



The two photographs above tell more about the most important thing that happened this week than anything else. It finally rained. The first photo is of our verification field in Allen parish where I dumped 1.76" while it was raining then in St. Landry parish we got chased out by the storm shown in the second shot. I do not mind getting wet, but I have a strong aversion to lightning and getting stuck. The field is at the end of 2 miles of field road and we did not have the 4 wheeler. I purposely did not load it so I would not jinx the chance of rain.

I drove in and out of rain most of the day Tuesday and Wednesday so was disappointed when I found out how little had fallen on the southwestern area. While every drop helps it did not come close to saving some areas where salt water continues to be a problem.

We are conducting a grand experiment concerning the effects of salt on rice production. Unfortunately, it is an unplanned experiment that is going to cost some growers a lot more than a check-off contribution.



You may have read the articles concerning the spread of the Mexican rice borer from Texas into Louisiana. The confirmation of its presence in Louisiana is via the collection of male moths in pheromone traps in Calcasieu parish.

To my knowledge no actual borers have been collected yet. Most folks think it is just a matter of time. They can utilize sugar-cane and rice as well as many of the grasses found in both states.

Research in Texas has shown this borer to be particularly damaging to sugarcane and to a lesser extent yet significant to rice.

So when I see a “white head” (a white, blank panicle that lacks any grain discoloration) I split the stems to determine what borer might be present. The one at left was found in our verification field in Cameron parish.



In the next photograph is a Mexican rice borer on sugarcane. This is a more juvenile version, however the distinction between the two can be made from a comparison of them.

The rice stalk borer or stem borer has a dark head capsule in contrast to the light head capsule of the Mexican rice borer. The double stripes along the side of the body of the rice stalk borer are continuous while those of the Mexican rice borer are broken.

In the picture at left the stripes appear continuous at the head end because the insect has contracted its body. The tail end of its body shows the broken lines fairly clearly. The intensity of color can vary considerably.

If you find any and are in doubt collect them. Placing them in a zip lock bag with plant material and keeping them cool will provide a fresh sample. Store them in alcohol if you cannot keep them fresh.



Every season has a “first” associated with it, sometimes just a curiosity and sometimes significant. Last year county agent Stuart Gauthier found spider mites in rice which was a first for me. This year a field representative showed him the field shown above. Stuart recognized the problem as spider mites, but the symptoms are totally different from those of last year and I suspect so are the spider mites. The small specks you see on the leaves at right are spider mites. Stuart sent these to me.

Dr. Hummel was not available but Stuart collected some for future identification. I will try to get some and use Dr. Groth’s equipment to take some high magnification images.

There are no miticides labeled for control of spider mites in rice. The problem was discovered before it rained and I suspect the rain will help to eliminate them.



Tuesday morning we looked at a field adjacent to an oil well location where there were scattered groups of plants exhibiting the symptoms shown at right. The lower leaves are chlorotic much like the ones shown in the June 3rd edition of field notes. The newest leaf is OK, but the next few are yellow then the lowest leaves are OK. This indicates an immobile element may be involved. The newest leaf is OK until it unfurls and demand for the nutrient exceeds supply.

Because it is in the vicinity of an oil well and it is known that drilling mud had been spread there in the past, it is extremely difficult to pinpoint this one without extensive tissue testing and even that might not provide the answer.

Below is a photograph of one of the most colorful birds in Louisiana. They have declined in numbers but appear to be recovering. It is called a Purple Gallinule or “Blue Peter” locally.

