Field Notes
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The photograph at left is of our verification field in Concordia parish. There is no underground irrigation line, no canal and crop land in between the well and the rice field, yet it is being irrigated just the same. This application of plastic tubing (aka polypipe) to irrigate rice is an example of using irrigation technology that has been around for quite a few years and used mainly on row crops. Each year we encounter new uses in rice farming. The idea of side inlet irrigation was proposed first in Arkansas and since has been used in Louisiana as well. This takes it a step further because an entire section is being used as a pipeline only. Each paddy has from two to three of the blue gates installed in the tubing. Each gate is capable of flowing 75 gallons of water per minute (gpm). I think the tubing shown here is 22 inches in diameter. The large diameter was necessary to move the water that far without rupturing the pipe due to increased pressure. As slick as the tubing is on the inside there is enough friction to cause resistance to flow that will result in increased pressure. The tubing is only capable of handling around 5 pounds per square inch (psi) of pressure. It is flowing nearly 3000 gpm at the time of the photograph. There are a number of fields in south Louisiana where this technology would help. We have emphasized the need to flood fields in a timely manner. This might offer a means of solving some of those problems.

On the next page are two photographs showing a four inch long panicle. In the first photograph the plants have the leaves intact. What reveals the advancing size of the panicle is the enlargement of the leaf sheath. The top the leaf sheath is smaller in diameter than it is at either the middle or the bottom. This is described in the literature as being “spindle” shaped. Unfortunately most folks do not know what a spindle is much less what it is shaped like. This is an old term referring to the wooden dowel that tapers toward each end that was used in spinning fiber into yarn or thread. At the time the phrase was coined it was a common object to which everyone could relate. The main point here is the enlargement of the leaf sheath. Of course once it is split open the panicle is easily observed

We have had a number of calls wondering if it is too late to apply fungicide if the panicle is 6 inches long rather than 4. The simple answer is no. We really do not even know if Cercospora will be a problem this year. As long as the boot is not split the fungicide containing propiconazole (Tilt and others) can be applied.

The major question this week has been should I even apply fungicide to control Cercospora when I cannot find sheath blight in the field. We have only found sheath blight in our verification field in East Carroll parish. All of the other fields have been clean as of Thursday. We recommended fungicide in two of the fields in south Louisiana because the farmer wanted to protect his crop and we cannot predict the likelihood of Cercospora occurring. In any other year we would not have sprayed yet. Some farmers are considering an application of propiconazole alone now with the idea of continuing to scout for sheath blight. If it shows up later Quadris or Gem can be applied. This will have cost the farmer a second application cost and possibly an increase in the fungicide cost depending on prices of the pre-mixes Quilt and Stratego. It is a gamble any way you look at it.

Yesterday a verification farmer asked us to take a look at a problem in another field. When he described it we knew what it was immediately. We took a look anyway just to be sure. It was so dramatic I took the photograph that appears on the next page. Howard Cormier sent out a similar picture earlier this week. Last year we included a very dramatic close up of this same problem. You should recognize it.