Field Notes
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Over the past few days I have had more calls about “slow moving rice” than anything else. In our verification program we have been dealing with the same problem for the past few weeks. Last week fields started to respond to starter nitrogen applications we had tried to avoid, but finally recommended as much out of frustration as anything else. Then several of the fields were completely flooded by from 3 to 10 inches of rain last Wednesday and Thursday. Today we checked a couple of these fields and were surprised to see them looking OK.

I have no real recommendation or solution to the problem. We have had to flush several times before flooding and have had to hold off herbicide applications until we felt the plants were able to tolerate flooding. It looks like the crop is going to be later than we would have predicted earlier. Our DD50 program is running about 5 to 7 days ahead of the crop where we are using it.

Today we had to recommend insecticide applications in two fields to control rice water weevil. These insects have emerged over an extended period this year just like the crop has grown slowly. We treated our field in Jeff Davis parish several weeks ago. The two we recommended treating today are in Evangeline and St. Landry parishes. I expect to find them in our field in Concordia parish later in the week.

In the photograph above are injured seedlings and a few dead seedlings. The standing water visible is from rainfall earlier that day. The damage occurred before the rain. In the photograph below, the dark objects in the whorls of the seedlings are the critters responsible for the injury. The photograph on the next page shows an adult chinch bug hiding behind the ligule of a rice seedling. We saw two fields affected by them last week. Rainfall and flooding should solve the problem.

Chinch bugs frequently cause “firing” of the leaves of plants on which they are feeding. If the field had been dry we would probably have found them near the base of the plants or in cracks in the soil surface. Once the field is flooded it forces the bugs up onto the plant where they are exposed to predators and perhaps other problems. Something sure causes them to seek the shelter of the whorls of leaves or other areas where they feel protected. The insect at right is an adult. The light colored areas on its back are translucent areas of its wings that are crossed over its back. A few issues back we showed an immature chinch bug which is red in the earlier stages with a tan horizontal stripe across its midsection. Immature chinch bugs do not have wings. Both adults and instars cause injury to rice seedlings. In extreme cases we have had to recommend an insecticide even though we are reluctant to do so because it is often difficult to get the insecticide to the pest.

The last two photographs on the previous page are of a problem we encounter every year and with increasing frequency over the past few years. It could be in response to more laser leveling or to modern varieties, but we really do not know. The first photograph illustrates the irregular patterns in the field common to this problem. The seedlings exhibit more diagnostic symptoms; they have more erect leaves, fewer tillers, firing lower leaves and often are more bluish green than other plants in the same field. We believe this is phosphorus deficiency. We recommended applying some triple super phosphate (0-46-0) to a few small areas as a test. The results we will know a little later on and will let you know.

The next three photographs show one of the most impressive demonstrations of the power of nature I have ever witnessed. As we approached our verification field in St. Landry parish last week a powerful thunderstorm came through the area. Unfortunately, I could not capture the explosive lightning strikes that were hitting all around us. In the second picture you can see the results of one of the strikes. What is burning is a wheat field – PRIOR TO HARVEST. The second photograph was taken from about ¼ mile away. The flames were at least 30 to 50 feet high. Winds of at least 50 mph fanned the flames pushing them across between 100 and 200 acres. A second smaller fire consumed about 10 acres. In fifteen minutes it was all over. Lightning started it and rain stopped it. The initial rain was not phasing it. Not until the really heavy stuff came over did it extinguish the blaze. This wheat had been yielding between 60 and 80 bushels per acre. The third photo barely tells the story of the amount of devastation. As the farmers son said, “You can do everything right all year and in an instant it is gone.” (Note: the photographs all look fuzzy because of the still falling rain when I took them.)