



LSU AgCenter

H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 22 Issue 1 | March 25, 2025

## Upcoming Events

- **Rice Production School** – April 14-15, May 12-13, June 16-17, July 14-15
- **South Farm Field Day** – June 11

## Upcoming Station Visitors

- **USA Rice Leadership Development Program** – March 27
- **Kentucky Farm Bureau Station Tour** – April 14
- **Mrytle Place Elementary Station Tour** – May 1
- **4-H Agent Professional Development Meeting** – May 20
- **Scientists and Industry Personnel from Argentina and Brazil** – June 6

## New Station Personnel

- **Ken Carmouche** (Janitor)
- **Tanner LaGrange** (Research Associate – Entomology)

## H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station Hosts the 2025 Rice Technical Working Group Meeting

Faculty and staff of the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station served as meeting coordinators and hosts of the biennial Rice Technical Working Group (RTWG) meeting. The Rice Technical Working Group is a collection of scientists, students, and industry personnel all working to advance rice production. Members of the group represent all the rice producing states as well as some international locations. This group meets biennially to exchange information, discuss collaborations, and review all phases of rice research and extension.

The meeting rotates between the 5 major rice growing states (Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas) with the 40th meeting being held in New Orleans on February 17-20, 2025. More exchange of information, cooperative planning, and periodic review of all phases of rice research and extension. The meeting rotates between the 5 major rice growing states (Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas) with the 40th meeting being hosted by Louisiana in New Orleans on February 17-20, 2025. More than 320 people attended the meeting representing 19 states and 5 foreign countries.

A total of 226 oral presentations and scientific posters were presented at the meeting covering all aspects of rice production. Putting on such an event is a significant undertaking that takes the work of many people. Several faculty and staff at the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station serve in leadership roles within the RTWG and had critical roles in the planning and implementation of the meeting. Those included:

- Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder) – served as Secretary for the RTWG and assumed the role of Chair at the meeting in New Orleans
- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator) – served as Chair of the local arrangements committee
- Dr. Brijesh Angira (Rice Breeder) – served on the local arrangements committee and served as Chair of the Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics Panel
- Dr. Manoch Kongchum (Agronomist) – served on the local arrangements committee and as Chair of the Agronomy and Rice Culture Panel

- Dr. Ron Levy (Rice Production Specialist) served on the local arrangements committee.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) served as Chair of the Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation Panel.
- Dr. Blake Wilson (Entomologist) served as Chair of the Plant Protection Panel.
- Mr. Michael Turley (IT Support) coordinated all IT needs for the meeting.
- Ms. Kimberly Guidry (Administrative Program Specialist) served on the local arrangements committee, assisted with purchasing and budgeting for the meeting, and manned the registration desk at the meeting.
- Ms. Hannah Derouen (Accounting Specialist) served on the local arrangements committee, helped develop meeting signage and name tags, and manned the registration desk at the meeting.

In addition, several others assisted with meeting logistics and various tasks during the conference, including:

- Mr. Brent Theunissen (Farm Manager)
- Mr. Rick Zaunbrecher (Foundation Seed Manager)
- Ms. Valerie Dartez (Research Associate – Breeding)
- Mr. Brady Williams (Research Associate – Breeding)
- Mr. Blaise Frey (Research Associate – Breeding)
- Mr. Bradley Beard (Research Associate – Agronomy)
- Mr. James Leonard (Research Associate – Agronomy)
- Mr. Jacob Fluitt (Research Associate – Agronomy)
- Dr. Karina Borges (Post-Doc – Breeding)

And, finally, Dr. Steve Linscombe (Retired Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder) graciously served on the planning committee and provided invaluable assistance and guidance for the meeting.

In addition to planning and implementing the meeting, the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station was well represented by faculty and staff participation in the meeting through oral presentations and scientific posters.

Those making **oral presentations** were:

- Dr. Felipe Dalla Lana (Pathologist) – was an invited speaker for a symposium on current issues facing rice production and presented in the Plant Protection panel session.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) was an invited speaker for a symposium on new and invasive rice pests.
- Dr. Blake Wilson (Entomologist) was an invited speaker for a symposium on new and invasive rice pests and presented in the Plant Protection panel session.
- Dr. Brijesh Angira (Rice Breeder) presented in the Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics panel session
- Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder) presented in the Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics panel session.
- Dr. Manoch Kongchum (Agronomist) presented in the Agronomy and Rice Culture panel session.
- Dr. Mike Stout (Entomologist) presented in the Plant Protection panel session.
- Dr. Karina Borges (Post-Doc – Breeding) presented in the Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics panel session.
- Dr. Jomar Punzalan (Post-Doc – Breeding) presented in the Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics panel session.
- Ms. Jennifer Manangkil (Graduate Student – Breeding) presented in the Student Competition session for Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics.
- Ms. Flava Furlan (Graduate Student – Breeding) - presented in the Student Competition session for Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics.
- Mr. Muhammad Danyal Khan (Graduate Student – Entomology) - presented in the Student Competition session for Plant Protection.
- Mr. Tyler Musgrove (Graduate Student – Entomology) - presented in the Student Competition session for Plant Protection.
- Mr. Wesley Carr (Graduated Student – Weed Science) - presented in the Student Competition session for Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation.

- Mr. Gavin Sparks (Graduate Student – Weed Science) - presented in the Student Competition session for Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation.
- Mr. Ben Stoker (Graduate Student – Weed Science) - presented in the Student Competition session for Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation.

Those faculty and staff displaying **scientific posters** were:

- Dr. Manoch Kongchum (Agronomist) displayed a poster in the Agronomy and Rice Culture poster session.
- Mr. Anderson Cerutti (Visiting Scholar – Pathology) displayed a poster in the Plant Protection poster session.
- Ms. Valerie Dartez (Research Associate – Breeding) displayed a poster in the Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics poster session.
- Mr. Bruno Borges (Graduate Student – Pathology) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Plant Protection.
- Ms. Christine Gambino (Graduate Student – Entomology) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Plant Protection.
- Ms. Dulakshi Mohottige (Graduate Student – Pathology) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Plant Protection.

Finally, the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station was extremely well represented in the Student Competition with several **students winning awards** for their oral presentations and posters. The winners from the Rice Station were:

- Ms. Jennifer Manangkil – First Place – Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics Student Oral Presentation Competition for her presentation entitled, “Genetic Characterization of the Quantitative Inheritance of Sheath Blight in Rice Under Field Conditions”
- Mr. Tyler Musgrove – First Place – Plant Protection Student Oral Presentation Competition for his presentation entitled, “Determining the Impact of Cultivar Resistance Against the Rice Billbug in Furrow-Irrigated Rice”
- Ms. Flavia Furlan – Second Place – Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics Student Oral Presentation Competition for her presentation entitled, “Yield Linkage Drag Associated with the Introgression of sd-1 Semi-dwarf Allele in US Long Grain Germplasm”

- Ms. Laila Santos (Graduate Student – Entomology) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Plant Protection.
- Ms. Jyoti Sharma (Graduate Student – Entomology) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Plant Protection.
- Mr. Jacob Fluitt (Research Associate and Graduate Student – Agronomy) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Agronomy and Rice Culture.
- Mr. Wesley Carr (Graduate Student – Weed Science) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation.
- Mr. Gavin Sparks (Graduate Student – Weed Science) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation.
- Mr. Ben Stoker (Graduate Student – Weed Science) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation.
- Ms. Evelyn Williams (Graduate Student – Weed Science) displayed a poster in the Student Poster Competition for Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation.



*Ms. Flavia Furlan and Ms. Jennifer Manangkil*



- Mr. Wesley Carr – Second Place – Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation Student Oral Presentation Competition for his presentation entitled, “Crop Response of Provisia Rice Systems in Overcast Weather”
- Mr. Jacon Fluitt – First Place – Agronomy and Rice Culture Student Poster Competition for his poster entitled, “Evaluation of Starter Nitrogen, Nitrogen Sources, and Timings in Delayed Flooded Rice Systems”
- Mr. Gavin Sparks – Second Place – Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation Student Poster Competition for his poster entitled, “Mixtures of Tetflupyrolimet and Clomazone for Preemergence Grass Control in Rice”
- Mr. Wesley Carr – Third Place – Rice Weed Control and Growth Regulation Student Poster Competition for his poster entitled, “Crop Response in Louisiana Rice



*Mr. Jacob Fluitt and Dr. Manoch Kongchum*



*Mr. Gavin Sparks and Mr. Wesley Carr*



*A group picture featuring all the student winners at the RTWG conference*

Article by Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator)

## Early Fertilization for Rice

Rice seed is mostly carbohydrates stored in tissue called endosperm. The embryo makes up most of the rest of the seed. Germination begins with the imbibition of water. The seed swells, gains weight, conversion of carbohydrates to sugars begins and the embryo is activated. Nutrition from the endosperm can supply the growing embryo for about three weeks. Fertilization timing and water management are similar for both drill-seeded and dry broadcast-seeded rice. Phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and micronutrient fertilizers should be applied preplant or pre-flush based on soil texture and soil test results.

The addition of 15 to 20 pounds of preplant or pre-flush nitrogen (N) is generally recommended to ensure against nitrogen deficiency in seedling rice. Early nitrogen deficiency can reduce tillering and yield potential. Application of large amounts of preplant nitrogen should also be avoided in a dry-seeded system since wetting and drying cycles before the permanent flood is established can lead to the loss of much of this nitrogen.

Most of the nitrogen fertilizer should be applied to a dry soil surface within 3 days prior to permanently flooding the field. The remainder of the nitrogen requirement should be applied midseason. In some cases, all of the nitrogen fertilizer can be applied ahead of the permanent flood if the precise nitrogen requirement for a field is known and if the permanent flood can be maintained throughout the season. If a field must be drained, however, for any unforeseen reason such as water weevil larva control or straight head, appreciable amounts of nitrogen can be lost requiring reapplication of nitrogen. When the required nitrogen fertilizer rate is not known or the field will be drained before harvest for any reason,

apply 60 to 70 percent of the estimated nitrogen fertilizer requirement prior to flood establishment. Additional nitrogen fertilizer should be applied at midseason at the beginning of internode elongation (IE) green ring. Native soil fertility, soil type and other factors affect nitrogen fertilizer efficiency. Rice growers should determine the nitrogen rate that provides optimal grain yield on their soil and production system.



*Nitrogen deficiency in rice*

Article by Dr. Ron Levy (Rice Production Specialist)

## Crop Weed Management Considerations for 2025

As I write this article during the third week of March, much of the southwestern portion of the state is approaching completion of drill-seeded rice acres. During late February and early March, several growers began water-seeding following the wet conditions that we experienced this winter. One frequent question that I received pertaining to water-seeding was centered around the timeframe needed after Valor applications before establishing/holding a seeding flood. I received this same question about Valor that was applied in late fall as well as for applications made in January and February. My answer was the same for both scenarios, which was to wait the duration of the labelled plant-back window before establishing a seeding flood. For example, Valor applied at 2 fl oz/A or less requires a window of 30 days before planting/seeding, therefore you should wait 30 days before establishing a seeding flood. The reason behind this recommendation is that many herbicides will persist for a longer period of time under anaerobic soil conditions.

These questions made me recall a conversation that I had a couple of years ago with Dr. Jason Bond at Mississippi State University. He described a time when a grower in Mississippi was spraying a fall burndown that included Valor, but the grower decided to stop spraying halfway across the field. This decision was made because the grower wanted to flood the field for duck hunting that winter and knew that holding a flood could make the Valor persist longer. After draining the field in the spring, rice was drill-seeded, and a visible line was present in the field where the grower stopped spraying the Valor in the fall (Figure 1). This particular field would have been planted several months after the Valor application, but due to the flooded conditions the Valor was still present in the soil at the time of planting. Valor is not known to be very persistent, but under the right conditions, Valor does have the ability to persist for longer than normal.





Figure 1: Non-treated portion of the rice field on the left side and Valor treated on portion on the right side  
Photo by Dr. Jason Bond, Mississippi State University

As we progress into the growing season, in addition to the common weed species that are found in Louisiana rice fields, there are several difficult to control weeds that should be on everyone's radar. These species would be Fimbristylis, Brook paspalum, fall panicum, Nealley's sprangletop and gooseweed to name a few.

#### **Fimbristylis (*Fimbristylis littoralis*)**

Identification: Two-ranked sedge species with an extremely flat stem; grows in whorls of flat stems (Figure 2).

Control: Prowl should be used for residual control of Fimbristylis. Once Fimbristylis emerged effective herbicides for control are 2,4-D, Grandstand, Rogue, Regiment, and Novixid.



Figure 2: Fibristylis

#### **Brook paspalum (*Paspalum acuminatum*)**

Identification: Solid stem; lacks hair, leaf blades wide in proportion to stem; membranous ligule; seedhead winged rachis (Figure 3).

Control: Repeated tillage and drying can be used outside of the rice crop for management. For postemergence in crop control, Novixid is the most effective option.



Figure 3: Brook paspalum

### **Fall panicum (*Panicum dichotomiflorum*)**

**Identification:** Bent and branched nodes; leaf blade may be hairy on upper surface; membranous ligule; large panicle seedhead (Figure 4).

**Control:** Fall panicum is very difficult to control once the plant starts to tiller and the stem thickens. Command, Prowl or a combination of the two should be used for residual control. Provisia, Propanil, Clincher, or Ricestar are the most effective postemergence options. If fall panicum is known to be an issue on a farm, then Provisia rice should be considered. It should be noted that Highcard in the MaxAce system does not control fall panicum.

### **Nealley's sprangletop (*Leptochloa nealleyi*)**

**Identification:** Erect annual; 3-5 ft tall; small hairs on leaf sheath up to 4 leaf stage, older plants smooth to slightly hairy on leaf sheath, keeled leaf sheath, short membranous ligule; tall and narrow seedhead, 10-20 inches long 1-1.5 inches wide (Figure 5).

**Control:** Seedling Nealley's sprangletop can be controlled in a burndown using glyphosate. Residual control of seedling Nealley's can be achieved using Command. Provisia or Ricestar are the most effective postemergence control options. Nealley's sprangletop can overwinter like a perennial weed, which makes it very difficult to control and is often most effectively controlled using tillage.



Figure 4: Fall panicum



Figure 5: Nealley's sprangletop

Article by Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist)

## **Identification of New Blast Resistance Gene in U.S. Rice Breeding Germplasm**

Rice blast, caused by the fungal pathogen *Magnaporthe oryzae*, is one of the most destructive rice diseases, significantly impacting production in the southern United States and California (Figure 1). Severe outbreaks in the 1980s led to yield losses of up to 50% in the southern U.S., emphasizing the ongoing threat this disease poses to rice farmers. Various factors can influence the development and impact of blast, including the planting date, maintaining a continuous flood, optimizing nitrogen rates, and fungicide applications, but the most effective management strategy is to plant varieties/hybrids that are resistant to blast.



Figure 1: Rice leaves with blast symptoms



Fungicide applications are expensive and require precise application timing. In 2015, the United States invested approximately \$63 million in fungicides to control rice blast and other fungal diseases, highlighting the substantial economic burden of disease management in rice. Moreover, fungicides are not always effective due to pathogen adaptation and environmental factors.

Breeding for blast resistance offers a cost-effective and sustainable solution for managing blast. Most of the long grain varieties released over the last 10 years are resistant to blast. However, this resistance is largely dependent upon a single gene, *Pita*, which confers broad spectrum resistance. Reliance on a single resistance gene brings risk of the gene being overcome by different blast races or mutations in the blast fungus. Additionally, the *Pita* gene is rare in medium grain germplasm and is not present in any released medium grain varieties.

Recently, the LSU Rice Breeding Program has incorporated new genes from exotic germplasm (*Pi33/42*, *Pi9*, and *Pib*) into elite medium and long grain germplasm, but it will still be a few years until these are commercially viable products. Although exotic germplasm can be an excellent source of resistance, it often introduces undesirable agronomic traits and requires years of breeding before it can be integrated into commercial varieties. If there are resistance genes in the elite target breeding germplasm, these can be

incorporated into commercial varieties in a much more efficient manner. It has been observed that some elite U.S. lines in our study exhibited resistance despite lacking *Pita* or any other known resistance genes. This suggests the presence of undiscovered resistance genes within the elite breeding germplasm.

To investigate these potential novel resistance sources, a Genome-Wide Association Study (GWAS) was conducted on a panel of 258 elite long-grain lines tested against four diverse blast races. While we identified the known *Pita* gene, the most exciting discovery was *qBlast4.1*, a region on chromosome 4 detected in three out of four races. This region overlaps with *Pi63*, a resistance gene previously identified in the Japanese variety, Kahei. *Pi63* gene has never been reported in U.S. rice germplasm.

Validation and characterization of *qBlast4.1* in a breeding population was conducted using eight blast races and revealed that this gene confers broad-spectrum resistance, providing resistance to six out of the seven races screened (Table 1). This newly identified locus, *qBlast4.1*, provides broad-spectrum resistance to multiple blast races, reducing dependence on *Pita* gene alone. Additionally, it confers resistance to race, IE1K, known to overcome *Pita* gene, making it a valuable target for breeding durable blast-resistant rice varieties.

Table 1. Characterization of *qBlast4.1* and *Pita* genes across diverse races of blast.

Class	Blast Race	Blast Race	Blast Race	Blast Race	Blast Race	Blast Race	Blast Race
	IA45	IB1	IB45	IB54	IB49	IE1K	IG1
<i>qBlast4.1</i> ( <i>Pi63</i> )	Res.	Res.	Res.	Sus.	Res.	Res.	Res.
<i>Pita</i>	Res.	Res.	Res.	Res.	Res.	Sus.	Res.

Res. - Resistant; Sus. - Susceptible

Ongoing and future research is focused on developing a DNA marker to facilitate selection of new breeding material and characterization of existing lines and varieties. This will accelerate the development of blast-resistant rice varieties and help ensure more durable blast resistance in U.S. rice varieties.

Article by Jennifer Manangkil (PhD student), Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder), and Dr. Brijesh Angira (Rice Breeder)

## Project Highlight – Agronomy Project

The overall objective of the agronomy project at the LSU AgCenter Rice Research Station is to enhance rice production in Louisiana by evaluating and improving nutrient and cultural management practices. In the growing



season of 2024, the agronomy project had over 120 field plot experiments at the Rice Research Station as well as at off-station sites in producer fields throughout Louisiana.

One of the most important nutrient management studies undertaken every growing season by the agronomy project is the evaluation of nitrogen fertilizer requirements for the new released rice varieties and experimental hybrids. Other essential fertilizer nutrients, such as phosphorus, potassium, sulfur and zinc, are also evaluated. Cultural management practices evaluated by the agronomy project include seeding rate, tillage systems, planting methods, stubble management for ratoon (second rice) crop, and crop rotation systems. In addition, several research studies are focused on climate-smart practices to improve productivity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the major inputs such as water and fertilizers. Finally, the agronomy project also participates in the LSU AgCenter's statewide variety testing program for soybeans, grain sorghum, and wheat. Dr. Manoch Kongchum (Agronomy) heads the Agronomy Project. Other members of the Project are Jacob Fluitt (Research Associate), James Leonard (Research Associate), Bradley Beard (Research Associate), Matthew Breaux (Research Farm Specialist), and Aaron Magnon (Student Worker).



*Pictured from left to right are Jacob Fluitt, Dr. Manoch Kongchum, Matthew Breaux, Bradley Beard, Aaron Magnon, and James Leonard*

## 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:

### December 2024

- Dr. Ron Levy (Rice Production Specialist), Dr. Manoch Kongchum (Agronomist), Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist), and Dr. Brijesh Angira (Rice Breeder) all participated in the USA Rice Outlook Conference held in Little Rock, Arkansas. Dr. Angira also participated in the Rice Quality Symposium held at the Outlook Conference cooking samples of various varieties developed at the Rice Station to buyers from throughout the world.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) was selected for the USA Rice Leadership Development Program at the USA Rice Outlook Conference
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) delivered an invited presentation at the Mississippi State University Row Crops Short Course held in Starkville, Mississippi.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) was an invited guest on the Mississippi Crop Situation Podcast.

- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) provided training on the LSU AgCenter's Agricultural Summary publication to ANR Agents in the AgCenter's Central Region.

## January 2025

- Dr. Herry Utomo started an international research collaboration with the Peruvian Ministry of Health and the University of Kansas. The research project is entitled "Impact of Long-Term Consumption of Low Glycemic, Non-GMO Rice on Insulin Sensitivity, Inflammation, and Diabetes Risk in the Upper Amazon: A Household-Based, Community Study". As part of the project, Dr. Utomo coordinated the setup of a secure and stable storage facility in Yurimaguas, Peru and for the delivery of 9 tons of low-GI rice to be used in research trials.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) was an invited speaker at the Louisiana Agricultural Aviation Association meeting held in Lake Charles, LA.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) was an invited speaker at the Western Rice Belt Conference held in El Campo, Texas.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) was an invited speaker for the BASF Clearfield and Provisia Rice Stewardship Webinar.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) and Dr. Ron Levy (Rice Production Specialist) was an invited speaker at the Cotton and Rice Conference held in Memphis, Tennessee.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) and his graduate students participated in the Southern Weed Science Society Annual Meeting held in Charleston, South Carolina.
- Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder) traveled to Puerto Rico to the Rice Station's nursery to rouge the breeding program's seed increase and to take notes on the breeding nursery.
- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) presented at the LSU AgCenter's Outlook Conference held in Alexandria, Louisiana.
- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) presented at the St. Mary/Iberia/Vermilion Sugarcane Production Meeting held in Jeanerette, LA.

## February 2025

- Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder), Dr. Ron Levy (Rice Production Specialist), Dr. Felipe Dalla Lana (Pathologist) and Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) all presented at the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association Annual Meeting held in Marksville, Louisiana.
- Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) and his graduate students participated in the Weed Science Society of America annual meeting held in Vancouver, British Columbia.
- Mr. Gavin Sparks (Graduate Student – Weed Science) placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Poster Competition during Weed Science Society of America annual meeting with a poster entitled "Introduction of a New Sedge in Louisiana Rice, *Fimbristylis littoralis*"
- Mr. Gavin Sparks (Graduate Student – Weed Science) received the Ray and Dorothy Young Scholarship during the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association Annual Meeting.
- Dr. Herry Utomo (Rice Breeder) was invited to speak by the University of Council Professors at the University of Brawijaya in Malang, Indonesia.
- Dr. Herry Utomo (Rice Breeder) was invited to speak at the Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Brawijaya in Malang, Indonesia.
- Dr. Herry Utomo (Rice Breeder) was invited to speak at the Department of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Brawijaya in Malang, Indonesia.
- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) presented at the Tri-Parish Farm Forum held in New Roads, Louisiana.
- Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder), Dr. Brijesh Angira (Rice Breeder), and Dr. Jomar Punzalan traveled to Puerto Rico to the Station's breeding nursery to harvest seed increases and breeding nursery.



- Jennifer Manangkil (Graduate Student – Breeding) successfully defended her PhD dissertation. Jennifer works under the direction of Dr. Adam Famoso with her research focusing on genetics and breeding strategies for Blast and Sheath Blight diseases.
- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) presented at LSU AgCenter's Master Cattlemen Programs in Winnsboro, Bossier City, and Abbeville, LA.
- Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist) presented at the Lafayette Parish Cattlemen Association Annual Meeting held in Lafayette, LA.

**January, February, and March 2025** – Dr. Adam Famoso (Resident Coordinator and Rice Breeder), Dr. Ron Levy (Rice Production Specialist), Dr. Felipe Dalla Lana (Pathologist) and Dr. Connor Webster (Weed Scientist) all presented at several rice production meetings held throughout the rice growing area. Meetings were held in Crowley, Welsh, Abbeville, Mamou, Mansura, and Delhi.

## Station Events

- **December 3, 2024** – The Rice Research Station hosted more than 70 high school students from throughout the Southwest Region for the Agricultural Career Day. This event exposes high school students through hands-on and interactive activities to the various career opportunities available in the agricultural industry.
- **February 18, 2024** – The Rice Research Station hosted the Louisiana Farm Bureau's Crawfish Advisory Committee Annual Meeting.
- **March 19, 2025** – Dr. Kurt Guidry (Assistant Resident Coordinator and Economist), Dr. Ron Levy (Rice Production Specialist) and Mr. Todd Fontenot (Crawfish Production Specialist) hosted a group that is involved in economic development projects in West Africa. The group toured the rice station to learn more about the research being conducted and to get a better understanding of rice and crawfish production.

## New Employee Highlight

Ms. Hannah Derouen joined the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station as an Accounting Specialist in April 2021. Ms. Hannah was born and raised in Winnie, Texas but had strong connections to Louisiana with grandparents on both sides of her family, being from the Gueydan, Mermentau, and Lacassine areas. Through her high school years, Ms. Hannah was active in sports and was heavily involved in the FFA program. Through her participation in the FFA program and through showing livestock, her appreciation and interest in agriculture grew. Ms. Hannah worked in the oil and gas industry following her high school and college days but the opportunity to work in the agricultural industry became a reality when she moved to Louisiana in 2021. Soon after moving to Louisiana, she started here at the Rice Research Station.

As her role as Accounting Specialist, Ms. Hannah creates all purchase orders for the station, pays and manages station bills, manages all station vehicle logs, and creates travel reports for all station employees. Ms. Hannah indicated that one of the most enjoyable parts of working at the Rice Research Station is how welcoming everyone is and the family vibe that the station has. She says that she sees how everyone is willing to come together and work as a team and does it with a smile on their face. And, Ms. Hannah has certainly added to that culture by always being willing to lend a helping hand and being a true team player. The one thing that has surprised Ms. Hannah since coming to work at the station has been the Rice Research Station's commitment to outreach and extension.

From the various groups and individuals that come to the station to learn more about rice research and rice production to the station faculty and staff working directly with producers and industry personnel, Ms. Hannah has come to understand and appreciate the level of commitment the Rice Research Station has to its stakeholders and the type of support it can provide.

When not working, Ms. Hannah spends most of her time caring for her 2 beautiful children – Hudson (8 yrs old) and Hallie (2 yrs old). They are her world and keep her on her toes. She also enjoys raising chickens, show cattle, and growing a garden and tries to schedule trips back to Texas to visit family as often as she can.



*Ms. Hannah Derouen*



**For more information, contact us at the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station**  
1373 Caffey Road | Rayne, Louisiana 70578 | Phone: 337-788-7531 | Fax: 337-788-7553  
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

The LSU AgCenter and LSU provides equal opportunities in employment and programs.

**For more information, visit our website at:**

**[H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station \(lsuagcenter.com\)](http://lsuagcenter.com)**

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