Field Notes
April 1, 2011
Johnny Saichuk

The plant at right is growing in our verification field in Cameron parish. The farmer called it rattlebox and he may be right. The problem is that there are two very similar plants; rattle box (or rattle-bush) and bladder pod. The first is in the genus *Daubentonia* and the second in *Glottidium*. I will have to observe it a few more weeks before I can come up with a definitive identification. Like its cousin Hemp Sesbania, its first true leaf is simple. Taxonomic keys do not attempt to identify seedlings so those of us in agriculture have to learn what separates one from the other by noting the characteristics of the seedling then following it through later stages of development so that it can be positively identified.

The second photograph is of the same plant farther along in development. The upper plant has only one true leaf. The other two leaf-like structures are the cotyledons – seed leaves. The plant in the second photograph is in the 3 leaf stage. The first leaf is simple and all remaining leaves will be compound. Sesbania follows the same pattern in contrast to Jointvetch which has a compound first true leaf. This is the kind of information I referred to above that is not found in taxonomic keys.

If our weed control program works we will have to look for plants on field margins. After consulting with Dr. Eric Webster we located some Permit Plus and applied ¾ ounce with 4 quarts of propanil last Tuesday. It got about 6 hours without rain. According to Keith Majure, the Gowan rep, this is the first commercial use of the herbicide. We'll let you know how it works.

The field should have been fertilized as soon as all standing water drained following the rain late Tuesday and early Wednesday morning. By the time we get there next week I hope to see permanent flood established.

Our fields in Allen and Vermilion parish were drilled into dry soil. The last issue of Field Notes showed photographs of the dusty conditions there. In Allen parish there may have been enough moisture to get a stand, but not enough to get the herbicides into the soil solution. Some folks use the term “activated” which implies that moisture is necessary to trigger something that makes the herbicide work. All the moisture does in get the herbicide to where it will work either through root or shoot uptake by the target species. It must be in the soil solution for this to happen. Rain following both herbicide and fertilizer application was perfect. Rarely have we had that kind of luck in the verification program.