

Field Notes
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To drain or not to drain is a difficult question that always comes to me at this time of year whether I am in one of our verification fields or in another farmer's field. It seems to be especially difficult this year because many fields are very uneven as a consequence of the cooler than normal temperatures in April which led to uneven emergence. Aside from the uneven maturity there is also a delay in maturity of about two weeks in most of the fields we have looked at closely this year. The photograph below is of one of our verification fields. In the top paddy, in the foreground of the picture, is ready to drain, but the bottom end of the field is still solid green. We will have to hold the water another week to let the bottom end catch up with the front. We are fortunate the variety is CL 161 so it can tolerate harvest at lower than recommended moisture than most varieties without sacrificing milling quality.



The area in the immediate foreground is at the entrance and only represents a very small area. If this was the only area still green we would recommend draining now.

How do we determine when to drain? We have addressed this before, but just to be sure we will again. We pick out an area of the field we think of as "typical", that is, it represents the majority of the field. Then we look at several panicles from this area. On light soils we drain when the selected panicles are straw colored for about $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of their length. On heavy soils we

recommend draining when the panicles are straw colored for about $\frac{1}{2}$ of their length. In the photograph at left below the panicles on the left are straw colored about $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of their length while those on the right are straw colored for about $\frac{1}{2}$ of their length. In poorly drained fields or if rainy weather sets in we modify the recommendations to fit so that we might drain a silt loam soil when the panicles are $\frac{1}{2}$ straw colored or in a very dry year on a clay soil when the panicles are $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ straw colored. It is a tough judgment call.

In a couple of our verification fields one planted to Cheniere and the other to CL 161 we picked up quite a few plants with blast on them. We did not see any leaf blast earlier and there is still no leaf blast instead it is the most yield limiting forms, collar blast, rotten neck and panicle blast. In the CL 161 field panicle blight was actually causing more damage than blast. The Cheniere field has had no fungicide applied to it while the CL 161 received fungicide when it was beginning to head, much too late to prevent blast. The recommendation was made to control sheath blight.



Mature panicles. Left $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ straw colored. Right $\frac{1}{2}$ straw colored.



Collar blast, early lesion on Cheniere.

On the following page the first two photographs are of rotten neck blast on Cheniere. This caught us by surprise because up to this point the field had been so clean we did not recommend a fungicide.



In one of our verification fields planted to XP 723 we noticed quite a few whiteheads. When we split stems we found the rice stem borer. We also noticed a few skipper larvae in the field too, but they are not of any consequence.

