

Field Notes
August 5, 2011
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Last week I was called to a field of Jazzman 2 that the farmer said “was just not right and had not been all season.” It was pretty obvious at first glance that there was a serious nutrient problem because it had one of the worst cases of brown spot I have seen in a long time.

In the photograph at right it is apparent that tillering is less than desired because water should not be visible between the drill rows under normal circumstances. It is also obvious that the lower leaves are firing. Upon closer examination of the leaves the typical spots associated with brown leaf spot disease are present. The photograph below illustrates these symptoms well.

I have had some folks mistake these spots for leaf blast, however they really are fairly easy to separate once you look at them closely.



These spots are almost circular in contrast to the strongly elliptic spots of leaf blast. (See Field Notes of May 20th for photographs of leaf blast.)

Brown spot is almost always associated with some sort of nutrient deficiency especially nitrogen deficiency. In this case the total nutrients applied should have been more than sufficient so the question remains why nutrients are deficient. We recommended tissue testing to try to identify the possible culprits to be followed by soil testing at harvest.

Soil tests had been taken prior to planting and the only thing that stood out was fairly high pH. A follow-up soil test in conjunction with the tissue analysis should provide the answer. I will let you know if it does.

Yesterday I attended the Arkansas rice field day at Stuttgart. I always thought we had the hottest field day conditions of any, but the temperature there at 11:00 was 95° F. The day before it was 104° at 5:00. No, it was not as humid, but it was too hot.

In spite of the heat it was a good field day. At one stop Dr. Nathan Slaton described a problem I have mentioned at least twice this year in Field Notes. In the June 30th edition and again in the July 14th edition I had photographs and discussion about leaf tip burn that I had not been able to explain. I mentioned in one of these issues that I had taken samples to plant pathologists and they had been unable to isolate any pathogens. Dr. Slaton said they have had similar calls and have reason to believe it is a nutrient imbalance between nitrogen and potassium. He said based on tissue testing the nitrogen levels were too high in relation to the potassium levels. This would make sense in at least one case I looked at because the symptoms showed up shortly after top dressing at mid-season. There had even been some speculation in that case that the fertilizer pellets had stuck to moist leaves and caused the burn. I was able to eliminate this because grasses on the levee did not exhibit the symptoms as they would have had it been a physical burn.

In one discussion I went way out on a limb and speculated that it could be something associated with water of guttation. It looks like that was way off base. I intend to look into this problem more after harvest is complete.

Yield figures I am hearing are very good with only a few exceptions usually in common with heavy disease pressure or some other explainable situation. If you have any reports you feel like providing, please send them to me.