

Field Notes
April 8, 2011
Johnny Saichuk



This morning we walked through part of one of a verification field that was water seeded yesterday. At left is a view of the seed below about 4 inches of water. The field was being drained and will continue to drain for another 24 hours or so. By the time we visit next Tuesday we will have to make decisions concerning weed control and fertilization. The soil at this location is a very heavy red clay that normally has more than adequate amounts of phosphorus and potassium present. However, the pH at this location is also high. In similar fields we have learned to apply phosphorus early because it is often unavailable. In most of those situations the fields were dry prior to planting. Because this field was flooded throughout the winter and under flooded conditions the pH moves toward neutral and because it is a new field to us, we will wait to determine if we need to apply any phosphorus.

One of the real pleasures of my job is being outdoors and having the opportunity to observe wildlife. Until a few years ago Roseate Spoonbills were a rare sighting, but with the increase in rice fields flooded throughout the year for crawfish production these birds have become common. This photograph was taken in a field near our verification field.

The farmer working with us was concerned about the number of ducks still in the area, in particular, in our verification field. Draining should get them to move. We saw blue wing teal, spoonbills, and poule d'eau (coots) in addition to various wading birds. The ducks and poule d'eau are the only ones likely to cause any problems.



If there is anything good about the picture at right it is that it guarantees weed scientists a job. I took this photograph on the edge of one of the fields on the Rice Research Station in Crowley. These fields are either in rice production or fallow. When fallow they are plowed repeatedly throughout the summer to reduce weed problems. In spite of these practices it is obvious that we still have more than enough weed seed produced to continue to have to deal with weeds in the future. The seed had accumulated on one corner after rain which floated them to that side. I have not done an analysis of the composition though it was clear much of the seed were of barnyardgrass, broadleaf Signalgrass and probably sprangletop. Without examining them more closely I cannot tell the broadleaf weed species. When it eventually rains or when flushed we will have an opportunity to study the makeup.



Over the twelve or so years of the verification program we have learned many little tricks. It took about eight years to learn this one. At the left is one of our rain gauge set ups. At right is a stalk of bamboo inserted there (not growing).

The bonus question of the week is “Why did we stick the stalk of bamboo near the rain gauge?” Any previous participants in the program are ineligible to answer.

I will publish the answer next week.