



Well, it is official; we have the Mexican rice borer in Louisiana. Earlier reports were of male moths caught in pheromone traps. Last week county agent Jimmy Meaux was called to a field in Calcasieu parish where he tentatively identified borer larvae as Mexican rice borer. He sent them to Dr. Natalie Hummel whose associate Anna Meszaros and graduate student (under Dr. Gene Reagan) Julien Beuzelien examined the specimens. They confirmed the identity. This afternoon I visited the field with Jimmy where we easily found several borers including the one shown here. I sent the photo to the experts and they just confirmed it. That is one of the advantages of the technology we have today. The photograph was taken at 2:12 p.m. and by 5:30 it was confirmed.

Jimmy told the farmer, Chris Habetz and his son Brad, we would put up a plaque at their farm. They did not see the humor. The field where this borer was collected had no insecticide seed treatment; however a nearby field is treated with Dermacor. We will follow up to see if borers are discovered there or if the insecticide prevents them from becoming a problem. This is a manageable albeit unwelcome pest. Dermacor and/or timely applications of the pyrethroids can keep them in check in rice.

On the next page are a series of photographs of CL151 treated with fungicide. We are aware of several fields with this problem and are looking into it.



**Sheath blight
on CL151**



**Sheath
blight on
leaves of
CL151**



**Rotten neck
blast on
CL151**

**Sheath blight
on panicles of
CL151**

As you can see on the previous page the sheath blight infestation is about as bad as it gets. At this particular location it was evident and abundant. The lesions on the leaves indicate it is still active in spite of additional fungicide having been applied a couple of days prior. It is much too soon to call it resistance. Samples have been sent into a lab to test that hypothesis. The bottom photograph compares rotten neck blast symptoms to those of sheath blight on panicles. Note the upright almost cylindrical shape of the panicles infected with sheath blight. The panicles do not nod over because there is little grain development and the branches remain tight because the fungal mycelium literally holds them together. Most of the reports have come from the same area. Only one report of CL111 in another parish with the same problem has come into an agent's office. If you have fields of any variety treated with a fungicide and exhibiting similar symptoms please contact your agent so we can document the frequency of the problem.

Below are two photographs of a problem I addressed in an earlier issue of Field Notes. The difference here is that the symptoms are more dramatic. We do not know the cause of the problem. Up to this point I have thought it to be an environmental problem and each time I have shown plant samples to plant pathologists they have said the same thing. This time I collected more samples because the tip burn was so prevalent and it extended down to the collar where an area of injury extended around the collar. The leaves affected in this case were nearly all flag leaves thus yield could be impacted at least on a localized level. The variety here is a hybrid, but we have observed it on many varieties.



Another issue we are dealing with is continued reports of white or blank kernels in panicles. Like the leaf tip problem this one has been observed on many varieties. In some cases it is the upper part of the panicle, in some the middle and in some the lower portion. I still think it is another environmental problem we have not figured out. The blanking of kernels probably occurred when the plant was in the panicle differentiation (PD) stage. This is roughly 7 to 10 days after green ring or internode elongation. At the time of panicle formation some event caused some florets to be sterile. If it happened when the top florets were forming then the top florets are blank. If it happened when the lower florets were forming then the lower florets are blank. We will continue to investigate this problem.



Near the field where the Mexican rice borers were detected was the largest flock of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks I have ever seen. Below is only a small portion of those in the field. In the past I have always seen them in small groups or mixed in with Fulvous Whistling Ducks (aka Mexican Squealers) so this was a surprise to me. When we checked our verification field in Cameron parish it had at least 30 Squealers in it and it is only 18 acres. They are making a mess of the rice. The farmer decided to lower his water to try to discourage them.

