



When we arrived at our verification field in Vermilion parish Wednesday morning we found a small flock of grackles feeding just a hundred yards or so from propane cannons which seemed to annoy us more than the birds. One old farmer once told me he thought the cannons called the blackbirds. If you think about Pavlov's experiments with dogs this makes sense. If the birds begin to associate the noise with planted fields then they will seek out the noise. The cannons do seem to chase ducks who have reason to not like that type of noise. I don't know if blackbirds are stupid or don't care about noise or maybe they are so smart they realize it will not hurt them if they can stand the racket. AV-1011 was not used in this field.

Rice is moving rapidly in this field where Jupiter was water seeded on March 21 and emerged by April 1. Rain and flushing has kept it wet. After listening to some research papers presented at the Rice Technical Working Group meetings and discussion that followed we decided to manage our nitrogen in this field differently than we have in the past. Phosphorus and potassium have already been applied. In the past we applied 2/3 of the total intended nitrogen fertilizer during the brief drain period between planting and establishment of permanent flood. The research mentioned earlier suggests nitrogen use efficiency might be improved by applying 1/3 at that time, then following two to three weeks later with another 1/3. The remaining amount will be applied at internode elongation. We will see how it works out and let you know.

In several interviews I have characterized this spring as a season in slow motion. We only have 2 of 5 intended verification fields planted. It seems like the more you go north of interstate 10 the wetter it gets. Of the south Louisiana parishes Evangeline appears to be the most delayed when compared to average planting date and percentage planted by this time.

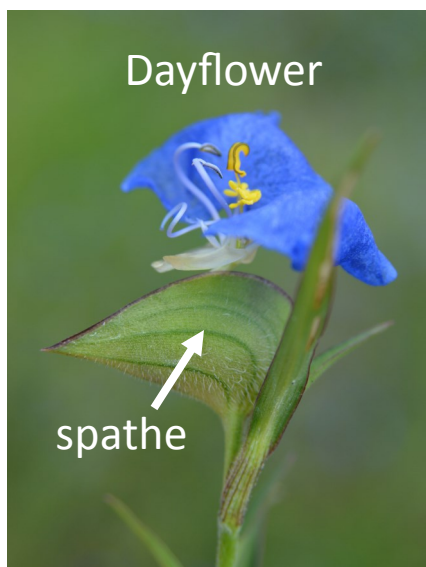
I looked over the dates of plating from 2005 to 2013 in the verification program. The earliest was March 9, 2010 in Acadia parish and the latest was May 31, 2009 in Madison parish. When the parishes were separated into southern, middle and northeastern parishes and the dates averaged over the years March 30 was the average for south Louisiana, April 8 for the middle parishes and April 25 for the northeastern parishes. Because of the variation in yield from year to year regardless of planting date it is almost impossible to determine the effect of planting date from these studies. That is a good example of why the small plot date of plating studies conducted by Dr. Linscombe are so important. With proper experimental design researchers can separate the sources of variation so that differences measured are real and not perceived.

The bottom line is that we are later this year than we would like to be, but like last year the most important yield influencing environmental conditions are likely to occur in the months of May, June and July. That was certainly true last year.

Even though our Vermilion field is water seeded and the planted rice was between 1 and 2 leaf at the time we found the red rice seedlings shown at left. The seeds were all near the surface and the seedlings were in 3 to 4 leaf stage indicating they had germinated before the Jupiter. Red rice seedlings can be identified by the dark colored medium grain, pubescent seeds. Look carefully at the close-up of the seed and you can see the small hairs on the hull.



The three plants (flowers) shown below are in the same family and can be easily confused especially in the vegetative stage. They are all in the *Commelinaceae* family. This Dayflower is *Commelina communis*. The blue flowered spiderwort is probably *Tradescantia virginiana* and the other is *Tradescantia rosea*. The presence of the spathe separates Dayflower from Spiderwort species.





I am still waiting on confirmation of the identity of the critters shown above. Unfortunately I did not include a size reference in the photograph. They are very small, about 1 mm (1/32 inch) in diameter and about 5 mm (3/16 inch) long when stretched out. A dealer rep found them while checking an area of a field that had a lower stand than other parts of the field. While they look like a two headed caterpillar the two “heads” at opposite ends are to confuse predators. If you enlarge the document you can easily distinguish the real head from the fake. The absence of prolegs on the abdomen immediately indicates they are not the larvae of Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies). They are probably either Wireworms or False Wireworms. I will let the entomologists figure it out. In either case, they are grubs of a group of beetles whose larvae are known to feed on the roots of plants. Sugarcane and corn are two Louisiana crops in which wireworms are a common pest.

I visited the field with county agents Barrett Courville and Jeremy Hebert and Dr. Dustin Harrell. The dealer rep and two farmers were also there. We dug around in the soil for at least 30 minutes and never did find anymore of them. These were collected by the dealer rep and brought to me before we visited the field. Whether they were responsible for stand reduction or were just incidental to other conditions we could not determine. The field was dry broadcast and covered with a harrow. Wireworms are documented in lots of upland grass crops such as wheat and the aforementioned corn and sugarcane so it is possible that dry planted rice might be a host for them too. I hope they are just an oddity, but it is worth checking the root systems carefully and letting us know if you find anything like them.