

Field Notes
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Believe it or not I am still getting questions about rice water weevils, such as “Can I use Mustang Max impregnated on fertilizer I am finding 10 to 12 larvae per core sample?” and “How late can I drain, I was at green ring last week and now I am finding plants with almost no root system?” Bad situations for the grower accompanied by answers he does not want to hear.

Dr. Boris Castro did extensive field testing this year of Mustang Max impregnated on fertilizer. In his tests he found it provided good control of **adult** rice water weevils, but did **not** control the larvae. We experienced the same thing in one of our verification fields where the farmer was not able to spray when we recommended it and applied fertilizer impregnated with insecticide. We had lots of larvae when we quit looking.

How late can you drain? This is another one of those subjective questions I mentioned in an earlier issue. Normally I would not drain beyond the three to five crown node stages because I would prefer to have water back on the field at green ring with the intention of never draining until harvest. In extreme cases of rice water weevil feeding damage we have been forced to drain at green ring because the failure to do so would result in a complete crop failure. The weather right now is perfect for draining and drying a field quickly – hot, dry and no rain in sight.

We also take into consideration the stage of growth of the weevil. Dr. Castro explained it this way. If most of the larvae are large and/or you can find pupae in the field then they are near the end of the life cycle. It will take the pupae a week or so to reach adult then a week or so from the time the adults emerge to mate and lay eggs and then another week or so for these eggs to hatch. So if the population is uniformly near the end of the life cycle the plants are going to get about three weeks of some relief during which they can recover if they are healthy and not already damaged too much. If the population is mixed in that some larvae are first or second instars and others large then feeding will continue without interruption resulting in more damage. In the first case I would take a chance and not drain. I don’t know what I would do in the second.

Draining beyond green ring is really risky business with so many variables that each case must be addressed individually. It would be a lot easier if we had something to control larvae, but we have beaten that dead horse enough.

I have had several reports of the whorl maggot in Vermilion and lower Acadia parishes. I have not seen any of these fields. I did ask one of the company reps to bring some of the damaged plants to the field day this Thursday so we could take a look at them. Howard Cormier told me one grower thought he had found the adult flies of the whorl maggot when in fact he had found a fly larger than a house fly. The whorl maggot adult is the same size as the leaf miner adult. It is very tiny and the last means to be used to identify the insect. The most practical means of identifying the problem is the discovery of the maggot in affected plants followed by the symptoms produced. If the youngest leaf can be pulled out of the whorl and the plant is

exhibiting symptoms reminiscent of grass herbicides in that they kill the growing point while the remaining leaves are green, at least for a while, that is an indication it might be the whorl maggot. If the maggot or its pupa can be found in the leaf whorl this is diagnostic. Leave the adults to the taxonomists at the Smithsonian.



Above left: South American Rice Maggot (a.k.a. whorl maggot) Above right a great photograph of the eggs of the SARM taken by Dr. Boris Castro.

If you have any problem weeds, diseases or insects please bring them to the field day. We will have a trouble desk set up under the shed as we have at the last several field days and will have a full complement of scientists around to help out.

Last week while scouting our field in Acadia parish we found these two different stink bugs. The one on the left is the adult rice stink bug. The one on the right is the red shouldered stink bug. I hope the red shouldered stink bug was just incidental and not using rice as a host because it has become such a serious pest in soybeans.



The rice stink bug is feeding on smartweed, one of the few times I have seen it feeding on any plant not a member of the grass family.

The next series of photographs depict a problem we encountered in our verification field Acadia parish. It reminded me of a similar problem Dr. Dunand had in his research plots on the rice station a few years ago. We never figured it out then and may not have an answer this time either. The difference this time is in a couple of clues we did not have on the station.





In the first photograph it looks like typical whiteheads resulting from borer damage. The second is just a closer look. Still looks like borer damage. The third photograph reveals entirely different damage to the stem; obviously it is not borer damage and probably not even an insect. The fourth photograph and the first reveal a clue. In the fourth photograph the stem appears to be cut as if a rodent had chewed on it and in the background of the first photograph is a wooded area adjacent to the damage area. I suspect a mouse or something similar, but am open to suggestions. Only serious ones please.