Field Notes
July 30, 2007
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I thought the last edition might be the last of this year. Today I received a sample of rice from Concordia parish collected last week. It presented a good quiz opportunity. The symptoms described on the phone by a consultant sounded like stem borers; however he was well versed on borers and was adamant that borers were not the problem. The next four photographs illustrate the problem. It has been featured in Field Notes more than once. What is it?

In the photograph at left are several stalks of rice with a view of the base of the plants. The plants show deterioration of tissue and death of the stalk above the area of injury. The photograph at right shows what I believe is an exit opening of the critter. On the next page are photographs of it. The first shows the tip of its posterior and the second exposes the entire insect in the stem of the plant.

This pest is often found in the transitional water areas where the water level changes along the edges of fields and on levees. There is no treatment recommendation at this time. It is fairly common, but never have I seen it in large quantities. First symptoms are the appearance of blank panicles as you would see when stalk borer damage has occurred. Look for this insect toward the base of the plant not up in the middle of the stalk.

After three days of no rain I had hoped the weather pattern had finally changed for the better to allow us to harvest without rutting up fields so second crop would be better. Guess I was hoping for too much. Based on the weather data here at the Rice Station we had a total of 7.42 inches of rain in June in 13 rainfall events. In July it rained on 16 days with a total of about 7.49 inches so far. Rainfall to date is 38.53 inches which is a little over 13 inches more than last year.

I almost never recommend to farmers that they try something we have not already evaluated on the experiment station or in on-farm demonstrations and I don't know if it would work. Current weather conditions have caused a change of attitude. This might be the time to experiment with rolling the stubble to fill in the ruts and knock down the ridges. A smooth roller might be better than a corrugated (grooved) roller. It may require running ditches afterward and it may do more harm than good so I would not try it on many acres. I just know we are harvesting in lousy conditions so we have less to lose than in a good year.

Informal yield reports sound surprisingly good so far. I hope they continue on this track.