of 8,815 lb/acre compared to 7,967 lb/acre for Jupiter and 8,210 lb/acre for Titan (Table 1).

Venus has shown strong performance across diverse geographies, highlighting its stability across various locations and environmental conditions. Venus also exhibits robust agronomic characteristics: it heads 6 days earlier than Jupiter and 1 day later than Titan, has a longer grain length than Jupiter, and similar plant height to the checks. For chalk content, Venus consistently shows lower or comparable levels than the checks and has demonstrated milling quality comparable to Jupiter (Table 1). Additionally, Venus has similar disease resistance to Jupiter.

**Table 1. Yield Test Data of New Medium Grain Variety (Venus) Compared to Checks – 2019 - 2024**

| Variety | Year | Grain length (mm) | Grain width (mm) | Length/ Width ratio | Days to heading | Plant height (in) | Milling - Total % | Milling - Whole % | Yield (lbs./ac) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Venus** | **2019** | **5.9** | **2.8** | **2.1** | **70** | **38** | **70** | **66** | **7,951** |
| Jupiter | 2019 | 5.6 | 2.9 | 1.9 | 76 | 37 | 68 | 64 | 6,601 |
| Titan | 2019 | 5.8 | 2.8 | 2.1 | 67 | 37 | 70 | 66 | 6,966 |
| **Venus** | **2020** | **6.0** | **2.8** | **2.1** | **85** | **39** | **69** | **61** | **9,793** |
| Jupiter | 2020 | 5.7 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 92 | 37 | 69 | 64 | 9,515 |
| Titan | 2020 | 6.0 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 85 | 39 | 70 | 60 | 9,384 |
| **Venus** | **2021** | **6.1** | **2.8** | **2.1** | **85** | **40** | **70** | **64** | **8,705** |
| Jupiter | 2021 | 5.8 | 2.8 | 2.1 | 91 | 39 | 69 | 63 | 8,744 |
| Titan | 2021 | 6.2 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 84 | 40 | 70 | 61 | 8,414 |
| **Venus** | **2022** | **6.1** | **2.6** | **2.3** | **85** | **37** | **67** | **65** | **8,919** |
| Jupiter | 2022 | 5.9 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 91 | 37 | 64 | 60 | 7,581 |
| **Venus** | **2023** | **5.9** | **2.6** | **2.3** | **83** | **36** | **68** | **56** | **8,461** |
| Jupiter | 2023 | 5.7 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 88 | 34 | 67 | 59 | 7,314 |
| Titan | 2023 | 5.9 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 86 | 34 | 69 | 52 | 7,937 |
| **Venus** | **2024** | **6.0** | **2.5** | **2.4** | **85** | **39** | **67** | **56** | **9,061** |
| Jupiter | 2024 | 5.8 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 90 | 37 | 67 | 58 | 8,049 |
| Titan | 2024 | 6.0 | 2.5 | 2.4 | 84 | 37 | 68 | 55 | 8,351 |
| **Venus** | **2019-2024 Avg.** | **6.0** | **2.7** | **2.2** | **82** | **38** | **69** | **61** | **8,815** |
| Jupiter | 2019-2024 Avg. | 5.8 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 88 | 37 | 67 | 61 | 7,967 |
| Titan | 2019-2024 Avg. | 6.0 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 81 | 37 | 69 | 59 | 8,210 |

Article by Dr. Brijesh Angira (Rice Breeder)

## 2024 Rice Crop Update

The 2024 Louisiana rice ratoon crop is being harvested in South Louisiana. In general, it has been a fair year for rice production. Early predictions were that the average per acre yield for the state would be the highest ever. The cropping season started out with milder than normal temperatures in late February and early March when much of the rice in South Louisiana is planted. This early-planted rice had excellent conditions for germination and stand establishment. Unfortunately, unseasonably low temperatures in April (in the mid to upper 30s) set this early rice back, and it took the crop a long time to recover and start growing again. However, these cool conditions did not appear to have had any long-term effect on the crop. Rice producers in North Louisiana were hampered by wet conditions and then cold conditions that delayed planting. Most of the rice in North Louisiana was planted late and several thousand acres failed to be planted.

Climatic conditions during the rice growing season were, for the most part, good after the early April cold spell. There was adequate but not excessive rainfall, and the rainfall events came in a timely manner in most areas. There were many days of limited cloud cover, which maximizes radiant energy. This is good for rice growth and development. Weather conditions were favorable in the first part of the harvest period, but excessive rainfall in mid-July made

getting the crop out of the field a trying experience for many rice producers. Fields that were ready for harvest remained in the field as quality continued to go down. While disease pressure was low in the early season, many producers reported disease increased after these continued rains. Many people might think that rice likes rain because it is grown here as an irrigated crop. However, rice is typically negatively impacted by rainfall which (because of cloud cover) decreases radiant energy to the plant. Also, very wet conditions facilitate disease development, and rain and wind can actually cause sterility in rice florets.

After two to three weeks of rain, the rice harvest resumed the first part of August. Later rice saw increases in sheaf blight and kernel smut. Cercospora net-blotch (CNB), and cercospora panicle blight (CPB) caused severe yield losses. Applications of fungicide from the strobilurin group are expected to have limited CPB efficacy, as local Cercospora population contains a high frequence of a mutation that confer strong resistance to this fungicides class. Carboxamides are not labeled to control Cercospora, as this fungicides class has limited action to fungus from the Cercospora group. Recently studies showed that fungicide applications for CNB and CPB cause no or limited yield return from applications made from panicle differentiation to heading. More studies are being conducted to improve the fungicide efficacy for CNB and CPB, including alternative timing and use of biological control. Growers are encouraged to harvest the crop as early as possible to avoid yield loss due to CPB, especially on late planting rice.

*Rice infected with kernel smut. Kernel smut was a significant issue for many producers in 2024.*

Damage from rice water weevils and stem borers has also increased. In the past, the Dermacor X-100 seed treatment provided approximately 80% control of rice water weevil. In recent years, control has substantially reduced, especially in late-planted rice. Fortenza, Cruiser 5FS and NipsIt INSIDE are also only achieve partial control (40% to 60% control), and damaging infestations may occur when any of the seed treatments are used under high pest pressure. Growers with a history of heavy weevil infestations should consider using multiple seed treatments or supplementing control with foliar applied insecticides. The sugarcane borer, rice stalk borer and Mexican rice borer are reducing yields. In recent years, none of the insecticidal seed treatments have provided control of stem borers. Heavy infestations have been reported in both late-planted and ratoon rice regardless of seed treatment usage. Foliar applied insecticides will be needed to

*Harvesting rice infected with kernel smut. The combine is covered with kernel smut spores.*

reduce losses in those fields. Ratoon rice in Southwest Louisiana is prone to high levels of stem borer infestation also. Seed treatments do not provide benefit to ratoon rice and additional control strategies such as foliar insecticides may be needed to prevent yield losses.

Rice milling quality is almost as important as yield because the price a producer will receive for his crop is highly dependent on this factor. The most important factor here is what is referred to as head rice or whole grain milling yields. In simple terms, this is the percentage of the harvest that remains as whole (unbroken) grains after the rice has been milled. We normally will begin to harvest rice at 20 percent grain moisture. As the moisture percentage falls in the field prior to harvest, this will normally have a negative impact on whole grain milling yields. Continued wetting and drying in the field can also have a negative impact. A lot of the latter harvested rice crop produced below average milling yields. While the prices our producers receive for their rice crop has not moved up, the expense to produce the rice crop continues to rise. The price expectation for the 2025 crop will have to increase a great deal more before we see a substantial increase in acres planted to this important crop.

Article by Dr. Ron Levy (Rice Production Specialist)

## Project Highlight – Front Office Staff

The ability of the Rice Research Station to accomplish its primary goal of conducting research to improve the sustainability and profitability of the Louisiana Rice Industry hinges on having effective support structure in place. Having a effective support structure allows the scientists and the members of their research projects to focus the majority of their efforts and energies on conducting the needed research. A critical component of the station's support structure is the Front Office Staff. The Front Office Staff is comprised of individuals that help ensure the day-to-day operation of both the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station and the LSU AgCenter's Southwest Region. While each individual's major focus and responsibility is either on the station or the region, what makes this group extremely effective is their willingness to cross traditional boundaries and help whenever and wherever it is needed. This group truly are the ones that keep both the rice station and the region going. This group serves in a number of different ways to make sure that the station and the region operate efficiently. They make sure that monthly operational expenses are paid, they assist in identifying and securing needed supplies and equipment, they manage payroll, they assist faculty and staff in planning and organizing needed travel, and they manage required routine reporting, just to name a few. In addition, these individuals are the "go-to" people with questions on LSU AgCenter policy and procedures related to purchasing, expenses, and a host of other operational processes. And they all serve a critical role in assisting with the many events hosted at the station from helping to plan event logistics to arranging needed catering to helping with meeting room setup. Both the station and the region are successful and effective in accomplishing their mission, in part, because of the tremendous support these individuals provide.

Members of the Front Office Staff that primarily serve the Rice Research Station are Ms. Kimberly Guidry (Administrative Program Specialist), Ms. Hannah Derouen (Accounting Specialist), and Mr. Andy Mullins (Administrative Coordinator). Ms. Carol LeDoux (Retired Administrative Program Specialist) works part time to provide additional support to the station. Members who primarily focus on the Southwest Region are Ms. Estelle Trahan (Administrative Program Specialist) and Ms. Karen Bodoin (Administrative Coordinator). Ms. Darlene Regan (Retired Administrative Program Specialist) works part time to provide additional support to the region.

*Members of the Front Office Staff from left to right are Andy Mullins, Estelle Trahan, Karen Bodoin, Hannah Derouen, and Kimberly Guidry*

## Faculty, Staff, and Student News

The faculty, staff, and students of the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station are actively involved in outreach, professional and industry events. The following is a list of the activities and events people from the Rice Station participated in over the last 3 months:

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) and Dr. Ron Levy (State Rice Specialist) participated in the Louisiana Rice Growers Association's Board Meeting on September 4, 2024. Both Dr. Guidry and Dr. Levy provided the board with crop and research updates from the rice station.

- Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder) gave a talk on the history and importance of rice and rice breeding to the Lafayette Beaver Club on September 25, 2024.

- Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder) served as an invited speaker at the AEIC Conference in New Orleans on October 9, 2024.

- Dr. Manoch Kongchum (Rice Agronomist) helped plan and accompanied the USA Rice Leadership Development Program on its International Session to Thailand on October 18 – 26, 2024.

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) served on the LSU AgCenter and College of Agriculture Awards Committee. The committee met on November 2, 2024 to review applicants and select recipients of various awards offered by the LSU AgCenter each year.

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist), Mr. Todd Fontenot (Crawfish Specialist) and Mr. Mark Shirley (Crawfish Specialist) participated in the Louisiana Farm Bureau's Crawfish Advisory Committee Meeting on November 7, 2024. All three provided updates to the committee and discussed an LSU AgCenter initiative to collect crawfish production information.

- Several faculty from the Rice Research Station participated in the LSU AgCenter's Extension Summit held on November 13 – 14, 2024. The Summit provided an opportunity for Extension Faculty from across the state to come together to receive training as well as be provided an opportunity to discuss issues facing agriculture across the state.

- Several faculty from the Rice Research Station participated in the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association fall planning meeting on November 15, 2024. This meeting identifies topics and issues that will be addressed at the Association's annual spring meeting.

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) joined LSU AgCenter Administration at the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association's Board Meeting on November 19, 2024. This meeting allows LSU AgCenter Administration to highlight various initiatives to the Board while also giving the Board an opportunity to inform Administration of needs and issues facing the agricultural industry.

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) coordinated the LSU AgCenter's Grazing School. The grazing school offers comprehensive training in forage production and management and consists of 5, day long workshops. The 2024 Grazing School started on September 13, 2024 and concluded its final workshop on November 15, 2024.

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) conducted regional training from September to November 2024 with LSU AgCenter personnel on estimation procedures for the LSU AgCenter's Agricultural Summary Publication.

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) participated in the Northeast Louisiana Beef Cattle Field Day on September 19, 2024 and the Southeast Louisiana Beef Cattle Field Day on November 2, 2024. Dr. Guidry provided a market outlook presentation for the beef cattle industry at both events.

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) presented information on beef cattle economics and record keeping at the Southeast Louisiana Master Cattlemen Program on October 15, 2024 and the LSU AgCenter's Advanced Master Cattlemen Program on October 18, 2024.

- Several faculty from the Rice Research Station participated in the Acadia Parish Rice Advisory Meeting on November 20, 2024.

## Station Events

The Rice Station hosts a variety of events each year. These events range from agricultural education for youth to training for LSU AgCenter personnel. During the last quarter, the following is a list of the events hosted by the Rice Station:

- August 5, 2024 – The station hosted personnel from the US Environmental Protection Agency. The event was planned by the USA Rice Federation, and it provided an opportunity for EPA personnel to get a better

understanding of rice production and the unique challenges that it has. Several faculty from the Rice Research Station were involved with the event.

- August 6, 2024 – The station hosted a group from Argentina (INTA) to discuss rice production in Louisiana and rice research being conducted here at the station. Several faculty from the Rice Research Station were involved with the event.

- August 13, 2024 – The station hosted the LSU AgCenter's Southwest Region Parish Chair meeting.

- August 29, 2024 – The station hosted an LSU AgCenter 4-H Agent Training Workshop.

- September 25, 2024 – The station hosted a group from the Kentucky Farm Bureau. Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) met with the group to discuss and plan a tour of the station for their members that will take place in April 2025.

- October 2, 2024 – The station hosted committee meetings of the Louisiana Rice Research Board. The committee meetings included an Executive Committee meeting, a COL-RICE Committee meeting, and a Project Review Committee meeting. Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder) and Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) participated in all three committee meetings.

- October 3, 2024 – The station hosted the Louisiana Farm Bureau Rice Advisory Committee meeting. Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder), Dr. Felipe Dalla Lana (Rice Pathologist), and Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) all participated in the meeting providing updates.

- October 4, 2024 – The station hosted a group of undergraduate students from Mississippi State University. Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist), Dr. Connor Webster (Rice Weed Scientist), and Mr. Todd Fontenot (Crawfish Specialist) visited with the group about rice and crawfish production systems.

- October 8, 2024 – The station hosted the Texas A&M Representative Farm Meeting. Faculty with Texas A&M's Agricultural and Food Policy Center met with rice producers to collect information about their farming operations. This information is used to model a representative rice farm in Louisiana to determine the impacts of various market and policy environments on the financial condition of rice operations.

- October 15, 2024 – Dr. Ron Levy (State Rice Specialist) hosted a planning meeting for the Rice Varieties and Management Tips Publication. This is an annual publication developed by the LSU AgCenter that provides the most update information on rice varieties and recommended production practices.

- October 29, 2024 – The station hosted the fall meeting of the Louisiana Rice Research Board. At this meeting, the Board reviewed proposed research projects and identified projects it would provide funding for 2025.

## New Employee Highlight

Dr. Jomar Punzalan joined the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station as a Postdoctoral Researcher in April 2024, where he is working with the Breeding project. Born and raised in Laguna, Philippines, Dr. Jomar's upbringing was shaped by his parents' work at the International Rice Research Institute and as rice farmers, which sparked his early exposure to agriculture and rice production. This background fueled his academic journey, leading him to the University of Los Baños, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture, followed by a Master's and PhD in Plant Breeding, all from the same institution.

Before joining the Rice Station, Dr. Jomar gained valuable experience in the private sector. He worked as a Research Associate at Pioneer H-Bred and as a Technical Agronomy Manager at Syngenta. He was hired at the Rice Station as part of a project funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) called the "Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Climate Resilient Cereals," under the leadership of Dr. Adam Famoso. This multi-institutional project aims to assist foreign countries in strengthening food production in the face of climate change. Dr. Jomar's role in this project involves developing computer code and apps to identify and analyze the genetic makeup of rice blast disease observed in Bangladesh. In addition to this, he has applied his analytical skills to optimize the Breeding program at the Rice Station.

Dr. Jomar has enjoyed the opportunity to conduct high-level data analysis, particularly appreciating the quality and accessibility of the data at the Rice Station. He finds the efficient organization of field activities, including the handling of planting materials, field tasks, and data collection, to be a pleasant surprise compared to his previous work experiences. He also values the teamwork within the breeding project, where he observes a strong work ethic, output-oriented attitude, and genuine passion of the work among colleagues.

*Dr. Jomar Punzalan is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Rice Research Station's Breeding Project*

Outside of work, Dr. Jomar enjoys evening walks and runs, as well as visiting the LSU campus in Baton Rouge on weekends. In his spare time, he also enjoys reading about cars, politics, and the economy.

**For more information, contact us at the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station**
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**For more information, visit our website at:**

**H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station (lsuagcenter.com)**

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