



The warm weather in February had everyone itching to plant, but only a few brave souls took a chance. The rain and colder weather that followed slowed things down for a few days. Today we planted our first verification field of the year in Cameron parish. The plane shown above is seeding Jupiter at 130 pounds per acre. The original intention was to plant 120 pounds per acre, however the grower decided to bump the rate up because we are technically a few days earlier than the recommended starting date of March 15.

In the beginning of the Rice Research Verification Program we probably would have balked at planting outside of the recommended date. Over the years we have learned to work with growers as long as we maintain the intent of the recommendation. The starting date of March 15 was a compromise when we changed the date years ago from March 21. Dr. Linscombe would probably have chosen an earlier date because of his success in his date of planting studies. I urged him not too because I had seen too many commercial fields where they would never have the same success and did not want to have to visit these fields. So we compromised.

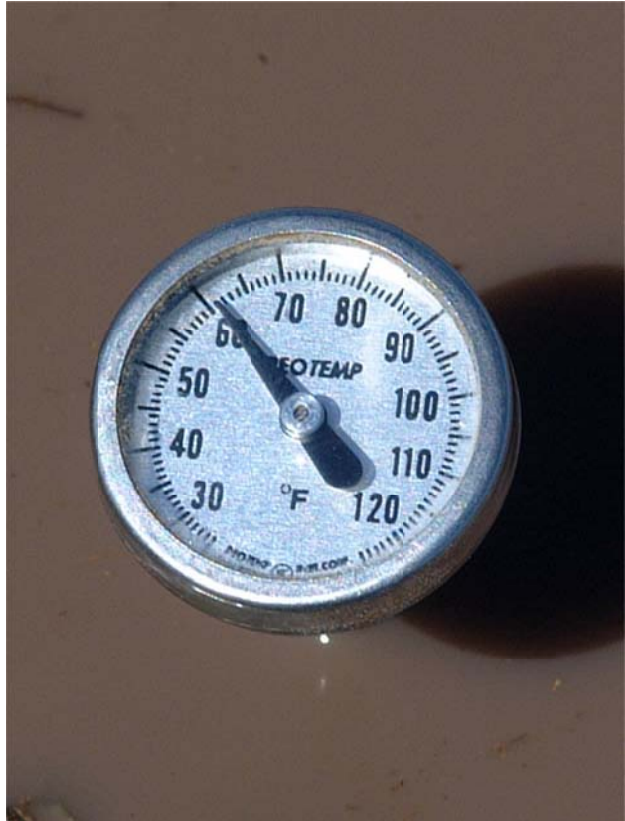
This year is much warmer than last year at this time. If it is cooler than last year in July and August we will have a chance at a better crop. I sure hope so.

I have always stressed that environmental conditions are more important than a calendar date. To reinforce the decision and make myself more comfortable with planting today I checked the temperature. As you can see it is above 60°F in a flooded state.

The farmer intends to hold the water on the field until Sunday (about 48 hours) then drain the field.

We do not want to hold the water too long because it increases the chance of seed midge problems, could impair seedling establishment, and will attract more ducks. Of course, once it is drained we will trade ducks for black birds, both of which are prevalent in the area right now. Hopefully, with enough folks planting we will spread them out a little.

The farmer told me when he got to the field this morning there were about 150 Teal. They were landing in the field while it was being planted.



This issue is the introductory issue of the year. Depending upon what is going on in the field others may not follow on a weekly basis until there is more to show you.

I will also post this on the blog if I can remember how to do it. I am supposed to use Facebook too. I don't know if I can stand all of this technology.